

Illustration Artworks of Hijabographic: Visual Expressions in Virtual Learning Community

Rahina Nugrahani¹, Tjetjep Rohendi Rohidi², Triyanto³, Muhammad Iban Syarif⁴
{rahina_dkv@mail.unnes.ac.id¹, trrohidi@yahoo.com², triyanto@mail.unnes.ac.id³,
ibnans@mail.unnes.ac.id⁴}

Arts Education Doctoral Degree Graduate Program Universitas Negeri Semarang
Jalan Kelud Utara III Semarang 50237^{1,2,3,4}

Abstract. Young learners today are willing to take creative risks with the use of technology. They will need to learn how to apply these powerful forms of technology in ways that enable them to work creatively to innovate and develop distinctive outcomes. Learning interactions built through virtual communities provide opportunities for young learners to broaden their visual art learning experiences. Involving members of the Hijabographic community, this study is aimed to reveal how the learning interaction in a virtual community has a significant influence on the visual expression of illustration artworks produced by community members. This is qualitative research using the virtual ethnography method. The result shows that the distinctive characteristics showed in illustration artworks created by Hijabographic members were inspired by the spirit of disseminating Islamic values through visual artworks.

Keywords: visual expressions, illustration artworks, virtual community, online learning

1 Introduction

Globalization of information has changed the relationship between individuals and institutions, both family, state, religion and education. In the era of information technology, individuals are now more intensely running their lives outside the institution, virtual spaces built by information technology are the second place to run social life. The character of information technology has now developed into network forms, building the power of individuality that is free, open and flexible. What is offered by information technology for individuals is about choices that can be adjusted to their needs and interests.

Research conducted by Brumberger [1] mentions that the need to exist in social media has triggered increased skills in the field of technology and visual communication by various individuals, both those with a background in technology, art and design, even those who do not have a visual arts education background at all. This is motivated by the fact that digital natives have a very good level of visual literacy. That is the reason why we can now easily meet visual art creators who do not have a formal education background in the fields of art and design, but are skilled enough to create visual art works that fit the needs of the display of social media, such as photography, illustrations, comics, electronic posters and so on.

In the realm of non-formal learning, there are now a variety of learning communities that use virtual space as a place of learning. Learning communities in virtual form are very commonly found in visual arts learning, because in general the visual arts skills and knowledge are closely related to the demands of industry and employment. In a network society, flexibility in the learning process is needed because the dynamics of science are growing so rapidly. Every new art work project is require new knowledge. This condition cannot always be facilitated by educational institutions that organize visual arts learning. Thus, learners have the needs to always increase their knowledge and skills through new media and learning spaces facilitated by the internet.

Interactions built through virtual learning communities provide opportunities for learners to broaden their experiences. Interaction through social media used by members of the virtual learning community can explore complex ideas such as subject relations with technology that allow subjects to influence the production of objects, reverse the relationship of subject-objects, and obscure boundaries between subject and object relations. The concept of interaction in a virtual learning community is a main feature that is in line with the learning concept proposed by Dewey about activities and experiences. By maximizing learning activities and experiences, learners are more active in the learning process. Through this activity, learners will dig more, find and conclude information and build their own theories based on their experience [2].

When associated with the learning process, internet technology is not only a medium that connects virtual communities but also forms learning spaces that are very easily accessible to various groups. In the virtual learning community, all learning materials, methods and strategies are flexible, contextual, open and always adapted to the needs of community members. Emphasis on learning strategies that are flexible, is not always intended to produce absolute knowledge, but in the learning process that will lead each individual to develop various skills and attitudes towards learning.

Learning visual arts through virtual space is now an option that is widely used by young learners in order to improve knowledge and skills to produce visual arts. Open and unlimited access to cyber-based learning media, such as tutorials on creating art through youtube, portfolio sites and social media offering convenience for the non-formal learning process [3]. Learning visual arts through non-formal channels adapted by virtual learning communities is believed to be increasingly developed and has the potential to be a good alternative for millennials to increase their professional capacity in the field of visual arts.

The existence of a virtual community is widely used by visual art learner as a place to share ideas, transfer knowledge and skills, produce collaborative visual art work, and as a medium for mutual encouragement between members. Generations born in the information technology era are generally independent learners who are very flexible and adaptive. This study will reveal how the interaction of learning that takes place in a virtual community has a significant influence on the visual expression of works produced by community members?

2 Method

This study involved members of the Hijabographic community, a virtual learning community consisting of Muslim women who have an interest in the field of visual arts in Indonesia. Visual arts content, published through social media, is intended for the purposes of preaching and disseminating Islamic values. This community was founded in 2013 and

currently there are more than 500 members from cities across Indonesia. They actively produce collaborative visual arts, and until now more than 2000 works have been produced by members and published through the official community account.

Considering the background of the research, the approach used in this study is virtual ethnography. Virtual ethnography is an online research method that adapts ethnographic methods to study communities and cultures created through computer-mediated social interactions [4].

The works that will be analyzed through an aesthetic approach are illustration artworks, considering that the illustration artworks are the dominant type of artwork produced by members of the Hijabographic community. The technique used to collect data in this study is document tracking and interviews. Document tracking is aimed to determine the illustration artworks that have been published through official social media managed by the Hijabographic community, and getting the most responses and appreciation from the audience over the past nine months. The interview technique involves the creators of selected illustrations, which are intended to know and understand the phenomena experienced by research subjects (in this case illustrators), related to behavior, perception, motivation, actions holistically.

3 Result and Discussion

3.1 Virtual Learning Community

Virtual community is virtual social spaces where people gather to obtain and provide information and support for learning process to increase knowledge [5]. Facilitated by information technology platform, interactions that take place between members are tied by similarity in same common goals, interests or problems [6]. Virtual Learning Community (VLC), dedicated to the interests of learning. VLC is a virtual social space facilitated by an information technology platform, where people with the same goals or objectives gather to interact with each other to get and share knowledge [7].

Central characteristics in the interaction of virtual communities give learners the opportunity to broaden their experience. Interactivity using social media can explore complex ideas such as subject relations with technology that allows the subject to influence the production of objects, reverse subject-object relationships, and blur the boundaries between subject and object relations. The concept of interactivity in virtual communities is a key feature when we think about the learning concepts proposed by Dewey about activities and experiences [8]. Technological issues, a feeling of inhibition or lack of trust, and a lack of common goals or motivation, are the main challenges in VLCs. While a strong instructor, face-to-face meetings and assignments for small groups are three crucial factors that lead to desirable outcomes, such as a feeling of community, satisfaction and learning success [7].

The existence of a virtual community used by young learners to improve their skills and knowledge in the field of visual arts. Every virtual community builds a positioning to distinguish it from others. We will easily find the existence of virtual communities that are passionate about their interest in illustration, painting, photography and crafts.

3.2 Illustration Artworks Created by Virtual Learning Community Member

The learning process that takes place in the Hijabographic community is carried out through online and offline activities. One of the online activities that stimulates members to

productively produce works is daily artwork. This activity facilitates members to publish their latest work through the official account of the Hijabographic community. Thus, the artwork produced by members can get a broader response and appreciation from audiences. In the Daily artwork activities, the Hijabographic community will invite members to produce artwork with certain themes. Each work produced will be equipped with a caption in the form of a message that conveys Islamic goodness and values. Fellow members will appreciate and exchange information about the techniques and processes used in every artworks that have been published. This virtual discussion room is one of the media for members to improve their knowledge and skills in creating art.

In this study nine selected illustrations were analyzed using an artistic approach to see the quality of illustrated artwork produced by members of the learning community. There are three main points that are used to be analysed for analysis; 1) drawing style (decorative, surrealistic, or abstract), 2) techniques used, 3) harmonization of visual elements (lines, colors and textures) [9].

The selection of nine illustrations to be analyzed in this study is based on consideration of the work that was most appreciated by the audience in the last nine months. Document search, selection of artworks and creator interviews related to the concept of work, techniques and messages delivered through illustration artworks, carried out from May 2018 to January 2019. Nine selected works are displayed as follows:



Fig. 1. Illustration artworks selected

Drawing Style. Drawing styles used by creators in illustrated works are categorized into three styles; decorative, surrealistic and abstract. The categorization is based on the category presented by Salam in his book "Illustration Art". Identification of the drawing style used by creators can be seen through the following table 1:

Table 1. Drawing Style

Artwork	Drawing Style		
	Decorative	Surrealistic	Abstract
1	✓	-	-
2	✓	-	-
3	✓	-	-
4	✓	-	-
5	✓	-	-
6	✓	-	-
7	✓	-	-
8	✓	-	-
9	✓	-	-

Decorative is the most widely used drawing style by illustrators. Based on information obtained from illustrators, it is known that decorative styles tend to be favored by Hijabographic audiences dominated by women. The style also looks simpler, and is also in accordance with the recommendations in the Islamic religion which do not suggest making images that resemble originals (realistic). In addition, according to illustrators, decorative drawing style is also easier to be learned by Hijabographic community members. Not all members have educational or professional backgrounds in the field of visual arts. Even most illustrators whose works are shown above, do not have a background in visual arts education. They are interested in creating illustration artworks for hobby. Not only for hobby, but they also hope that the illustration artworks displayed as their social media content can provide good values that persuade other Muslim women to always do good.

Technique. Based on the analysis result, only two out of ten that use manual techniques. Digital techniques are widely used by illustrators because of its practicality and convenience.

Table 2. Technique used

Artwork	Technique	
	Manual	Digital
1	-	✓
2	-	✓
3	-	✓
4	-	✓
5	-	✓
6	✓	-
7	✓	-
8	-	✓
9	-	✓

Illustrators said that graphic software for creating illustrations is now rich in features that make it easy for them to explore various techniques in digital illustrations.

A visual artist always has curiosity about their own creativity. They are equipped with the ability to explore forms of visual expression and choose the most comfortable technique to use [10]. Most members of the Hijabographic virtual community are digital natives, so they have the ability to quickly adapt to technology, including mastering the most up-to-date graphics software to create illustration artworks. With tutorial videos, they easily find out the steps to mastering graphics software, and Hijabographic community has a stake in becoming a

facilitator between members and professional illustrators in sharing knowledge and visual arts skills.

Visual Elements. The visual elements in the illustration artworks are analyzed by paying attention to lines, colors, and textures. Most of the illustration artworks feature thick curved lines, so that they still give a feminine character to the work. The most chosen colors are soft. The selected illustrations also don't use too many strong textures, so the whole artworks seems light and simple.

The similarity of characteristics in carving out lines, choosing colors and textures is recognized by creators because they are inspired by one another. The existence of the Hijabographic community that provides facilitation in online and offline learning activities, gives influence to members to work and produce interesting visual content for the purposes of da'wah and the spread of Islamic values.

From a psychological perspective, one important factor that supports sharing knowledge is trust. This is in line with the research conducted by Leimester which cites the sharing of knowledge with trust that is built well between members is one of the keys to an effective learning process in VLC [6]. Profiles between community members can help build trust. In the Hijabographic community, it can be seen that each member uses social media for the sake of building a good reputation. The social media they create for the public contains visual art that displays Islamic values as a spirit of their work. Some collaborative works have also been created between members through online interaction.

Table 3. Visual Elements

Arwork	Visual Elements					
	Line		Color		Texture	
	thick	thin	bold	soft	hard	soft
1	✓	-	-	✓	-	✓
2	✓	-	-	✓	-	✓
3	✓	-	-	✓	-	✓
4	-	✓	-	✓	-	✓
5	✓	-	-	✓	-	✓
6	✓	-	✓	-	✓	-
7	-	✓	✓	-	✓	-
8	-	✓	✓	-	✓	-
9	-	✓	-	✓	-	✓

The success of Hijabographic as VLC can be seen in various ways, including the activeness of members in activities organized by the community, satisfaction in improving knowledge and skills, easy use of community platforms and concrete learning outcomes. The number of 2,000 collaborative works produced by Hijabographic members since the community was founded in 2013, shows that trust between members and a sense of belonging to the community have been built very well.

4 Conclusion

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The distinctive characteristics of the illustration artworks produced by Hijabographic members are tied to the spirit of producing works that can be a medium of visual communication in conveying Islamic values. The spirit has become the biggest inspiration among members to produce quality illustrations

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