

On The Covers of Indonesia's Hai Magazine: A Visual Framing of Youth

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Abstract: - This article analyses how Hai magazine, one of the most established and iconic youth magazines in Indonesia, framed youth throughout its 40 years of publication. The study applies framing theory and design principles to examine how the magazine presented youth in general and, more specifically, in relations to designs through its covers. A content analysis of 50 covers total from 1977 to 2017 was performed, comparing several aspects concerning both the content of the magazine and the art design. Results showed that the evolution of Hai can be explained through 4 time phases that captured a dynamic use of images and graphics to define and represent the evolution of Indonesian youth.

Keywords: - Magazine Covers, Visual Framing, Indonesia, Youth, Designs, Culture

Introduction

Indonesia's Hai magazine has been in publication since 1977. Targeted specifically to teenage boys, the magazine has been instrumental in defining youth culture in Indonesia. Throughout the 40 years of its publications, the magazine has gone through different stages of evolution in terms of design and interpretation of youth cultures. Due to immense pressure coming from the internet and the digitization of media, Hai magazine had announced in June 2017 that it will cease its printed publication and focus instead on its online version. Despite this change in platform the magazine is still a significant media as it continues to offer contents that are contemporary, modern and attractive to the young. However, some see the Hai's existence as contested and unique because it is fundamentally a liberal and secular magazine that sits within a conservatively Muslim society. Indonesia is home to the world's largest Muslim population. While the country is generally secular, it's culture and traditions are predominantly Islamic. Therefore the role of popular media in designing cultures especially among the youth is an interesting area of study. As such, Hai magazine offers a good case to

Understand the relationship between magazines, designs and youth culture.

Literature Review

Since the introduction of photography and printing technology, visual images especially on magazine covers have created and promoted ideals, trends and gave rise to celebrity cultures. The power to shape and influence perceptions that comes with visual images has increased the importance placed on visuals as framing devices (Mohamed and Azzman, 2017). Framing in this sense refers to how strategic use of visual imageries is used for specific purposes. According to Rodriguez & Dimitrova, 2011, framing study is the most appropriate for analyzing how the visual elements on magazine covers act as symbolic tools for representing ideals within a culture. It is the front cover of a magazine that attracts people's interest and curiosity to discover the meaning offered behind the cover lines and the captivating images. The appeal factor of a magazine cover increases readership and this had made the study on covers more appealing (Held, 2005). Therefore, examining the design elements and overall images on the covers of Hai reveals not only what magazine designers believe visually

entices the reader to pick up the magazine but also how the magazine frames its concerns. In general, frame analysis is an organization of experiences that people process in their minds. Reese (2001) stated that frames mainly serve as systematic tool that manages ideas. Readers learn about themselves and others within and outside their circle through frames. However, media frames alone cannot create positive and negative impressions on a reader (Reese, 2001), the effects of framing also depend on many other factors like cultures, traditions and values that influence the way in which the reader make sense what he or she sees and reads.

Images direct a reader's attention and assist the reader to understand more accurately about realities of a situation because it is effective in mitigating emotional responses from an audience (Lester, 2005). Today, the development of media technologies have increased the numbers and varied the forms of visual images present all around the world. Messages on mass media for example, must have an equal balance of literal text with attractive and meaningful visuals. Thus visual artists and graphic designers must know that the most relevant elements of images are those that enhance or mitigate certain consequences (Messaris and Abraham, 2001). Thus readers are encouraged to pay closer attention to visuals as framing devices within the media and how this affects the way an audience interprets the messages.

Although research on framing tends to focus on texts and words, visualized interpretations of a story are equally in telling a story or explaining a piece of news. Rodriguez & Dimitrova (2011) explained that actually visual framing is even more significant in understanding the ways media frame an event or issue to the public. Regardless of whether a message is textual or visual, all messages in the media have literal and symbolic components (Lester, 2005) that can affect the visual communication of images in used in the media.

Widyokusumo (2012) argues that the magazine cover is the strength of a magazine and becomes the initial communication to the intended customer regarding the content available in the magazine. Designing a magazine cover not only requires

creativity, but also expertise in visual communication. What is presented on the cover can determine whether a passerby decides to buy the magazine. Held (2005) stated that the cover is a magazine's most important selling tool. Therefore, magazine publishers depend on a cover's self-promotion as a means of gaining readership (Held, 2005). Thus, a magazine cover must be attractive, expressive, and representative in creating a sense of identity. There are many elements that help accentuate the cover image include graphics, editing, layout, lighting effects, text designs and an engaging caption. The cover's design should be distinguishable from other magazines so that it could attract the reader to look inside the pages, and represent the magazine's ideas and contents (Widyokusumo, 2012). The magazine focused on in this study, Hai, is known for some of its distinct design choices that have dynamically evolved throughout the 40 years it was on publication.

According to Feixa and Nofre (2012) 'youth cultures' refer to the way in which young people's social experiences are expressed collectively through the construction of differentiating lifestyles, mainly in their leisure time, or in available spaces in the institutional life. More specifically, the term explains the creations of 'youth micro-societies', that are very much distanced and independent from the 'adult institutions' is the established status quo at a particular time and context. Historically, the theorization and scholarship on youth cultures originated from the western countries after the Second World War, in response to the significant development of social change in the economic, educational, labour and ideological areas. Youth cultures are mostly visible in the expressions of spectacular, unique and even rebellious youth styles that effect large groups of young people. The term 'cultures' is used in order to avoid the sense of diversion given to the term 'subculture'.

The plural term 'youth cultures' is more widely used and effective in explaining the different ways youth express their identities as opposed to the singular 'youth culture' which implies a homogeneous way of looking at how young people live their lives. Feixa and Nofre (2012) further claimed that this terminological change to a more

homogeneous approach implies also a diversion in the way to study and learn about young people, transferring the emphasis from marginalization to identity, from appearance to strategy, from spectacular events to daily life, from delinquency to leisure time, from images to actors. Young people are often dynamic and always looking for new ideas and interests. Therefore they do not usually identify with only a single style, instead they are easily influenced by many, and they often mix and match different ideas and create a style that is unique to their personalities. Because of this, youth cultures can be analysed from two perspectives: from the perspective of social conditions (generation, gender, class, ethnic and territorial identities); and from the perspective of cultural images, understood as the set of ideological and symbolic attributes (trends, music, language, cultural practice and focal activities) assigned to young people or taken by them.

This article takes on the second perspective that look into youth cultures as the set of ideological and symbolic attributes. Through this understanding, media in general and Hai magazine in specific assign to young people ideas and values that are distinct from the older generations. These ideas and values presented through images and texts inform the youth about lifestyles and trends such as music and fashion that inherently become part of youth identity. Therefore, this article will explicate the relationship between media, visual images and youth culture through the study of Hai magazine. To do this the study asks:

1. How have the covers of Hai magazine evolved from 1977 to 2017?
2. How did the covers of Hai magazine framed the image of 'youth' throughout 1977-2017?

Methodology

This research studied how Hai, a teenage magazine, visually framed symbols of youth on its front covers and how these symbols have evolved together with the changes of the magazine's cover designs. This study examined a series of Hai covers through a combined quantitative and qualitative analysis. Through a visual analysis, the covers framing of youth were analyzed through the different use of

design elements. These elements include the person depicted on the cover, the image as a whole, and the overall way in which the symbol was portrayed.

Visual Framing on Hai Covers

Hai is an Indonesian magazine targeted at teenage boys. According to Sokowati (2016) Hai magazine first published on January 5 1977. Until now Hai still exists in the magazine industry in Indonesia. By targeting the youth segment, Hai offers a typical teen lifestyle. Hai is a unique product because it is the only male teenage magazine in Indonesia. As a magazine for teenage boys, Hai helped define the ideas of male teenagers. Hai magazine has a large role in offering teenage forms of masculinity in its articles. Its contents concern all matters relating to adolescents. Because of that, Hai contains all articles related to lifestyle. Ranging from music, film, education, hangout, fashion, technology, sports, psychology, sex education, and of course short stories and comics. Hai has four main contents, namely entertainment, art, school life, and entrepreneurship.

Since magazine covers are this study's main unit of analysis, it is important to apply a qualitative approach in evaluating the ways in which the ideas and symbols that represent youth cultures were visually presented through images, styles and design elements. In the main observational analysis, the complete cover image was first analyzed. The visual details of each of the covers were then studied, including the use of colors, the cover title, the design elements, textual styles and the figure featured on the cover. This is then followed by a combination of observation, historical and textual analysis that will appropriate the effects of how the images frame youth cultures within the Indonesian context. Looking at the covers from a design perspective emphasized Hai's particular stylistic choices and provided insight into the visual meaning of youth identity. In addition, the brief introductory paragraphs that accompanied each cover on Hai's website were read for context in order to gain a better understanding of the meaning behind the cover image and the person or object depicted.

Research findings

The research findings found that the evolution of Hai magazine covers and its representation of youth can be chronologically grouped into the 4 decades it was in publication. These phases were aptly categorized based on the design trend it followed which were the Illustration phase (1977-1987), celebrity phase (1988-1997), graphic phase (1998-2007) and the last, Remixed phase (2008-2017). In each of these phases, the magazine covers applied distinct design elements that were attributed by the time in which they were published. Each phase was unique in the sense that the cover designs followed

specific trends that were different from the other phases. Each phase also represented the kind of culture that was being promoted to the Indonesian youth. To better articulate the findings, each phase will be explained through the two main contexts problematized in the two research questions which are: design evolution (RQ1) and framing of youth (RQ2). Design evolution discusses the visual characteristics of the magazine covers while the framing of youth qualitatively assesses how the images on the covers from youth culture.

The Illustration Phase (1977-1987)



Figure 1: Examples of Hai's cover during the Illustration Phase (1977-1987)

Design evolution: in the early years of its publication, the designs of Hai covers were very traditional as it mainly used hand-drawn illustrations. The covers appeared dark and blunt due to the limited use of publication and graphic technologies at the time. The illustrations were not sharp, as high definition printing did not support it. The look and feel of the magazine during this time was very much influenced by the comic genre. It is also interesting to observe that the characters featured in the illustrations were of white, Caucasian figures. This indicated that the images used at the time were not representative of its audiences. This is also typical of early magazines in developing countries such as Indonesia. These countries often imported and internalized ideas from the western countries that had advanced media technologies and content. The magazine's masthead used a simple text design with a simple selling line 'majalah remaja' or translated as 'teen magazine'.

Framing of youth: Hai's first edition in the 1977 consisted only 36 pages. The contents were

dominantly comic-based. Some of the more famous comic titles were Pendekar Trigana, Arad & Maya, Si Rambut Merah. Then came the comic strip komik Coki si Pelukis Cepat. Comics had a strong global appeal at that time, more so in Indonesia. The 1970s to the mid-80s were considered as the heyday of Indonesian comics. But this so called 'golden age' glorified the proliferation of locally produced copies: Chinese legends, foreign adventure stories and heroes, and wayang tales. Most of these were politically neutral with no connection to the concerns of contemporary Indonesian society (Berman, 2005). As such, Hai was mostly propagating and polarizing cultures that was debased from the traditional local cultures. The comics presented images of foreign figures hence exposing their young readers to different cultures and creating new youth cultures that were appropriating local and imported values.

While Indonesian comics were in their golden age, the western comics were already in the Bronze which lasted from the 1970s until 1985. The

primary characteristic of this time period was the darker storylines that dealt with real-world issues like drugs, violence, and alcoholism. Superheroes from minority backgrounds were first featured during this time period. The common art style changed to incorporate more realism (Russell, 2013). This development in the west also influenced the visual imageries incorporated in Hai' covers as they portrayed issues that were considered sensitive to the locals especially among the elders. This again formed new ideas in which the youth are supposed to be more open in facing and talking about darker issues.

The later editions of the magazine during this phase started to include more variety of contents such as fictions and poetry. Starting from translation works from international writers such as Guy de Maupassant's and Leo Tolstoy to local series of like

Imung Detektif Cilik and Kiki dan Komplotannya by Arswendo Atmowiloto. Some famous Indonesian writers and short writers also contributed to the contents of Hai magazine. Several novels were also included in Hai magazines such as novels written by Leila S. Chudori, and Hilman Hariwijaya. Likewise, Butet Kartarejasa contributed some of his poetry works, which were packed in the form of a poetry collection book entitled Sajak Ikan Asin as a bonus. Periodically Hai presents a Special Edition that varies its contents. Starting from comics, history, to other general knowledge. Through this variation of content, Hai introduced Indonesian youth to a world of literature and poetry that were about the desires and aspirations of young people.

The Celebrity Phase (1988-1997)



Figure 2: Examples of Hai's cover during the Celebrity Phase (1988-1997)

Design evolution: Hai went through a significant design change from the previous phase instead of using hand-drawn illustrations, the magazine they began to use photos of celebrities. The availability of photo editing and image manipulation technologies attributed to this development. The background also started to include patterns and bright colors making it more attractive to the readers. More cover lines that hinted the content of the magazine were included. Also included were cover credits where names the celebrities on the cover were mentioned. This shift in design saw Hai entering a more modern approach to magazine publication.

Framing of youth: When the comic era began to decline, the trend in Indonesia began to switch to audiovisual. This trend can be seen from the many

rentals of compact disks or CDs in various cities in Indonesia. People began to like some Mandarin martial arts movies, such as Silkworm Swordsman. The martial arts movies trend was also recorded in the addition of a rubric in Hai magazine. The increased demand for audiovisual and electronic media propelled the dominance of celebrity culture. American music and Hollywood became the prominent influence. Magazines like Hai banked in on the audiences' interest in the lives of celebrities. For example, during this time, Hai was known promote concerts of foreign artists and even held competitions that would bring the readers to international concerts abroad. In 1988, Hai managed to interview Mick Jagger at his concert in Sydney Australia. Although Hai maintains to be a teenage magazine, many at the time saw it to move more towards music and entertainment. As such Hai

gravitated from predominantly featuring fictional content to gossips and lifestyle features. This phase saw Hai propagating the entertainment culture in which the young idolized local and international

celebrities that were selling insignificant lifestyle trends over more pressing issues that affect the local communities such as poverty and crime.

The Graphic Phase (1998-2007)



Figure 3: Examples of Hai's cover during the Graphic Phase (1998-2007)

Design evolution: the Graphic Phase saw Hai Magazine truly entering the modern publication age. The covers were sharper and more vibrant. The selling line “majalah remaja pria (Teenage Boys Magazine)” is now more targeted toward a specific group of readers. The logo change looked more relaxed and informal. The inclusion of more graphics increased the appeal of the covers. At this stage, Hai was still featuring celebrities on the cover. However, the emphasis was given on local Indonesian artists. This may be attributed to the booming of the Indonesian entertainment industry at the time.

Framing of youth: The 1990s were the peak era of the story series in Hai magazine. Many talented young writers have sprung up and started their writing careers in Hai since the late 1980s. Stories or series such as "Lupus", "Balada si Roy ", "Anak-anak Mama Alin" are some of the popular ones. As the name Hilman Hariwijaya, Gola Gong, Bubin Lantang appeared on the surface. Moreover, several story series in Hai were later appointed in novels, television series and films. In addition to the story series, there is also a continuous martial art story "Senopati Pamungkas" by Arswendo Atmowiloto which was later recorded in dozens of novel volumes.

Hai passed a 30-year period as a teenage male magazine on January 5, 2007. The content was becoming more varied focusing especially on lifestyle and entertainment. If in the beginning Hai only published 36 pages, in the 2000s, Hai appeared with 80 pages thick and full color. As a senior magazine and the only one in the youth magazine segment, Hai continues to play his role in Indonesia's youth cultures. The talent search event in music such as "The Dream band" which was held from 2004 to 2006 for example, is one form of the magazines initiatives in creating a localized entertainment culture for their young readers. A significant change can also be seen in the language use (Smith-Hefner, 2007). Instead of using proper Indonesian dialect, the magazine started to use every day conversational speech style that included imported English words as well as everyday contemporary slangs. This is a move towards postmodern cultures that break away from strict traditional rules. The languages and images that are modern and disconnected from the conventional local customs are ways how magazines such as Hai propose ideas of individuality and rebellion among youths. Youth cultures than become unique through it's deviant from traditional norms. Being youthful means being modern and anti-orthodox.

The Remixed phase (2008-2017)



Figure 4: Examples of Hai's cover during the Remixed phase (2008-2016)

Design evolution: By the end of the first decade in the new millennium, Hai magazine have completely adopted the modern design principle. The magazine started to incorporate a more 'remixed' approach towards its cover designs. Remix culture allows and encourages derivative works by combining or editing existing materials to produce a new creative work or product. It defines the type of creative content we see in digital spaces today. From viral videos to music mash-ups and from news story voice-overs to memes. Remix culture is the epitome of postmodernism where internet facilitates the mixing and mashing of different media content with

philosophical ideals. Political discussion for example is no longer just confined to serious discussions among serious people but could come in the forms of memes and parodies. This change towards remix is evident in Hai's covers in the last years of its printed publication. There was complexity in the designs that used many techniques, such as shadowing, photo filled text, transparent, color mashing and many others. The images on the covers are also varied where elements of graphics were combined with illustrations, photography and texts.



Figure 5: Examples of Hai's cover in the final year of the Remixed phase (2016-2017)

However since the October 2016 edition Hai magazine made the final transformation of their design approach to Simple Minimalist design. This Simple Minimalist approach emerged from the development of Swiss / International Style Design

in 1950. This design emphasizes the use basic shape, straight line, effective space utilization, and harmonious colors. In this contemporary time, many websites, softwares, and mobile apps nowadays use this design approach for their user interface.



Figure 6: Hai's last cover on June 2017

Hai magazine published their June 2017 edition as their final physical print version before they move totally from printed platform to digital platform. In this edition, Hai magazine conveyed a farewell message on its cover by writing “We Need More Space”. The sentence gives a message to its readers that it needs wider space for their content in the future which will not be enough if they remained on printed platform.

Framing of youth: Information and digital technologies did not only influence the magazine's cover designs but also its approach towards the readers. The adoptions of remix technology also lead to the appropriation of remix culture. If in the previous Graphic Phase, contents and languages were already removed from traditional values, the remix phase saw a further hybridization of culture. By 2007, Hai magazine already had a strong presence online. In its online platform offered the readers to also become content contributors? Having its own social media also helped Hai to become constantly present in the lives of its readers. Hai readers are constantly fed with entertainment and lifestyle content from the magazines multiple platforms that include its printed version, online website (www.hai-online.com), mobile application (wap.hai-mob.com) and social media. Through its presence in various media, Hai promoted a new form of digital youth culture that allowed young people to build networks, channel their abilities and express opinions.

Responding to the decreasing viability of printed copies and the increasing demands for digital contents that are more diverse, interesting and easily accessed; HAI magazine officially stopped its

physical print version in June 2017. This move was significant indicated that Hai was indeed a magazine that is dynamic and responsive to its environment. To stay relevant in a world that is now mostly digital where young peoples' lives are lived online, the magazine coordinated its approach and opted to be where its audiences are.

Concluding Discussion

This article analyzes how magazine covers frame the image of youth by studying the evolution of the covers of Indonesia's Hai magazine. Through two research questions that asked about the evolution of Hai's covers and its subsequent framing of youth, the study found that Hai magazine has dynamically evolved in terms of visual design and has been liberal in its framing of youth. In the 40 year of its printed publication, the magazine covers had gone through 4 phases of changes. These changes were captured into four categories: Illustration phase (1977-1987), celebrity phase (1988-1997), graphic phase (1998-2007) and the last, Remixed phase (2008-2017). In each phase, the magazine had adopted unique design strategies that were very much influenced by the development of graphic and publication technologies. These changes in design element and visual images on the magazine's covers also documented the magazine's influence on its targeted readers: the youth. Hai magazine proved to be a dynamic magazine as it was always evolving to remain relevant. Through its contents and visual imageries, it has framed many forms of cultures. Instead of seeing youth as monolithic and mundane, it proposes and promotes an evolving ideas of youth. Hence it does not frame a single youth culture, instead it presented a multifaceted youth

cultures that evolved across time. This is evidenced by the different cultures framed by the magazine that included westernized comic cultures, celebrity culture, postmodernist culture, commercial culture and remixed culture.

Thus, this article found significant evidence for the arguments that visuals can be framing devices on magazine covers. Through the media like Hai, young people learn about other parts of the world and other peoples' experiences and this make them consider about issues relation to their own identity, including how they adapt within their own cultures and traditions. The results confirmed that magazine covers are more than just a marketing tool, they are also powerful forms of cultural expressions that depict the way people view the world and themselves.

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