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Infographics as a visual communication tool in sports: The representation of the Indonesian national team on *Okezone.com* in June 2025

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Abstract:

Infographics have become one of the most important journalistic products in online media, especially for young readers who prefer visually rich and concise content. However, infographics are still often perceived merely as tools for presenting data, whereas they contain narratives, visual choices, and symbolism that can influence public emotions and perceptions. The urgency of this research arises from the fact that infographics depicting national representation often shape public perception subtly yet significantly. This study aims to analyze the role of infographics in sports journalism, focusing on infographics published by *Okezone.com* about the Indonesian National Team (*Timnas Indonesia*). *Timnas* holds a privileged position as a national symbol of pride, making its representation in infographics particularly important. The study employs visual content analysis with a descriptive qualitative approach, using seven infographics about *Timnas Indonesia* published in June 2025. The findings show that infographics do not merely present data and visuals; they also construct narratives and produce meanings for the public. Elements such as the red-white color palette, the Garuda emblem, player photographs, and statistical figures are combined to build the image of the national team. In both pre-match contexts and post-match reporting, the visuals convey optimism and heroism. These findings affirm that infographics play a crucial role in shaping perception and strengthening national identity on the international stage, while also contributing to visual journalism studies and editorial practices in producing more responsible and meaningful visual content.

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Introduction

The advancement of information and communication technology has brought significant changes in the way news is disseminated, including sports news. In today's digital era, technological developments not only affect the speed of information distribution but also transform how people consume and understand news. Online media can deliver information instantly and interactively, packaged with engaging and dynamic visuals. Online media are mass communication channels presented through websites that have the capacity to spread news rapidly to a wide audience in real time (Romli, 2018). Supported by the expanding reach of the internet, ease of access through various devices, and strong integration with social media, people can now access information, including sports news, anytime and anywhere. This phenomenon illustrates a shift in media consumption behavior from conventional formats to faster and more participatory digital formats.

The presentation of sports news today is no longer limited to text and photographs but has evolved into multimedia formats involving short videos, animations, and most notably, infographics. According to Paul De Maeseneer in *Here's the News*, news can be understood as information that possesses significance, high social relevance, the ability to influence public opinion, and is worthy of distribution (Romli, 2022). In *Media Writing: News for the Mass Media*, news is defined as anything people want and need to know (Newsom & Wollert, 1985). In this context, mass media not only function as channels for news dissemination but also as institutions that shape social perception, construct public agendas, and educate society on various social, cultural, and sports issues.

One important aspect of the development of online journalism is the increasing use of infographics as an integral part of news presentation. Infographics are no longer merely textual supplements but have become a primary tool in conveying journalistic messages that are concise, clear, and visually appealing. The use of infographics has evolved to encompass a new definition of a large-scale graphic designs that combine data visualization, illustration, text, and imagery into a format that tells a story (Krum, 2013). For younger audiences who tend to prefer visual content that is quick and easy to understand, infographics have become an effective form of communication. Each visual element such as color, iconography, composition is understood as part of a "text" containing social and cultural meanings, and researchers deconstruct these meanings embedded in the visual representations of the Indonesian National Team infographics (Baharuddin & Rosli, 2022). Nevertheless, infographics are still often viewed merely as data presentation tools. Infographics contain narrative structures, aesthetic choices, and visual symbolism that can influence public perception and emotional engagement with specific issues.

Infographics are also defined as visual presentations aimed at explaining a story, process, or phenomenon based on data using visual elements such as images, illustrations, typography, maps, and other forms of visualization (Dur, 2014). Today, infographics have become a highly effective tool in modern journalism due to their ability to communicate complex events visually, making them easier to understand and faster for audiences to digest (Rafeeq, 2024). Sports-focused infographics play a strategic role in simplifying complex statistical information and match analyses into visual formats that are easier to comprehend and follow. Sports infographics can also evoke audiences' emotional engagement with their favorite teams or athletes (Vairytė et al., 2022).

Careful planning is essential in the production of infographic content. This process involves selecting data, designing visuals, and determining the key message to be communicated to the public (Hamza, 2023). Visual elements such as league standings, player performance charts, and interactive infographics not only serve as decorative visuals but also play an important role in framing the meaning of sports events. Thus, infographics contribute to building a collective narrative that strengthens national identity and fosters pride in athletes' achievements and the nation's sporting success (Torrijos, 2020).

A concrete example of infographic implementation can be seen on the online news portal *Okezone.com*, which was established on March 1, 2007. *Okezone.com* presents various categories of news, including national, international, entertainment, and sports news, with a focus on lifestyle and current issues. As one of Indonesia's leading online news portals, *Okezone.com* continues to innovate in its content presentation. In addition to its main website, *Okezone.com* actively utilizes social media platforms such as Instagram, X (Twitter), and TikTok to expand its audience reach, particularly among younger generations who are more accustomed to digital visibility.

Okezone.com was selected because it has a strong sports channel with intensive coverage of football, particularly the Indonesian National Team. The platform consistently produces infographics as a form of news presentation, providing stable and relevant visual material for analysis. *Okezone.com* also has high traffic, meaning its infographics have wide reach and the potential to significantly shape public perceptions. These characteristics make *Okezone* both representative and strategic as a research object.



The infographics analyzed in this study are those published by *Okezone.com* in June 2025, the period during which the Indonesian National Team was competing in the 2026 World Cup qualifiers. During this phase, the intensity of reporting increased sharply alongside the team's preparations, matches, and results. This situation led *Okezone.com* to produce infographics with high frequency and relatively consistent themes, supplying rich and coherent visual data for analysis. Moreover, this period was marked by heightened public enthusiasm for the national team, making it an ideal moment to examine how infographics frame emotions, national identity, and public perceptions of the team.

Social media, as an internet-based application, enables users to create, exchange, and distribute content (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010). In this context, *Okezone.com* leverages social media to distribute its infographic content more widely, helping audiences understand trending sports issues through engaging and informative visual formats. The creative and contextual use of infographics adds value by capturing readers' attention and increasing engagement across digital platforms. This demonstrates that infographics are not merely aesthetic components of news but also an effective visual communication strategy that strengthens journalistic messages and expands the reach of information in the digital media era.

Although studies on digital journalism and visual communication are abundant, most previous research has focused on textual news analysis, editorial strategies, or audience engagement on social media. Studies that specifically examine sports infographics as visual discourse that constructs national identity remain relatively limited, particularly within the context of Indonesian online media. Few have investigated how visual elements such as color, symbolism, and composition are employed to frame narratives of nationalism in sports news presentations. Therefore, this study seeks to fill that gap by analyzing how infographics on *Okezone.com* represent Indonesia's national football team (*Timnas Indonesia*) and negotiate meanings of nationalism within the digital public sphere.

This study aims to analyze the representation of nationalism in sports infographics published by *Okezone.com*, particularly those featuring the Indonesian National Team. Using a visual content analysis approach supported by Entman's framing theory, this study attempts to identify how visual elements are used to frame journalistic messages, construct the image of the Indonesian National Team as a symbol of national pride, and demonstrate how online media contributes to the construction of national identity through infographic-based journalism (Entman, 1993).

Methods

This research uses a qualitative descriptive approach with visual content analysis, which aligns with the framework in *Qualitative Visual Content Analysis* (Bouvier & Rasmussen, 2022). This approach emphasizes the interpretation of visual elements such as composition, color, typography, and symbolism contained in infographics. The main focus is to understand how *Okezone.com*'s infographics represent nationalism and frame the identity of the Indonesian National Team in the digital space.

Approach and Type of Research

Descriptive qualitative research was used because it is suitable for examining the meanings and representations that emerge through visual and narrative elements. This approach allows researchers to interpret the relationship between the aesthetic, symbolic, and ideological aspects contained in infographics. This is to understand the phenomenon in depth and discover the meaning behind it (Moleong, 2018). Descriptive research focuses on presenting the phenomenon as it is, without intervening, so the results provide an in-depth picture of how the media shapes nationalist messages through sports visualizations.

Object and Data Sources

The object of this study consists of *Timnas Indonesia* infographics published by *Okezone.com*. The selection criteria include:

1. The content must be in infographic format, not textual articles.
2. It must explicitly represent *Timnas Indonesia* through visual elements such as the red-white color scheme, Garuda emblem, players' uniforms, or other national symbols.
3. It must be published during June 2025 through *Okezone.com*'s official channels.

Okezone.com was chosen due to its position as one of Indonesia's mainstream digital media outlets actively producing visual content and reaching a wide audience. A specific temporal focus ensures contextual relevance and analytical consistency in understanding the dynamics of nationalism representation in digital media.

Data Collection Techniques

Data were collected through three main stages:

1. **Document study** – by downloading and archiving infographics from *Okezone.com*'s infographic channel.
2. **Direct visual observation** – by examining design elements in each infographic, such as color, typography, layout, iconography, and players' facial expressions.
3. **Descriptive note-taking** – by compiling analytical sheets containing information about titles, publication dates, dominant visual elements, conveyed narratives, supporting news contexts, and audience responses on social media.

These stages enabled the systematic collection of visual and contextual data prior to interpretation.

Data Analysis Techniques

Data analysis was conducted using visual content analysis supported by Entman's (1993) framing theory and Stuart Hall's (1997) representation theory. The process consisted of several stages:

1. Visual Element Identification
 - Categorizing dominant design elements: national colors, player illustrations, typography, and national symbols.
 - Analyzing visual hierarchy to understand how these elements interact to construct key messages.
2. Representation Analysis
 - Applying Hall's representation theory to explore how *Timnas Indonesia* is depicted—whether as a symbol of struggle, national heroism, or collective pride.
 - Identifying semiotic signs that construct narratives of nationalism and heroism within the sports context.
3. Visual Framing Analysis
 - Applying Entman's (1993) framing concept to trace how the media select, emphasize, and guide meaning through specific visual choices.
 - Identifying framing patterns such as national optimism, unity, and athletic heroism.

In addition to the three stages above, researchers also conducted an ideological interpretation of the results of the visual analysis in the context of sports nationalism in order to understand how infographics play a role in constructing the nation's image and the community's sense of pride (Whigham, 2021). The flow is shown in the diagram in Figure 1 below.



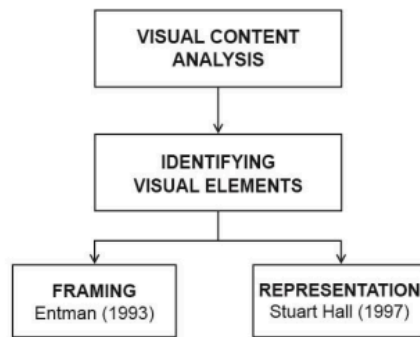


Figure 1. Diagram of the application of Entman's (1993) framing theory and Stuart Hall's representation theory
Source: Imamul Masyhudi

Validity and Reflexivity

To ensure the validity of findings, the researcher employed source triangulation by comparing visual analysis results with the contextual information of related news. The researcher also acknowledged the interpretive nature of visual analysis; therefore, reflexivity was maintained by documenting each stage of coding and interpretation transparently.

Thus, this methodological approach not only describes the visual structure of infographics but also interprets how such structures function as a medium for framing nationalism within Indonesia's digital sports journalism.

Result and Discussion

The infographics on *Okezone.com* consist of two pages. The first is the thumbnail page, where several infographics are directly displayed for the audience/readers. The second page appears when the thumbnail is clicked; this page presents the actual infographic content. On this page (Figure 2), there are: the *Okezone.com* identity/logo, the title, the content (visuals, data in the form of text, visuals, and diagrams), as well as credits at the bottom.

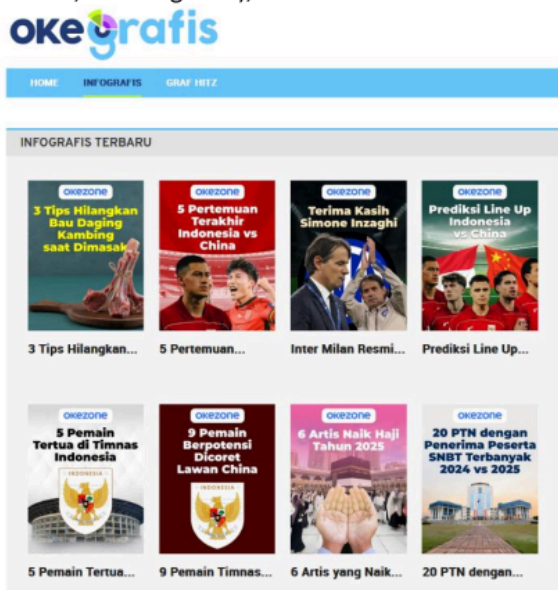


Figure 2. The main page of *Okezone.com*'s infographic channel
Source: Okezone.com

This study analyzes seven infographics on the Indonesian National Team published by the online media *Okezone.com* in June 2025. These infographics cover various topics: match line-ups, standings and FIFA rankings, coach tactics, player lists, match schedules, and player values.

Identification of Visual Elements

Visual Elements of the Indonesian National Team Infographics



Figure 3. Indonesia vs China

Source: Okezone.com

Title:

Predicted Line-Up Indonesia vs China

Publication Date:

June 4, 2025

Dominant Visual Elements:

5 National Team players

Main Narrative/Framing:

The national team as an unshakable force and a symbol of national Pride

National Symbols/Identity:

Red jersey and national flag

Dominant Colors:

Red and green

National Team Representation:

A solid team ready to compete

Additional Notes:

Clear and easy-to-understand visuals



Figure 4. Temporary Standings of Group C, 2026 World Cup

Source: Okezone.com

Title:

Temporary Standings of Group C, 2026 World Cup

Publication Date:

June 6, 2025

Dominant Visual Elements:

National Team star and a row of another smaller national team Players

Main Narrative/Framing:

The heroic struggle of the national team toward the world stage

National Symbols/Identity:

Red jersey and national flag

Dominant Colors:

Red

National Team Representation:

A strong chance to advance

Additional Notes:

Clear and structured data



Figure 5. Rotation Opportunity Against Japan
Source: *Okezone.com*



Figure 6. FIFA Ranking of the National Team
Source: *Okezone.com*

Title:

Opening Player Rotation Opportunities Against Japan

Publication Date:

June 9, 2025

Dominant Visual Elements:

Coach's photo and the National Team

Main Narrative/Framing:

The coach's cleverness for the glory of the National Team

National Symbols/Identity:

Indonesian and Japanese flags

Dominant Colors:

Red and dark blue

National Team Representation:

A prepared and strategic team

Additional Notes:

Concise match information

Title:

Calculating FIFA Rankings: Indonesian National Team vs Japan

Publication Date:

June 10, 2025

Dominant Visual Elements:

Photos of Indonesian National Team players and coach

Main Narrative/Framing:

The National Team striving to elevate the nation's dignity on the world stage

National Symbols/Identity:

Red National Team jersey

Dominant Colors:

Red and white

National Team Representation:

Fighting to climb the world rankings

Additional Notes:

Result scenarios clearly presented



Figure 7. U-23 National Team Players
Source: Okezone.com

Title:

30 U-23 National Team Players for the 2025 AFF U-23 Training Camp

Publication Date:

June 16, 2025

Dominant Visual Elements:

Coach and several key U-23 National Team players

Main Narrative/Framing:

The golden generation and the future of Indonesian football

National Symbols/Identity:

Red National Team jersey

Dominant Colors:

White
National Team Representation: Regeneration and the future of football

Additional Notes: Complete information, although not all players are visually Presented



Figure 8. Participants in the 4th Round of the 2026 World Cup Qualifiers, Asian Zone
Source: Okezone.com

Title:

6 Countries Participating in the 4th Round of the 2026 World Cup Qualifiers, Asian Zone

Publication Date:

June 11, 2025

Dominant Visual Elements:

2026 World Cup logo

Main Narrative/Framing:

Pride, the National Team has a chance at the 2026 World Cup

National Symbols/Identity:

Red-white flag

Dominant Colors:

Bright blue

National Team Representation:

On par with Asia's strong football nations

Additional Notes:

Complete and neatly structured information



Figure 9. The Most Expensive Players in the 2026 World Cup Qualifiers, Asian Zone
Source: *Okezone.com*

Title:

5 Most Expensive Players in the 4th Round of the 2026 World Cup Asian Qualifiers

Publication Date:

June 20, 2025

Dominant Visual Elements:

Top players participating in the 4th round of the Asian Zone World Cup qualifiers

Main Narrative/Framing:

Pride, with 2 Indonesian National Team players included in the list of Asia's top players

National Symbols/Identity:

Red jersey and flag

Dominant Colors:

Blue and red

National Team Representation:

High-quality Indonesian National Team players

Additional Notes:

Player price comparisons are presented clearly

Most of the infographics use visual elements such as player photos, large numbers (scores/rankings), national colors (red and white), as well as national symbols such as the Garuda emblem. The narratives are optimism, heroism, revival, and glory.

Representation Analysis (Stuart Hall)

The analysis of representation in this study is grounded in Stuart Hall's view that meaning does not inherently reside in visual objects, but is produced through representational practices—that is, through processes of selecting, arranging, and emphasizing particular symbols that are then interpreted by audiences within relevant cultural contexts (Hall, 1997). Accordingly, the infographics about the Indonesian National Team on *Okezone.com* are understood as cultural products that construct specific images of nationalism, identity, and collective pride.

This aligns with Vairyte et al. (2022), who argue that sports infographics do not merely convey information but also shape audience emotions and perceptions through visual and textual elements. Infographics do not only present facts but also influence how readers interpret those facts through design choices and visual framing, as Rafeeq (2024) also notes.

In the seven infographics analyzed, the representation of the Indonesian National Team is not constructed through a single element, but through a combination of visual, textual, and compositional components that work simultaneously. This is evident in several ways:

Visual Attributes and Iconography

The red-white palette, the Garuda emblem, flag shapes, and the national team jersey function as national icons that are consistently displayed. Within Hall's framework, these symbols operate as *signs* carrying the connotative meanings of nationalism and patriotism. Red, for example, is not merely an aesthetic choice, but is interpreted as representing fighting spirit, courage, and resurgence. The presence of the flag and Garuda strengthens the nation's visual identity while positioning the narrative of the National Team within a national—rather than merely sporting—context.

Selection of Actors and Body Positions

Okezone.com consistently features players in heroic poses, confident expressions, and victory-coded gestures (such as clenched fists or intense eye contact with the camera). The selection of actors—especially popular figures or high-performing players—contributes to constructing the image of “modern sports heroes.” According to Hall’s theory, this selective process is an *encoding practice* that highlights certain figures to represent the nation’s collective identity. The absence of other figures also has meaning: the media frames who is deemed worthy of symbolizing nationalism.

Typography and Visual Language

The use of bold typography, large font sizes, and motivational phrases such as “Opening Opportunities,” “Rising in Ranking,” or “Toward Glory” constructs connotative meanings related to optimism, progress, and national resurgence. This text not only conveys information but also serves as *anchorage*, guiding the audience to interpret the visuals through the emotional frame intended by the media.

Composition and Visual Hierarchy

Visual elements are strategically arranged to create a visual hierarchy that directs audience attention. Player photos are typically placed in the center or foreground, while supporting data such as scores or standings serve to reinforce narratives of heroism and achievement. From Hall’s perspective, this composition is a form of “representational practice” that positions players as the core of collective identity and as national symbols in struggle.

Data Representation as Ideological Signs

Technical information such as standings, FIFA rankings, or squad lists is not presented as neutral data. Tables, graphics, and numbers are visualized as symbolic signs connoting “progress,” “competitiveness,” or “national achievement.” For example, the FIFA ranking is not merely shown as a number, but as evidence of national pride and rising prestige. Within Hall’s framework, this demonstrates how media construct reality through presentational choices that carry ideological effects.

Visual Narrative of Nationalism

The combination of national symbols, heroic poses, and motivational text constructs a representational narrative that positions the Indonesian National Team as:

1. A symbol of struggle,
2. A form of collective pride,
3. An expression of national identity,
4. An agent of national football development.

This narrative does not arise naturally but because of the media’s *encoding* of a specific socio-political moment—namely the public enthusiasm surrounding the 2026 World Cup Qualifiers during the publication period.

Constructed meaning:

Infographics do not merely communicate match information but also build the image of the Indonesian National Team as the nation’s identity and a source of pride on the global stage.

Framing Analysis

Framing demonstrates how narratives are built through visual choices to influence audience perceptions.



National optimism and player heroism:

Nearly all infographics predominantly use colors, with optimistic text such as “Opening Opportunities” and “Climbing the Rankings.” This creates a positive spirit and hope for the public. In all infographics, players are always the focus. They are presented with confidence, giving the impression of sports heroes fighting to uphold Indonesia’s honor.

Struggle and togetherness:

Infographics featuring many players emphasize teamwork and the collective struggle of the National Team. They also highlight regeneration for the future of Indonesian football, expected to become a golden generation, as seen in the infographic titled “30 Indonesian National U-23 Players for TC AFF U-23 2025.”

Achievement and glory:

Standing tables and FIFA rankings not only show numbers but also frame the team’s efforts as part of elevating the nation’s dignity on the international stage. The infographic showing the most expensive players in the Asian qualifying zone—where two Indonesian players made the top five—proves the quality of Indonesia’s National Team players.

Visual Communication Strategy of Online Media

Media outlets like *Okezone.com* use infographics as a content strategy that is engaging, easy to digest, and highly shareable. Visuals serve as the main language to reach a wide public, especially the visually oriented younger generation.

The designs reflect:

1. Simplification of complex data (scores, rankings, schedules).
2. Quick emotion and framing (facial expressions, colors, motivational words).
3. Branding consistency (logos, fonts, colors, team logos) that strengthens media identity.

This also reflects planning, which Hamza (2025) emphasizes as an essential aspect of successful infographic content production.

The results of the analysis show that infographics are not neutral; they construct the image of the Indonesian National Team according to media moments and needs. Infographics function both as visual communication tools and as ideological framing instruments, particularly in conveying narratives of nationalism, pride, and performance. Infographics provide the experience of *seeing and feeling* the information, not just reading it. Linked to Stuart Hall’s representation theory, *Okezone.com*’s infographics act as agents of meaning-making, not merely data transmitters.

Conclusion

Based on the analysis of infographics themed around the Indonesian National Team published by *Okezone.com* during June 2025, several conclusions can be drawn:

1. Infographics serve as effective visual communication tools in delivering information about the Indonesian National Team. Data visualizations such as player lists, match scores, FIFA rankings, and match schedules are presented in ways that are easy to understand and capture public attention.
2. The representation of the Indonesian National Team in infographics is not neutral but laden with meaning and symbols. Infographics often display elements of nationalism such as red-white colors, the Garuda emblem, and patriotic narratives that construct the team’s image as a symbol of hope and national pride.

3. The online media outlet *Okezone.com* uses a visual framing strategy to shape public perception of the national team. During moments of good results in matches, infographics evoke symbols of glory (expressions of pride).
4. Infographics are not merely informational decorations, but instruments for shaping public narratives and emotions. The media actively constructs visual realities that strengthen national identity, invite public participation, or frame the national team's performance in a particular way.
5. The findings related to representation theory also carry broader implications for other design contexts. The selection of colors, symbols, figure poses, or typography in political, commercial, educational, or digital media design can shape public perception in ways similar to those seen in the context of the *Timnas* infographics. This reinforces the idea that representation is inherently constructive and ideological: visual design always chooses certain aspects of reality to highlight, amplify, or obscure.

Thus, this study affirms that infographics carry communicative, constructive, and ideological functions. Through representation (Hall) and visual framing (Entman), infographics become a medium that shapes perception, strengthens national identity, and produces visual realities about the Indonesian National Team within the digital media landscape.

This study has several limitations: 1) It focuses only on a single online media outlet (*Okezone.com*) and therefore does not reflect the representation of other media platforms. 2) The analysis is limited to visual and narrative aspects, without conducting interviews with the infographic designers or editorial team.

For future research, it is recommended to expand the scope to multiple online media outlets to compare representations across different platforms, including independent or community-based media. For media practitioners, this study highlights the importance of considering ethical and representative aspects when presenting information visualization, especially in the emotionally charged field of sports. For visual communication and journalism curriculum developers, sports infographics can serve as rich learning material encompassing design elements, visual rhetoric, and the construction of national identity.

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