Visual Communication Strategy in Parody Content: Lessons from the GUSDURian Network

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ABSTRACT

The parody of political figures is standard in democratic countries, including Indonesia. However, in Indonesia, some cases of political parodies have faced intense backlash, even leading to legal action. In contrast, the parody of Indonesia's fourth president, Abdurrahman Wahid (Gus Dur), created by the GUSDURian Network, is often presented uniquely and eccentrically. This article provides recommendations for strategic communication practitioners, mainly social media activists, to disseminate the thoughts of prominent Indonesian figures through visual political parodies, with a case study on Gus Dur parody content produced by the GUSDURian Network. Based on in-depth interviews with GUSDURian staff and guided by communication strategy indicators from Onong Uchjana Effendy, this study identifies key strategies for creating accessible, humorous, and responsible parody content. These strategies include targeting Millennials and Generation Z (MZ) fans of anime pop culture, utilizing visually engaging social media platforms, positioning parody content as an initial engagement tool (bait), aligning content with current issues, and verifying content with experts before publication.

Keywords: Gus Dur, parody, anime, communication strategy, political figures

INTRODUCTION

The phenomenon of parodying famous figures has become an inseparable part of popular culture around the world. Parody is done to create a satirical representation that is controversial towards other cultural works or practices

(Dentith, 2000). Today, the development of digital media has also expanded the purpose of parody, such as forming self-identity (Lam, 2022) and responding to current conditions experienced by global society (Murru & Vicari, 2021). The types of parody consist of several variations, such as imitation of stories (Chan, 2019), gestures (Prozorov, 2022), and appearance (Taylor, 2018) of prominent figures in various fields, such as fictional characters in literature (Hemmat, 2022), celebrities (Wright, 2023), and important figures in human history (Oren, 2023).

In the realm of politics, politicians are also not free from being the subject of parody. In a large democratic country like the United States (US), parody in various media is common, such as the satirical television comedy show entitled *Saturday Night Live* (Becker, 2021) and other comedy practices presented by John Oliver (Peifer, 2018), Stephen Colbert (Waisanen & Becker, 2020), and Samantha Bee (Kaye, 2020). In addition to the US, political parodies have also been widely carried out, such as clown-dress parodies by a group of activists in Finland (Laaksonen, Koivukoski, & Porttikivi, 2022), socio-political resistance content through YouTube video content in Singapore (Abidin, 2021), to satirical images and memes circulating during the Nigerian election (Uzuegbunam, 2020).

In Indonesia, political parodies have been widely performed and received various responses. Some welcomed it as a form of freedom of expression, such as the comedy show *Sentilan Sentilun* broadcasted by *Metro TV* (M. Busairi, 2023), cartoon illustrations in various online media (Nugraha, 2022), and puns on acronyms of social criticism that are widely circulated in society (Jupriono, Rochim, & Hakim, 2023). In addition, there have also been strong reactions to political parodies in Indonesia—even to the point of being reported to the police— such as the case of editing a photo of the 5th President of Indonesia, Megawati Soekarnoputri, wearing a bikini (Faisol & Kurniati, 2023), to editing a photo of President Joko Widodo to resemble the stupa of Borobudur Temple (Noviansah, 2022). Sympathizers of political opponents often report visual parodies of political figures to maintain the dignity of their favorite figures based on defamation.

However, a different condition occurs in a community that emulates the values of the struggle of the 4th former president of Indonesia, Abdurrahman Wahid (familiarly called Gus Dur), called GUSDURian. In this community that often emulates Gus Dur's traits, the figure of the role model is frequently parodied by its members with unique and eccentric visuals. Some forms of Gus Dur's visual parodies include being associated with popular culture characters such as *Naruto, One Piece, The Simpsons, Spider-Man,* etc. In addition to resembling popular culture characters, Gus Dur is also often parodied wearing attributes that follow the context of current developments, such as the COVID-19 pandemic, the 2020 UEFA European Championship, and the 2021 Chinese New Year celebrations.

The visual parody of Gus Dur certainly requires its strategy to raise awareness and increase audience appeal without reducing the substantial values contained therein. Several previous studies have shown that using strategy in creating visual communication has increased content engagement, as has been done by various media (Ang, Yeo, & Koran, 2023), brands (Made, Oktavia, & Julianto, 2024; Shannen & Tjandrawibawa, 2023), political figures (Mazzoni & Mincigrucci, 2022), and propaganda movements (Cui, 2023). Although Gus Dur is a political figure who once served as President of Indonesia, this study focuses more on the strategies used by GUSDURians in spreading the exemplary values possessed by Gus Dur to achieve noble goals in society, not for practical political interests.

Therefore, the question that can arise regarding this phenomenon is: what kind of visual communication strategies have been used by GUSDURian so that their parody of Gus Dur can have an impact and be well received by the audience? To determine the communication strategy, direct preferences are needed through in-depth interviews with GUSDURian members responsible for its creation. It is hoped that the results of this study can provide recommendations for communication strategy practitioners in creating visual communication works that can improve content synchronization and improve the quality of democracy of life characterized by tolerance and mutual respect.

RESEARCH METHOD

This study employs a qualitative method with data collection techniques through in-depth interviews to understand the communication strategies implemented by GUSDURian in creating visual parody content of Gus Dur. The focus of this research is to identify the supporting and inhibiting factors in the production process, referring to Onong Uchjana Effendy's theory, which includes audience recognition, media selection, purpose of creation, content appeal, and verification of the work's credibility (Effendy, 2003).

Primary data were collected through interviews with two main informants, namely staff from the research and publication division and another from the community development division of GUSDURian. Both informants were selected based on their active involvement and expertise in the content production process. The informant from the research and publication division served as the primary source. In contrast, the informant from the community development division served as a triangulation to validate the interview results from the first informant. Each informant's personal preferences can cause potential bias from creative decisions in creating parody content. Still, their active participation in GUSDURian can be an argument for the validity of the findings that can represent the values of the community being represented.
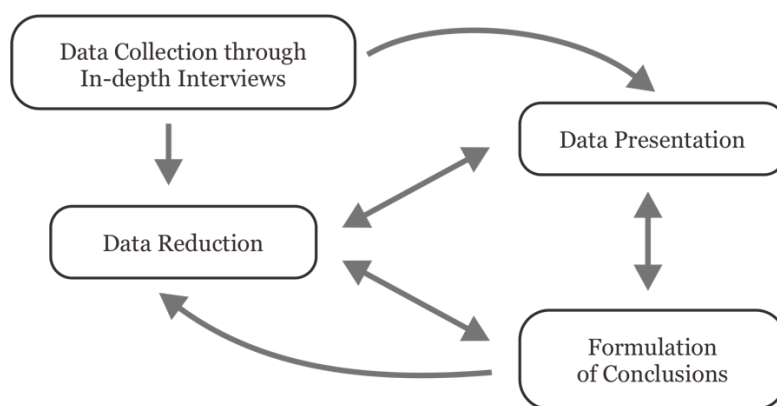

Figure 1. Data Collection and Data Analysis Process
source: authors' documentation

The data obtained after the interview were then analyzed through three stages: data reduction, data presentation, and formulation of conclusions. Data reduction is in the form of eliminating irrelevant or redundant information; data presentation is in the form of organizing research findings systematically; and formulation of conclusions is in the form of identifying key patterns, which are then summarized to obtain actionable insights (Miles & Huberman, 2018). An overview of the data collection and analysis process can be seen in the flowchart in Figure 1.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

MZ *weebs* as the target audience

Millennials and Generation Z (MZ) are the target audiences of Gus Dur's parody illustrations. This determination is based on their ability to connect with pop culture, which is currently being discussed online. Before the emergence of parody content, illustration content functioned more as examples in the form of quotes or social commentary on current issues. For example, the initial illustrations uploaded reminded members to emulate Gus Dur's attitude. One illustration was realized in the form of a quote accompanied by a cartoon visual of Gus Dur that re-depicted the moment when Gus Dur was impeached, and it contained a message about prioritizing humanity over politics. In addition to Gus Dur's quotes, there were also uploads in the form of social commentary related to viral humanitarian issues, such as environmental damage, natural disasters, the deaths of great figures, and so on. However, in the following period, the style of illustrations uploaded by the GUSDURian account changed to parody.

This shift towards parody began when the COVID-19 pandemic hit Indonesia in early 2020-2021. Almost everyone stayed at home to avoid the spread of the virus. The MZ generation was the most affected (Asikin, 2021). Meanwhile, Generation X, as the dominant group in the workforce, still had to go to the office while adhering to strict health protocols due to work demands that could not be done remotely (McDonough, 2021). MZ, who were predominantly at home during the quarantine period, experienced limitations in their activities and felt lonely, which caused them to look for alternative activities. Many then watched films, series, and

animations on streaming platforms to fill their activities and channel parasocial interactions (Shariffadeen, Manaf, & Chan, 2023). One of the most popular types of entertainment during the pandemic was animated series from Japan, better known as "anime" (Thornton, 2021). At that time, watching anime, which was previously limited to fans of Japanese pop culture, became a mainstream activity that most MZ people widely carried out.

When the GUSDURian Instagram account uploaded an illustration related to anime, unexpected enthusiasm emerged from several of its followers. Initially, GUSDURian uploaded an illustration inviting discussion about the phenomenon of full-time dads, which was widely discussed then. The illustration shows a man holding a baby while giving him milk with a bottle. The illustration looks ordinary at first glance, but there are several details that only anime fans can recognize, namely the headband worn by the fictional character named Naruto and the milk bottle that says "Zeke." Naruto is a character from the popular anime series *Naruto,* known for his distinctive headband. Zeke, whose full name is Zeke Yager, is a character from the anime series *Attack on Titan,* which has a story connection with the giant *"Titan."*

Several followers recognized these references and commented on them in the comments column. One of the comments read, *"The admin also turns out to be a* weeb (a term for fans of Japanese pop culture)*," "Auto becomes a* Titan *baby,"* and *"Does the baby become a* Titan*?".* Quite a few of the followers of the GUSDURian account understand things about anime. This has started from the increasingly mainstream viewing of anime caused by the emergence of alternative activities during quarantine. These responses then became considerations for the GUSDURian account manager in determining the theme of their following content. The research and publication staff said:

> *"During the pandemic, many young people were doing anime marathons at home. Since it was popular, we posted content related to anime. Unexpectedly, many of our followers noticed these references. Then we thought: 'What if we create content that contains anime again?' It seems that this is quite provoking a response from our followers."*

If illustrated in the form of a chart, the flow of determining parodies with anime references can be explained in Figure 2 below:
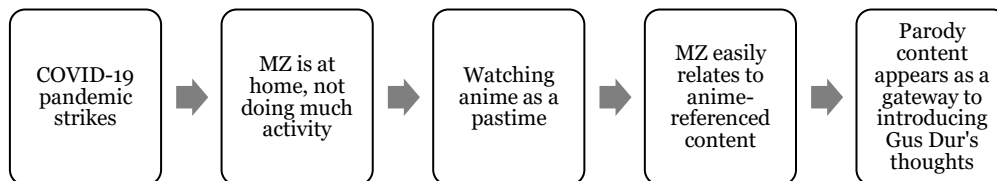

Figure 2. Anime decision-making flow as a parody reference
source: authors' documentation

In the next content, the GUSDURian account again uploaded anime-themed content. This time, they conveyed a humanitarian message through the moral story of the anime *Attack on Titan.* In the upload, GUSDURian explained the moral message of the importance of loving each other, which stems from the conflicts between nations, as depicted in the fictional nations called *Eldia* and *Marley.* In the upload, the response from followers was quite positive, and many felt connected. This is reflected in the comments that mention the sentences *"Shinzou wo sasageyo"* and *"sasageyo,"* which are exclamations in the anime *Attack on Titan,* which means "offer your heart." In addition, there is also a joke from one of the comments that mentions the name *"Gus Eren,"* which is an acculturation of two elements: *"Gus,"* which is a respectful greeting for a figure in the *Nahdlatul Ulama* (the Islamic ideology adopted by Gus Dur) tradition, and the name Eren, the main character in the anime *Attack on Titan.*

The first parody that depicted Gus Dur appeared in July 2021, at the peak of the COVID-19 pandemic in Indonesia. In the illustration, Gus Dur is shown as if he is still alive and wearing a mask as an example for his followers to follow the recommended health protocols. In addition to wearing a mask, Gus Dur is parodied as if he is attending the UEFA EURO 2020 event by asking who will win while wearing jerseys from two different teams. Parodies of Gus Dur wearing a

mask appeared again at the Islamic New Year celebration in August 2021, when the number of COVID-19 cases was still high.

Figure 3. First parody with anime Naruto reference
Source: @jaringangusdurian Instagram

The first parody, strongly influenced by anime and uploaded by GUSDURian, came from a submission from a follower who won second place in a graphic competition organized by GUSDURian. In the illustration (Figure 3), Gus Dur is parodied as one of the *Hokage*, or village leaders in the anime *Naruto,* named Minato Namikaze. In Indonesian internet culture, Indonesian presidents are often associated with Hokage due to various unintentional similarities, one of which is the figure of Gus Dur and Minato Namikaze, who both served as the 4th President/*Hokage* (Lantiva, 2023). Uniquely, this illustration received the most likes of the three works that won the competition, reaching around 7000. This shows that the audience of the GUSDURian Network is currently dominated by the MZ generation, which understands many references to Japanese pop culture.

Figure 4. Parody with Spider-Man film reference
Source: @jaringangusdurian Instagram

In addition to Japanese pop culture, the GUSDURian account also tries to create parody illustrations of American pop culture (Figure 4). In the illustration, Gus Dur is shown wearing a *Spider-Man* superhero costume from the *Marvel Cinematic Universe*. The figure of Gus Dur is parodied to resemble the promotional media illustration from the film *Spider-Man: Far From Home,* which was parodied as *"Durrahman: Far From Home."* The illustration informs that Gus Dur was also once far from his home country, Indonesia, when he studied in various cities abroad. In addition, there is also a parody of American pop culture in the form of Gus Dur illustrated in the animation style of *The Simpsons* for a cover that explains information about one of Gus Dur's thoughts.

The parody illustration used by GUSDURian functions as a trigger for the attention of the MZ audience by utilizing things that are currently viral and relevant to their lives during the pandemic. After their attention is captured, GUSDURian then deeply explains the legacy of Gus Dur's thoughts on current humanitarian issues.

This approach using anime has also been used several times by teachers in elementary schools in Indonesia as an effective, creative, and exciting learning medium during the COVID-19 outbreak (Hartatik, Mariati, & Rahayu, 2024).

Meanwhile, by GUSDURian, this approach is designed to ensure that the MZ generation remains aware and sensitive to humanitarian issues around them by the ideals of Gus Dur's thoughts while also considering the unique preferences of this generation in determining the future of the nation they will inherit.

Priority on visual platforms

In determining the media used, the staffs has prepared a mood board as a reference and parody content posted simultaneously on three leading social media platforms: Facebook, Instagram, and X (formerly Twitter). However, Facebook has become less well-maintained over time because the admin in charge has left the platform. On the other hand, MZ's audience now uses Instagram and X more, with Instagram dominating that age group. Facebook, now often referred to as "social media for Boomers," is slowly being abandoned by its young audience. GUSDURian also follows this trend by migrating to Instagram and X to reach new audiences. This is as conveyed by the community development division staff as follows:

> *"We have three main social media platforms: Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter. As time passes, the admins who hold the accounts are also getting younger. So, Facebook accounts are often neglected because they are not very popular with them. According to the admins, Facebook is filled with 'boomers' whose communication is less relatable to young people. In addition, Instagram and Twitter have restrictions on long written content, so image content is more popular on the two platforms."*

Audience growth on Instagram is higher than that of other social media platforms. The staffs believes that the appeal of visual content on Instagram is more effective and easily captured by their followers. In the context of aesthetics, Instagram supports the creation of a strong brand identity, making it easier for the audience to recognize and be interested in the content produced. For example, Gus Dur's image as a humanist figure can be maintained through relevant parodies even though he passed away a long time ago. In addition, parody content on Instagram has proven effective in shaping the image of other political figures, such as the case of Brazilian President Jair Bolsonaro, who was able to present himself as a populist who holds an important position as head of state (Mendonça & Caetano, 2021).

Instagram has also become an effective place to express humor and parody during the pandemic, as many of its users did in the hashtag *#CovidEaster*, where people who wanted to celebrate Easter during quarantine then took the initiative to create humorous visual content to foster a sense of togetherness and connectedness (Predojević, 2023).

In addition, the dominance of MZ's audience on Instagram positively impacts interactions with content containing anime references. On this platform, the responses received are lively and cheerful. Some followers even interacted privately with the admin, asking if they were fans of Japanese pop culture or just following the trends. This interaction is often not found on Facebook and is mainly filled with an older audience.

Although audience growth on Facebook tends to stagnate, some content is still uploaded on this platform when there is an issue that various groups are widely discussing. For example, the "childfree" phenomenon was the talk of Indonesian netizens in February 2023. GUSDURian participated in this discussion by uploading parody content on all platforms. By carrying the trend of viral topics, this content managed to attract attention on all platforms, including Facebook, which excels in providing extended comment features and preview links that help create more comprehensive discussions.

The dominance of MZ's audience on Instagram and X does not eliminate the importance of a severe process of content creation. Specific strategies are still needed to gradually convey Gus Dur's thoughts so that the resulting content can reach the audience more effectively and relevantly. First, the GUSDURian staffs needs to recognize the characteristics of popular content on both platforms. After understanding that visual content and short captions are its characteristics, they choose an issue currently being widely discussed to be used as bait so that the uploaded content can feel relevant and easily shared by the audience. At this stage, parody content plays an important role. Gus Dur is illustrated so that it is relevant

to current issues, attracts the attention of potential audiences, and motivates them to learn more about the values inherited by Gus Dur.

Although the expansion of GUSDURian's parody illustration content works very well on Instagram and X, TikTok is one platform they still have not needed to maximize. The GUSDURian staffs is still learning how the TikTok algorithm works, emphasizing short videos to make content go viral. With the rapid growth of TikTok among Generation Z, the GUSDURian staffs, mainly from the Millennial generation, hopes that the subsequent management will be able to master the creation of short video content. GUSDURian's expansion to TikTok is becoming increasingly important, especially with the increasing attention to the high level of misinformation messages (Bautista, Alonso-López, & Giacomelli, 2021; Southerton & Clark, 2023), hate speech (González-aguilar, Segado-boj, & Makhortykh, 2023; Jacques, Basch, Fera, & Jones, 2023; Weimann & Masri, 2023), and the promotion of unhealthy lifestyles (Brooks et al., 2022) on this platform. The presence of the GUSDURian account on TikTok is expected to bring positive energy to the humanitarian field as an antidote to the adverse effects that some people complain about.

Parody as bait

As previously stated, creating parody illustrations of Gus Dur was used as an initial strategy to increase engagement on social media. With the increasing role of visual content on social media, responsible clickbait with attractive images has become increasingly common as a tool to maximize engagement (Jain, Mowar, Goel, & Vishwakarma, 2021). In this context, user engagement is critical, so creating an emotional connection with the audience is essential. These parody images are intended to provoke responses from the audience, who may think that people in the GUSDURian Network have up-to-date and relevant preferences for the current era. This is as conveyed by the research and publication staff, who said:

> *"We intentionally use these parodies just for bait. Hopefully, if the audience feels relatable, they will say: 'How come the admin understands?' or 'Wow, his/her preferences are the same as mine!' Once their attention is successfully hooked, we will give them more profound understanding."*

This similarity of preferences encourages potential audiences interested in the parody content to follow the GUSDURian account and regularly participate in the discussions presented. Thus, Gus Dur's legacy of thought can be channeled to new generations. For example, a parody illustration of Gus Dur in a style that resembles *The Simpsons* cartoon (Figure 5) is used as a hook in the opening slide to explain one of his famous quotes, *"Tuhan tidak perlu dibela"* or in English it says *"God does not need to be defended."* Through this content, the GUSDURian staffs attempts to explain the quote's origins, initially intended to highlight the priority of defending oppressed minority groups in Indonesia.

Figure 5. Parody with The Simpsons reference; used as content bait
Source: @jaringangusdurian Instagram

Some content with parody as bait increased engagement significantly. However, some sparked serious discussions, such as in the parody of a happy "childfree" family sticker attached to the back of a car. In the content, the sticker that usually depicts a happy family consisting of a pair of parents and their children is now depicted as a married couple without children. The discussion from the content sparked a serious discussion about the Islamic view of childfree. In this context, the content functions as a discussion trigger, creating a healthy dialogue.

Although the concept of childfree in Islam is still being debated, the arguments that emerge reflect the diversity of views within this religion. Content about childfree has become a hot topic of discussion because many people discuss it from the perspective of Western feminism, which is often considered to be contrary to the

Islamic values adhered to by the majority of people in Indonesia. Thus, the discussion about childfree is a theological debate and touches on broader social and cultural aspects. The main purpose of these parody contents is to spark discussion and open up dialogue space for various views to produce a richer and more comprehensive understanding among followers of GUSDURian social media accounts.

Relevant issues to make them interesting

To increase the appeal of parody content and attract new audiences, the GUSDURian staffs felt the need to ensure the content was relevant to the current social situation. This relevance is significant because it helps create a connection with topics being discussed and paid attention to by the audience daily. When an issue is being widely discussed, participating can increase engagement and make it easier for content to enter the trending topic. This campaign strategy that enters through issue relevance—or what is known as riding-the-wave—has been used several times by political figures and parties such as in Germany (Haßler, Wurst, Pohl, & Kruschinski, 2024), Norway (Magin, Larsson, Skogerbø, & Tønnesen, 2024), Austria, France, Italy, the Netherlands, and the UK (De Sio & Weber, 2020). However, unlike political parties and figures in Europe, the campaign carried out by GUSDURian was intended purely as a form of national political education, not as a practical politics to gain votes. Although riding-the-wave has been quite successful in attracting attention, GUSDURian still tries to hold on to its core values without being too influenced by the wishes of the majority of the audience. The community development division staff conveyed this:

> *"Riding on a hot topic is undoubtedly an effective tactic in generating engagement. However, our team still adheres to Gus Dur's values without always following all the current trends being widely discussed. So, not all trends can be freely followed. We still have value guidelines."*

As the popularity of short videos on social media increases, summarizing content to make it easier for users to digest is one of the strategies GUSDURian is considering for their following content. Although the primary goal of this strategy is to attract the audience's attention as an initial step before introducing content

with a deeper context, GUSDURian realizes that short videos are the future of social media content that they need to study more seriously. On several occasions, they have met with social media activists and professional content creators, who emphasized the importance of following the rules of short video content such as those on TikTok, Reels, and Shorts to stay relevant in the new social media era dominated by Generation Z. Currently, the GUSDURian staffs is still in the process of studying this strategy, as well as collaborating to ensure that their message can be conveyed well. Shortly, they plan to map out potential content creators to work with, and in the past two months, they have conducted social media training that includes materials about TikTok.

On Instagram, the main attraction remains focused on visuals. Visuals serve as a compelling hook to attract the audience's attention. For the audience to be interested in reading the content until the end, the content must be related to current issues. For example, when *Attack on Titan* was a hot topic, using elements from this anime in the content could be an effective strategy to attract attention.

Screenshots, animations, and other visual elements often create relatable content while maintaining relevance to GUSDURian's values. Usually, more complex and researched content will be published first on X before finally being shared on Instagram.

After the pandemic, GUSDURian staffs predicts that audience preferences will be divided, and the popularity of pop culture from animation may begin to decline, although the Japanese government still emphasizes its commitment to promoting their pop culture (Futaesaku, 2023; Sato & Akilli, 2023). Outdoor activities such as concerts are starting to become popular again, and this can be a reference for new hooks for GUSDURian when creating the following content. The preferences of account holders and the team involved in content creation also influence the direction of the content created. Whatever is trending will be used as a hook to attract the audience's attention so that GUSDURian's messages and values can be conveyed more easily.

Verification from experts

In creating parody content about Gus Dur, verification is a crucial step taken by the GUSDURian staffs. For example, when making a parody containing a quote, the source must be stated to reduce the risk of using an invalid quote. Many of Gus Dur's quotes are widely known and often quoted by many people. As long as the substance of the quote is excellent and valuable, GUSDURian tends not to make corrections. They can analogize this to the massive famous Islamic quote, *"Cleanliness is part of faith,"* which, although its origin is unclear and may not have been uttered by the Prophet Muhammad, still contains undoubted good values. Likewise with Gus Dur's quotes, as long as the illustrations used are relevant to current conditions and provide positive benefits for many people, they are accepted without much change.

Although GUSDURian admins and content creators have been selected based on their skills and broad insights, they still have limitations. On social media, the GUSDURian network is often "forced" to understand various issues, so verification through experts is vital. This step is taken to minimize errors that can lead to blunders. Content verification is carried out through several layers that allow input from various experts. For example, for sensitive content such as gender issues, GUSDURian has members from Indonesian Women's Ulama Congress/*Kongres Ulama Perempuan Indonesia (KUPI)*. For democracy issues, they involve members who are also part of the *National Human Rights Commission Commissioners*, and for environmental issues, they work with environmental activists in their network. Before content is published, content creators always coordinate with relevant experts to ensure the suitability of data, references, and terms used. The content verification flow can be illustrated in Figure 6 below:
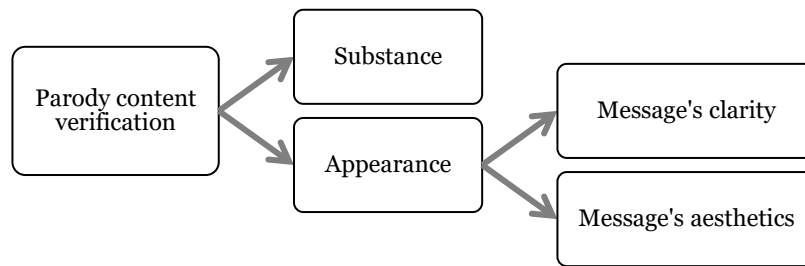
Figure 6. Parody content verification flow
source: authors' documentation

Issues that tend to be easy to verify are issues related to women because many GUSDURian members are active in this field, including well-known figures such as Kalis Mardiasih (writer and influencer) and Nur Rofiah (lecturer at a state Islamic university in Indonesia). Both figures widely recognize gender knowledge regarding ability and depth of insight. The draft content is usually consulted first with experts in the field. This was conveyed by the research and publication staff:

"Before the content is uploaded, we verify it first, of course. Fortunately, many GUSDURian staff are active in communities and institutions in various fields. Most are in KUPI. So, to verify content about gender, we have famous figures such as Kalis Mardiasih and Nur Rofiah who can be asked for advice."

Reviewing and consulting on the draft parody content is essential for the GUSDURian staffs. However, Gus Dur's family and friends generally do not have a problem and tend to support using parody content. This is necessary because some parties believe the imagery of a religious figure like Gus Dur is unethical. Several GUSDURian staffs have even received reprimands from their spiritual teachers regarding the visualization of Gus Dur, which is too eccentric. To avoid this, GUSDURian also held meetings and in-depth discussions before executing the parody content. For example, in the merchandise illustration depicting Gus Dur with an appearance and style that resembles Monkey D. Luffy from the anime *One Piece* (Figure 7), several changes were made to conform to traditional Indonesian norms, such as depicting Gus Dur wearing a tightly buttoned shirt, different from Luffy's original appearance which is more open. This change was made to respect local cultural values in representing the visual of a religious figure.

Figure 7. Parody with One Piece anime reference in one of the merchandise
Source: @jaringangusdurian Instagram

The verification of the parody content draft by the GUSDURian staffs was carried out to maintain social sensitivity amidst the increasing polarization in Indonesia. Over the past few years, polarization has been exacerbated by the massive spread of hate speech, especially related to politics and religion, which often leads to black campaigns. This condition causes communal anxiety in the community that begins with personal anxiety due to hate speech on social media (Syahputra, 2019).

Through this verification process, GUSDURian strives to maintain a peaceful atmosphere in public spaces, especially on social media, by avoiding content that can potentially worsen the situation and adhering to the principle of social responsibility.

After the parody draft is approved, the visual content is created with consideration from members who understand visual communication, including design elements, principles, and typography. Sometimes, the content is made simple without consulting a design expert, using a plain background so that the message to be conveyed can be received with focus by the audience. The use of fonts, between serif and sans-serif, is also chosen as the standard to convey the information

contained therein. The readability level of the content is tested using the smallest mobile phone screen size; if the text can be read well on the mobile phone screen, then the font selection is considered appropriate. This readability level testing is significant, especially when fonts outside of serif and sans-serif, such as handwritten, are needed for aesthetic purposes. In this case, designers must be careful in choosing variations of handwritten fonts and testing them on small-screen mobile phones (Bratić, Loknar, & Ivančević, 2022). That way, the substance of the message is still conveyed clearly while maintaining its aesthetic value that can touch the audience's emotions.

CONCLUSION

The results of this study indicate that GUSDURian has succeeded in creating a humorous and responsible parody of Gus Dur without eliminating the essence of the nation's teachers' thoughts, which are prone to being misinterpreted and potentially causing controversy amidst the political conditions in Indonesia. To remain relevant in the era of ever-evolving media, their visual communication strategy must also continue to adapt so that various generations can receive the message conveyed.

The results of this study are expected to provide implications for other communication strategy practitioners in balancing creativity and responsibility when designing ethical parody content relevant to the younger generation and able to preserve values without causing controversy. In addition, this study is also expected to encourage further studies that explore similar communities that play a role in preserving and inheriting the thoughts of other great figures who have made valuable contributions to the Indonesian nation. With their existence, these noble thoughts can continue to live, be relevant, and become a guide in facing current and future challenges and enriching the intellectual treasures of Indonesia.

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