

UTILIZATION OF MUSLIM PUBLIC SPACES AS A MEDIUM FOR DISCUSSION OF HALAL FOOD PRODUCTS IN INDONESIA

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Abstract

Public space is formed from the development of communication and information technology involving internet users in cyberspace. Public space is utilized as a forum for discussion related to halal food products in Indonesia by the Muslim community. This discussion related to Muslim public space uses a case study method to examine phenomena that exist on Instagram social media. The discussion results show that mass media can be used effectively to exchange information between individuals included in the cyber community to discuss various aspects of halal food products in Indonesia. The role of public space as a forum for discussion of halal food products can add insight and improve the quality of consumers in choosing halal food products.

Keywords: *Public Space, Mass Media, Instagram, Halal Food Product.*

Abstrak

Ruang publik terbentuk dari perkembangan teknologi komunikasi dan informasi yang melibatkan para pengguna internet di dunia maya. Ruang publik dimanfaatkan sebagai wadah untuk berdiskusi terkait produk makanan halal di Indonesia oleh masyarakat muslim. Pembahasan terkait ruang publik muslim ini menggunakan metode studi kasus guna mengkaji fenomena yang ada di media sosial Instagram. Adapun hasil pembahasan menunjukkan bahwa media massa dapat digunakan secara efektif untuk bertukar informasi antar individu yang termasuk sebagai masyarakat siber untuk mendiskusikan berbagai aspek produk makanan halal di Indonesia. Peranan ruang publik sebagai wadah untuk diskusi produk makanan halal dapat menambah wawasan dan meningkatkan kualitas konsumen dalam memilih produk makanan halal.

Kata Kunci: Ruang Publik, Media Massa, Instagram, Halal Food Product.



Lisensi

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A. INTRODUCTION

Indonesia as one of the countries with a majority Muslim population has a high awareness of the halalness of food products. The halal status of a food product is important to be considered by every Muslim. Halal itself is one of the important aspects of practicing Islamic religious beliefs. In Islamic teachings, a Muslim is required to consume halal and good food.

Consuming halal food products is a necessity for Muslims. Apart from being a necessity, consuming halal food products is very important for people who uphold the teachings of Islam. Consuming halal food products is an obligation for Muslims themselves. Consuming halal food products is important because it is one of the requirements that Muslims must meet in choosing food and drink.

Halal food products in Indonesia are usually consumed by people who follow the teachings of Islam. Apart from Muslims, halal food products are also often consumed by non-Muslim communities in Indonesia. Muslim communities in Indonesia must consume halal and good food according to Islamic teachings. So consuming halal food products is considered important for every Muslim.

Most food products in Indonesia have obtained halal label certification to prove that Muslims can enjoy the food produced. Quoted from the Halal Product Guarantee Agency (BPJPH)¹ approximately 4 million products have obtained halal certificates until May 2024. However, not all food products available to the public have been labeled halal according to government policy. Food produced by MSMEs and small traders is what is often discussed at the critical point of halalness.

The halalness of a food product can be seen from the way it is processed and produced. Before consuming food products, Muslims must know and understand how food raw materials are processed into food that can be

¹ Badan Penyelenggara Jaminan Produk Halal (BPJPH), "Dashboard Sertifikat Halal - Rev", diakses pada 16 Mei 2024, <http://olap.halal.go.id/public/dashboard/93784e9b-386a-4806-8aac-f7137c150c15n>

consumed. So Muslim communities need to maintain the halalness of food products consumed.

A number of food products that have not yet obtained a halal certificate from the government are of concern to Muslim communities who have a need to consume halal food. So that the Indonesian people who are mostly Muslims often discuss the critical points of various existing food products. Open discussion and criticism of halal food products is useful for increasing public awareness of halal food. In addition, it is also to improve the quality of halal food products in Indonesia.

Open discussion and criticism of food products occurs in the digital public space. The rapid development of the times has led to the creation of a digital public space to discuss the issue of the halalness of food products being traded. Public space itself is created and can be accessed by internet users around the world.

The use of public space to discuss halal food products has taken place since the Ministry of Religious Affairs made halal certification mandatory for food products in Indonesia on October 17, 2019². During the last three years, the government, especially the Ministry of Religious Affairs, has continued to intensify halal certification of food products. However, until 2024 there are still many small food outlets that have not registered their food or beverage products to obtain halal certificates. So that people still have to be careful in consuming various food products sold around.

The lack of information and knowledge of each individual regarding halal food products triggers discussions in the public sphere. As mentioned by Wahyuningsih (2021)³ that a number of people have minimal knowledge about halal certificates owned by coffee shops. Every Muslim community needs accurate and reliable information from others in consuming food products whose

² Peraturan Pemerintah Republik Indonesia Nomor 31 Tahun 2019 tentang Sistem Jaminan Produk Halal, diakses pada 16 Mei 2024, <https://peraturan.bpk.go.id/Details/161941/pp-no-31-tahun-2019>

³ Wahyuningsih, D.S. (2021). Analisis Respon Konsumen Muslim Terhadap Kedai Kopi Yang Belum Bersertifikat Halal. *Jurnal Ekonomi, Manajemen, Bisnis, Dan Sosial (EMBISS)*, 2(1), 1-14.

halalness is unclear. Therefore, public space can be utilized to meet everyone's information needs regarding halal food products available around them.

Discussions related to halal food products occur because some food products are considered not to meet the standards that have been set. Some food products still require more attention to be classified as halal food products. Various food products need to be discussed together as a form of finding solutions to existing problems.

The discussion of critical points in halal food products is now one of the most discussed issues in cyberspace. This is in line with increasing public awareness about halal food products. In addition, it also goes hand in hand with the incessant appeal from the government to traders to register their products as halal-certified food products.

The development of communication and information technology forms a public space. This public space is utilized by Muslim communities in Indonesia to discuss matters related to the teachings of Islam. Discussions about religious values form a Muslim public space for the people of the country who adhere to the teachings of Islam.

Muslim public space is utilized as a medium to discuss or discuss various matters in accordance with the teachings of Islam, one of which is consuming halal products. The consumption of halal food products can be further discussed by Muslim communities in cyberspace. Discussions to criticism of halal food products in the Muslim public space occur by involving many individuals who use the internet.

Public space can be utilized as a forum to discuss critical points of food products that do not have halal certificates. Issues related to the halalness of food products are one of the things that continue to be discussed by Muslim communities in cyberspace. The crowded discussion of the issue makes public space can be utilized as a forum to meet the needs of some Muslim communities.

The use of public space to discuss the issue of halal food products can benefit a number of people who need it. Discussions that form information

related to the halalness of food products can be accessed by every internet user directly. The development of discussions in the public space can continue to change and be accessed directly.

Discussions in the public sphere formed on the issue of the halalness of food products can connect a number of individuals. The relationship between individuals in the public space forms social relationships between individuals and between groups. The relationship between internet users in public space can unwittingly strengthen the sense of solidarity among Muslims in cyberspace.

The use of public space to discuss and criticize halal food products is one of the attitudes of the Muslim community as consumers in consuming halal products. Some Muslim communities are currently starting to show this behavior in the digital public space. The attitude of the Muslim community is included as one of the critical factors that influence the behavior of Muslims as consumers of halal products⁴. So that the consumption of halal products that are traded is closely related to the attitude of the Muslim community. The study also discusses the purchasing behavior of halal products. This research and previous research both discuss halal products. However, previous research focused on the behavior of buyers who were the object of the research.

The critical point of halal food products lies in the ingredients used to make them. This is because a number of food products that have not yet obtained a halal certificate often use additional ingredients that are considered haram for consumption by Muslims. So that discussions often take place in the public sphere regarding the halalness of a food product. As discussed in previous research which states that plant-based ingredients that become additives in food can be an alternative to guarantee the halalness of a food product⁵. Halal food product assurance can be assured by the use of basic ingredients derived from

⁴ Zuhri , S., Ilyas , Erwan , F., Syahputra , R. A., Sentia , P. D., & Noprita , Z., "Structural Equation Modelling Analysis of Purchase Behavior of Halal Products". *Indonesian Journal of Halal Research*, 2023, 5(1), 12-20

⁵ Mariyam , S., Bilgic , H., Rietjens , I. M., & Susanti, D. Y., "Safety Assessment of Questionable Food Additives in the Halal Food Certification: A Review". *Indonesian Journal of Halal Research*, 2022, 4(1), 19-25

plants. The study also discusses the safety of food additives. This research has similarities with this research, both of which discuss halal food products. However, this research discusses halal food products that have been marketed, while previous research discusses the ingredients that are the main thing in making food.

Criticism of food products that have not obtained halal certificates is often conveyed in the public sphere and occurs in a number of small restaurants or MSME products that are not yet well-known. The use of various staples that do not have halal labels on packaging, food processing, and the use of tools for cooking are critical points for halal food products. This is in line with previous research that criticizes food ingredients such as meat and the use of equipment for processing food such as brushes in restaurants in Padang City⁶. Various tools and materials used in the food processing process in restaurants must also be considered in the consumption of halal food. Previous research discussed the characteristics and identification of critical points of halal food traded in restaurants in the Padang area. This research is different from this research which discusses the discussion of food products. Although both discuss halal food, the previous study put halal food products as the object of further discussion.

Conversations about halal food products in the public sphere can also determine the attitude of the community as consumers. Consumers of halal food products themselves are not only Muslims, but also non-Muslims. Although it cannot be denied that the Muslim community remains the largest consumer for various halal food products themselves. There is a significant difference between Muslim and non-Muslim communities in consuming halal food products. A very significant difference was proven in previous research that occurred between Islamic high school and high school respondents. This difference occurs because of the knowledge and awareness of halal food that has been learned from Islamic religious teachings at school. Differences in teachings that have been understood

⁶ Faridah , A., Holinesti , R., Syarif , W., & Mohd Zahari , M., "Characteristics and Identification of Critical Points of Halal Food at Restaurants in Padang". *Indonesian Journal of Halal Research*. 2022, 4(1), 9-18

previously form different consumption patterns in students at school. Previous research discusses the relationship between attitudes and needs that influence the intention to buy halal food. Halal food products are an element discussed in previous studies. The position of halal food that has been researched previously has similarities with this research, but this study will further discuss the discussion of halal food products.

Halal food products have various aspects that can be criticized before being consumed by Muslim communities in Indonesia. One aspect that must be considered in halal food products is the source of raw materials used. Raw materials in the form of meat obtained from a place that has a halal certificate can guarantee the quality of the food. As has been stated in previous research which states that the quality of chicken meat that has been slaughtered by slaughterhouses with halal certificates is better than the results of meat processed in slaughterhouses without halal certificates⁷. Halal-certified slaughterhouses are able to guarantee the halal status of various slaughtered animals. The study discusses the relationship between halal-certified slaughterhouses and the storage of boiler chicken meat. Previous research and this research have similarities in the aspect of halal food products. However, previous research discusses the process of providing halal meat before it is made into halal food products.

Public spaces such as mass media and social media for Muslim communities in Indonesia are widely used to discuss halal food products. The discussion of halal food products itself has experienced a significant development, both through social media and mass media reporting related matters. As a country with a large Muslim population, the awareness to consume halal food products continues to increase. Social media such as Instagram is one of the platforms often used by Muslim communities to share information about halal food products. Not only sharing information, the Muslim community also

⁷ Irfan , Lubis, Y. M., Ryan , M., Yunita , D., & Lahmer , R., Effect of Halal-Certified Slaughterhouses and Storage Time on Microbiology and Organoleptic Quality of Broiler Chicken Meat. *Indonesian Journal of Halal Research*, 2023, 5(1), 1-11

shares their experiences of consuming halal food or visiting halal-certified restaurants in various places. So that they can recommend it to their friends and other Instagram users.

Instagram social media through halal influencers plays an important role in spreading knowledge and shaping public opinion. According to a study by Khasanah (2020)⁸, Social media has contributed greatly to raising public awareness of the importance of halal products through various interactive and informative online campaigns and discussions. This phenomenon also triggers discussions in public spaces that are often utilized by the Indonesian Muslim community.

On the other hand, online mass media also participates by presenting special programs and articles that discuss halal topics. Coverage on halal certification, product innovation, and other related issues are often in the spotlight, strengthening public education on the importance of halal food. Collaboration between social media and mass media which is utilized as a public space forms a dynamic information ecosystem. Not only dynamic, the utilization of public space is also very interactive and makes people discuss more. This makes it easier for the Muslim community to access accurate and reliable information about halal food products, while providing a platform for producers to promote their products to a wider range of consumers.

The topic related to public space utilized by Muslim communities aims to find out more about how the use of mass media and social media as part of the public space to discuss halal food products in Indonesia. In addition, this discussion is also expected to be useful and contribute to the development of da'wah science, especially those related to digital communication. The difference between this research and the previously mentioned research is the discussion of the concept of public space proposed by Habermas. However, this research is also continuous with various previous studies that discuss various aspects of

⁸ Miftakhul Khasanah, Peranan Media Sosial Sebagai Agen Sosialisasi Halal dalam Membangun Kesadaran Halal: Studi Netnografi, *Al-Tijary Jurnal Ekonomi dan Bisnis Islam*, 2020, Vol. 5, No. 2, 139-157

halal food. This research will focus on discussing the utilization of public space located in mass media and social media itself.

B. RESEARCH METHOD

Based on the previous description, this discussion will focus on the use of public space to discuss and criticize various halal food products in Indonesia. The discussion related to the issue of halal food products in Indonesia will focus on the use of mass media and social media as part of the theory of public space put forward by Habermas to discuss the issue of halal food products.

The discussion of the utilization of public space as a medium for discussing halal food products is studied using the constructivism paradigm. The constructivism paradigm emphasizes the social construction of society in the formation of knowledge and experience in the digital public sphere. This research is included in the type of qualitative research that is able to explain a phenomenon through in-depth and detailed data collection so that the validity of the data will be more guaranteed.

The method used in this research is a case study. This method is used to explore and understand complex phenomena in real contexts. In the context of the utilization of public space by the Muslim community as a forum for discussion of halal food products, this method is very effective in providing in-depth insights into the dynamics and interactions that occur.

The case study method offers a deep and rich approach to understanding the utilization of public space as a forum for discussion of halal food products. Case studies not only provide theoretical insights but also practical implications relevant to the development of policies and practices related to halal products. By combining various data collection and analysis techniques, researchers can explore the dynamics of interactions, perceptions, and the impact of discussions on the Muslim community. This discussion related to the use of public space uses a documentation study of various news articles in online mass media such as Detik.com and IDN Times. In addition, it also uses data collection techniques in

the form of observation to pay attention to the use of Instagram social media as part of the public sphere.

C. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Digital Public Spaces as Discussion Media

Public spaces that are formed in cyberspace with the help of technological sophistication and the internet in line. Digital public space is formed after the public space of society slowly moves into digital form. This happens because of the rapid development of information and communication technology that involves the community to form the digital public space itself. The use of the internet and various other social media platforms by people in cyberspace to communicate is a contribution to the formation of digital public space⁹. So that digital public space is used to interact in the form of discussions about halal food products.

The word space itself can be interpreted as a place or gap that is between the sidelines or between two things and two parties. Meanwhile, the word public can be interpreted as a crowd or audience. Therefore, public space can be interpreted as a place for audiences or many people consisting of individuals. Meanwhile, Habermas himself defines public space as a place or container for many individuals who have the aim of discussing various public issues¹⁰. The public space can also be referred to as a place for people or audiences who have the freedom and equal level to gather. People or audiences can gather to discuss a topic or various information about a topic. Even individuals who gather can also discuss and debate about a matter. Discussions and debates are useful for considering common interests in the available digital public space. The main product of the digital public space intended by Habermas is public opinion. Audiences involved in the public sphere can exchange their ideas and ideas

⁹ Lindgren, S. "Digital Media & Society". United Kingdom: British Library, (2017), 176

¹⁰ Kluge. In Talk on Television: Audience participation and public debate. In S. Livingstone, & P. Lunt, The Mass Media, Democracy and Public Sphere, London : Routledge, (1994), 21

regarding a topic in the public sphere. Each individual can propose their opinion, even debate their opinion in the digital public sphere.

Initially, public space was defined as a place or container that could be used to mediate for the audience involved as actors and the state itself. Where the audience or the community itself becomes a public that brings ideas to be called an opinion carrier. The community initially fought against monarchical policies made by the state as the highest holder of power. Habermas himself had expressed his opinion regarding the bourgeois public sphere which became a forum for the public to express their criticism of state authority¹¹. The forum that was formed into a public space was held with the principle of publicity. The principle of publicity in the public sphere gradually becomes something called public opinion. Public opinion itself is created in society through discussions that are open to the public and free from the domination of certain parties¹². So that there is an assumption about the ideal public space in society. Where the public space is participatory and free from any abuse of existing power. Then public space becomes a place for people who want to discuss various political issues. The discussion is carried out by gathering in digital public spaces to exchange opinions and deliberate on various public affairs¹³.

The meaning of public space has changed along with the situation that occurred, and even became the cause of the development of changes in meaning. Now public space for modern society is a digital public space that facilitates various virtual activities. The presence of the internet in modern society brings significant changes. It also changes the meaning of public space that existed before. The reason is that the internet is a medium consisting of networks and is able to connect many individuals. The internet has also succeeded in connecting individuals in the world virtually. The presence of the internet creates space for people to connect in the digital world. Even the community itself becomes an

¹¹ Thompson. In Talk on Television: Audience participation and public debate. In S. Livingstone , & P. Lunt , The Mass Media, Democracy, and Public Sphere, London : Routledge, (1994), 9-35

¹² Ibid 9-35

¹³ Adut, A, A Theory of the Public Sphere, Sociological Theory. American Sociological Association, (2012), 238-262.

actor in the existing digital public space. People who are connected in the digital world become actors in the public sphere, and can exchange information in it. The actors consisting of individuals are able to exchange information, express opinions, discuss, and debate in the virtual space. The internet as a public sphere can facilitate discussions that occur due to the exchange of ideas by actors involved in the digital world¹⁴.

Digital public space is one of the important things for people living in this modern era. Public space is seen as a forum that can accommodate the communication of various public issues. Many public interests can be discussed in the digital public space. of course, the discussion is carried out by a number of individuals who are part of the community. Communication and discussion on various topics in the digital public sphere allows people to know the development of their group and the development of other community groups. Habermas himself believes that the use of public space can increase solidarity over the existing human values¹⁵. Moreover, Habermas also revealed that this digital public space is not just a social space that exists in society. Public space also not only includes open culture to public spaces that form social communities¹⁶. Public space is useful for expressing the interests of many individuals in society so as to form public opinion and be able to explain common desires ¹⁷.

Public space refers to a place that is vast and unlimited. Public space itself cannot be limited by physical identity. In fact, public space becomes a forum for the exchange of opinions for those who participate. This place is also a forum for various knowledge that can create a shared judgment. These judgments can arise from a debate that does not have any bias. Topics discussed in the public sphere are also not limited to criticizing the government. Discussions in the public

¹⁴ Papacharissi, Z., *A Networked Self. Identity, Community, and Culture on Social Network*. London: Routledge, (2011), 24

¹⁵ Supartiningsih, S., "Etika Diskursus Bagi Masyarakat Multikultural: Sebuah Analisis dalam Perspektif Pemikiran Jurgen Habermas". *Jurnal Filsafat*, (2017), hal. 32-59

¹⁶ Ibid 32-59

¹⁷ Muhtar, A. A., "Ruang Publik dan Dakwah Media Sosial". *Jurnal Dinamika Penelitian: Media Komunikasi Sosial Keagamaan*, (2021), 22-41

sphere are related to various community interests that refer to public affairs, where these various matters are public and can be accessed by anyone. The various topics of discussion are discussed through the public sphere to form public opinion on a matter. Public opinion itself is an idea that can represent most people or a general opinion that tends to be temporary and refers to the majority opinion.

Communication agreements are very possible to be established through the use of public space, also known as the public sphere, which was first written by Jurgen Habermas in 1962 in Germany is *oeffentlichkeit*.¹⁸ Public space can be utilized by anyone. Public space is used as a place to exchange ideas by everyone who participates. There is no distinction for the participants involved in public space. Everyone has the right to express their opinions without having to be differentiated in terms of race, ethnicity, culture, skin color and others. As mentioned earlier, the use of public space is not limited to the physical.

There are several participants in public space who are classified into several groups as public actors. The first group is the Public, which consists of a number of imaginary people. This Public group is connected in public space through discussions related to common interests. The discussion itself consists of one or more issues of public concern. The next group is the Civil Society, which is a number of individuals who are closely related even though they do not have anything in common conceptually.

The third group of people is a number of people who are classified as public officials. Although the state is not part of the public sphere itself, people who have the capacity can become actors in the public sphere. The presence of this group in the public space is of course to listen to the people in the public space¹⁹. Meanwhile, the last group is the presence of mass media which has a central role in an infrastructure. The presence of mass media that also takes a role

¹⁸ Kurniawan, A., N. Yumna, and E. Tantri. "Resistensi Ruang Publik Di Tengah Covid-19 Perspektif Islam Dan Komunikasi Multikultural". *KOMUNIKE: Jurnal Komunikasi Penyiaran Islam*, vol. 12, no. 1, June 2020, pp. 24-40, doi:10.20414/jurkom.v12i1.2253.31

¹⁹ Muhtar, A. A., "Ruang Publik... 41.

makes it possible to voice public interests nationally and internationally. Apart from providing communication channels, the mass media also introduces and shapes public discussion topics. Fifth, private actors. When citizens or companies enter the public sphere, they usually promote private or public interests²⁰.

The concept of public space itself has been proposed by Habermas. The concept of public space is an area of social life that contains public opinion and access to it is easily obtained by anyone²¹. The concept of public space conveyed by Habermas is described as a place as well as a practice to convey personal interests. These personal interests become part of the life of civil society controlled by the government.

The concept of Habermas' public space itself is referred to as an area for a number of people to unite and gather to discuss public affairs together²². Topics related to the common interest are discussed in various perspectives, which will benefit a certain group of people. In this public space, people can convey ideas and ideas about certain issues to be discussed together.

Habermas' concept of public space also emphasizes the participation of people who are connected through the mass communication process and create a number of opinions to become solutions to issues that are discussed together²³. Issues related to halal food products are discussed through various mass media and social media used by the community. So that chatter about halal food products can involve many people to criticize the halalness of a product before consuming it.

The concept of public space conveyed by Habermas can be a place to talk about the critical point of the halalness of food products by the community in cyberspace. The digital public sphere itself involves news in digital mass media and various opinions on social media. Various opinions in the mass media and

²⁰ Muhtar, A. A., "Ruang Publik dan Dakwah Media Sosial". Jurnal Dinamika Penelitian: Media Komunikasi Sosial Keagamaan, (2021), 22-41

²¹ Habermas, J., Lenox, S., & Lenox, F. (1974). The public sphere: An encyclopedia article. New German Critique 3, (1974), 49-55

²² Kellner, D., Habermas, the public sphere, and democracy: A critical intervention. Perspectives on Habermas, (2000), 259-288

²³ Habermas, J. (1996). Between Facts and Norms. Cambridge: MIT Press, (1996), 360

social media become references for the community in considering the halalness of food products consumed.

The people of Indonesia are media users who often discuss the critical point of the halalness of a product. People in cyberspace utilize the sophistication of technology and the swift flow of information to question the halalness of a food product. This has often been done by the public in recent times, namely since the incessant halal certification is required at existing food outlets.

The discussion of digital public space cannot be separated from the topic of people's media habits. Indonesian people who are close to social media create their own digital public space. The digital public space then becomes a forum or media for people in cyberspace to express their opinions.

The public space utilized to discuss religious issues by the virtual community is in line with the use of virtual social networks. The diversity contained in the internet's virtual social networks is not only a means to interact but also to provide a place for humans to communicate to exchange ideas and ideas²⁴. Interactions and communications that take place on the virtual social networks of the internet tend to exchange specific ideas. This is similar to the arguments put forward in public spaces to fulfill the interests of certain individuals and groups. The existence of digital public spaces is a tangible manifestation that shows that people now have a close relationship with cyberspace. Even internet networks and services were previously considered difficult to use, but now they are part of people's daily lives²⁵. The digital communication culture has shifted the real-world discussion media into a digital public space. The existence of a public space to discuss the issue of halal food products is carried out by users of mass media and social media in cyberspace. In addition, the use of these media is also a form of conceptualization of the use

²⁴ Pratama , B. I., *Etnografi Dunia Maya Internet* . Malang : UB Press, (2017), 59

²⁵ Creeber, G., & Martin, R. (2009). *Digital Cultures: Understanding New Media* . London : Kerrypress, (2009), 108

of public space²⁶. Where the public space itself is used to apply the existing digital communication culture as a form of conceptualization.

The utilization of public space by internet users is also referred to as a social transformation. Where the social network revolution itself does not only discuss digital media, but forms a social transformation from communication to a social relationship²⁷. The digital public space itself is used by internet users to form a social relationship. Through social relationships that exist in the public, people can get more information about halal food products.

Discussion of Halal Food Products in Mass Media and Social Media

The use of social media as part of the public sphere allows users to utilize information as well as participate in the media. In social media, users can take information that is exchanged in the public sphere. Social media users can also participate in finding solutions to common problems that are being discussed. As mentioned by Iriansyah et al (2022)²⁸ that the participation activities of a religious community can seek to find solutions to problems that occur in social media.

Public space in the digital world involves various aspects such as cybersociety as actors who express their opinions, mass media convergence which is also a reference for cybersociety, and the use of cyberspace which is formed into a digital public space. These various aspects come together and have their respective contributions to the practice of utilizing digital public space. Therefore, the discussion of this public space is related to the development of the various aspects mentioned earlier in the digital world.

Discussions around halal food products cover various aspects, starting from the stage of providing raw materials that are processed, the food processing process, to the tools used to make the food itself. These various things are a concern for consumers of halal food in Indonesia. The reason is that the community as consumers must be careful in consuming food that has not

²⁶ Ibid 108

²⁷ Lindgren, S. "Digital Media & Society". United Kingdom: British Library, (2017), 176

²⁸ Iriansyah, A., Gafallo, M. Y., & Adiansyah, Budaya Partisipasi Dan Resistensi Komunitas Keagamaan Di Media Sosial. Jurnal Studi Komunikasi Dan Media, (2022), 17-30.

obtained a halal certificate from the government as the policy holder. The existence of public space is useful to be a medium for exchanging information about food products that have not included halal labels in their restaurants or food packaging.

Food that does not yet have an official halal label must be consumed with caution. Various food products that are not labeled halal can contain various additives that should not be consumed by Muslim communities. Some examples of additives in food that should not be consumed by Muslims are alcohol, mirin, angciu, and various other animal derivatives that are forbidden for consumption. The additives mixed in food need to be considered in determining the halalness of the product. The reason is that the halalness of food additives is related to the origin of raw materials which are derivatives of animal materials.²⁹

Various aspects can be criticized from food products that have not obtained halal certificates. So that the Muslim community needs discussions in the public sphere to increase knowledge about food products that can be consumed according to Islamic teachings. The presence of mass media and social media in the community helps exchange information related to this aspect.

The mass media plays a role in mediating the various arguments put forward by a number of individuals about halal food products. This is done by the mass media by sharing various articles that can be used as a guide to direct the decisions of the Muslim community in consuming food. The unidirectional dissemination of information from the mass media is enough to help the Muslim community in making decisions to consume a food product.

The contribution of mass media in utilizing digital public space is to provide information about halal food products. The converged mass media shares various information and perspectives on halal food products that can be consumed by Muslims. This can be seen from various articles uploaded by a number of mass media such as Detik.com, Republika.co.id, Kumparan, IDN

²⁹ Mariyam , S., Bilgic , H., Rietjens , I. M., & Susanti, D. Y., "Safety Assessment of Questionable Food Additives in the Halal Food Certification: A Review". *Indonesian Journal of Halal Research*, 2022, 4(1), 19-25

Times, Tribune, and many more. A number of online media share information about halal food to the enforcement of halal certificates on food products.

As written by³⁰ in Detik.com about the status of halal and haram food in Islam. Tsalats explains about foods that are syubhat or still doubtful about halal and haram in one of the online media. In addition, in IDN Times³¹ also mentioned news articles that discuss the topic of halal and haram food. Fria Sumitro explained the meaning of halal and haram along with the evidence of the types of food that are halal and haram for consumption by Muslims. The topic is similar to the news article written in the Depok Broadcast³² discusses the requirements of halal and haram food according to Islamic teachings. Wahyu explains the various requirements that must be met by halal food so that it can be consumed by the Muslim community. In addition to utilizing mass media which is part of the public sphere to discuss halal food products, social media also has a similar role. Social media also plays a big role as a forum for discussion and criticism of cyber society. This is because Indonesian people currently use social media a lot. Social media users are proven to use social media for more than six hours a day for various purposes such as communicating, seeking information, and entertainment.³³

Topics related to halal food products are being discussed by people in cyberspace through Instagram social media. Instagram is one of the social media that accommodates discussions and criticisms about halal food products that can be consumed by Indonesian Muslims. In fact, some users on Instagram also specialize their accounts to discuss topics around these halal products. A number of Instagram accounts that discuss halal products include @halalcorner,

³⁰ Khabbussila, T. G. (2023, Mei 05). Tentang Makanan yang Masih Diragukan Halal-Haramnya dalam Islam. Retrieved from Detik.com: <https://www.detik.com/hikmah/khazanah/d-6705410/tentang-makanan-yang-masih-diragukan-halal-haramnya-dalam-islam>

³¹ Sumitro, F. (2022, Agustus 02). Makanan Halal dan Haram dalam Islam: Pengertian, Dalil, dan Jenis. Retrieved from IDN Times: <https://www.idntimes.com/life/inspiration/seo-intern/makanan-halal-dan-haram-dalam-islam>

³² Wahyu. (2022, Oktober 19). Syarat Makanan Halal dan Haram Menurut Islam. Retrieved from Siaran Depok: <https://www.siarandepok.com/baca/20221019/syarat-makanan-halal-dan-haram-menurut-islam.html>

³³ Sumaryanti, I. U., & Yuniar, J., "The Implication of Social Media Toward College Students' Online Behavior in Bandung". *Mediator: Jurnal Komunikasi*, (2022), 55-64

@anca.id, @aishamaharani, @dianwidayanti, @rikaekawati, @halal.indonesia, and many more.

Various Instagram accounts that discuss halal food products share diverse information with the public on social media as Instagram users. One of the Instagram accounts that discusses information related to halal food products is @halalcorner. The @halalcorner Instagram account itself has been verified and has more than 277,000 followers as of May 7, 2023. The @halalcorner Instagram account shares a lot of content about halal products such as the critical point of halalness of breast milk booster, the form of products that cannot be certified halal, and the halalness of carmine dye from insects. Other Instagram accounts also share similar content on social media Instagram.

Instagram social media is a medium that is more often used to discuss the topic of halal food products. This can be seen from the number of Instagram accounts that share content specifically for halal food products. There are more than 16 Instagram accounts that discuss halal food products in Indonesia. A number of these Instagram accounts consist of personal, community, and institutional Instagram accounts. The various Instagram accounts are @anca.id, @aishamaharani, @dianwidayanti, @putifatisa, @benakribo, @jakartarandomeats, @leliazizah, @galuhachandri, @rikaekawati, @linctraveller, @sriwahyunisafitriar, @lilipuspitas_, @halalcorner, @halal.indonesia, @makanhalalmedan, @halal.academy. Each Instagram account shares various content about halal food products that can be consumed by the Muslim community in the country.

Unlike mass media which has a unidirectional communication pattern, social media can be used by its users with a two-way communication pattern. Instagram account owners can share information with other users. Where the information can get feedback or comments from other Instagram users. This two-way communication pattern on social media is more beneficial to cyber society than the delivery of information in the mass media. So that Instagram social

media is more often used by cyberspace communities to discuss halal food products.

The exchange of information about halal food products on Instagram social media is not limited to discussing the tipping point. Discussions related to halal food products on Instagram also discuss various restaurants or food outlets that have just received an official halal label from the government. This was done by the Instagram account owners mentioned earlier. The dissemination of information about food outlets or restaurants that have just obtained halal certificates aims to disseminate halal food products in Indonesia.

The public space used as a discussion forum shows how the community constructs halal food products. Muslim communities exchange information in interactive online mass media. Many information exchanges also occur through the Instagram social media comment section. There are a number of influencer accounts and halal communities that are busy being commented on and become a forum for exchanging this info.

The exchange of information then results in a variety of different preferences among the community. Muslim communities also use public spaces in cyberspace to express their preferences for certain brands that have obtained halal certificates, of course.

Discussions that often occur in public spaces such as Instagram social media and online mass media are also a form of promoting awareness of existing halal food products. In addition, enthusiasts of halal food products also often promote news about halal products through their Instagram social media. So that not only through the comments column, but the Instastory feature can also create discussions in the public space itself.

Many discussions on Instagram social media are carried out in the comment column. A number of Instagram accounts that are often filled with comments as a form of discussion itself are @anca.id and @halalcorner. One of the food products that went viral on social media is the discussion about ice cream and Mixue drinks.



Figure 1. Instagram @halalcorner

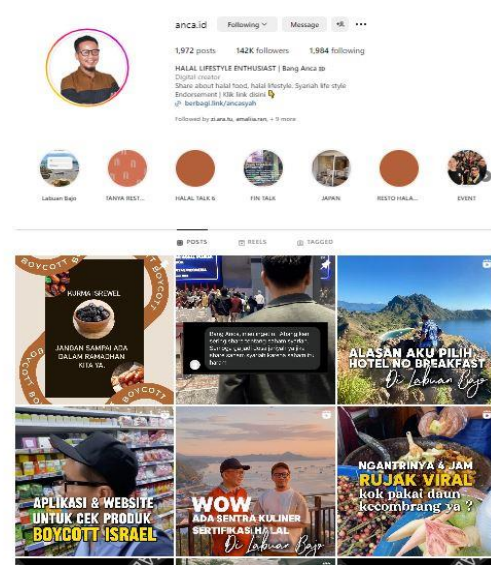


Figure 2. Instagram @anca.id

Mixue sells desserts and drinks in the form of ice cream and other iced drinks. This ice drink, which has an affordable price, is favored by many Indonesians because the taste is suitable for the people's tongue. This product from China is highlighted for its halal status.

Before obtaining a halal certificate, Mixue was widely criticized by the Muslim community because of the risk of using pork gelatin in the raw material for making ice cream. The increasing awareness of halal food products has led Mixue to unilaterally claim the halalness of its products. One Mixue outlet dared to put a halal label on its store. This unilateral halal claim was also discussed by Instagram users.

Some people questioned the existing halal certification policy, while others questioned the opening of outlets that did not yet have a halal certificate. The halal status of Mixue products went viral due to the violation. Mixue itself finally decided to process halal certificates for their beverage products. Until finally Mixue managed to pocket a halal certificate on February 16, 2023.

The process of obtaining Mixue's halal certificate was widely shared by Instagram users who focus on uploading halal food product information on social media. Instagram accounts @anca.id @aishamaharani, @halokataalks,

@azaleabotanicals, @galuhachandri also shared information about the halalness of Mixue products. These various Instagram accounts discuss critical points in the beverage and ice cream products sold by Mixue itself.

The discussion of the halalness of Mixue products on Instagram is an interesting phenomenon in the context of marketing and product information. Mixue is a product brand that offers a wide range of food and beverages. On Instagram social media, users often participate in discussions about the halalness of Mixue products. Such discussions are important because the halalness of food and beverages is a highly relevant factor for most consumers, especially those with specific dietary needs or religious beliefs.

Instagram has become one of the most popular platforms for sharing information, reviews, and users' views on various products. Instagram users can upload photos of products, provide reviews, or discuss the quality and halalness of a product. This also applies to Mixue products, where users actively participate in discussions about the halalness of the product.

The discussion about Mixue's halalness on Instagram includes several important aspects. First, there was a group of users who shared information about the ingredients and halal certification of Mixue products. They share their knowledge and experience regarding the product's halalness, as well as provide recommendations to other users whether Mixue products are in accordance with their needs and halal principles.

Secondly, there are also users who try to analyze the ingredients contained in Mixue products and question the validity of the halal claims made by the brand. They argued that some ingredients could be controversial from a halal standpoint and encouraged users to be more careful before consuming Mixue products.

In addition, the discussion also included a debate on the halal certification held by Mixue products. Some users consider the halal certification as a decisive factor in determining the halalness of the product, while others argue that there

are flaws in the certification system and that there is a possibility of errors or fraud in the process.

It is important to note that discussions regarding the halalness of Mixue products on Instagram involve various perspectives and viewpoints. Each user has a different backgrounds, beliefs and knowledge. The discussion reflects the diversity of opinions and understanding of the halalness of food and beverages.

An important role in the halal discussion on Instagram is also played by the Mixue brand itself. The brand can respond to user comments and questions regarding the halalness of the product by providing further clarification or explanation. This is an opportunity for the brand to build trust and establish a better relationship with its consumers.

In today's digital age, discussions about product halalness on social media are becoming increasingly relevant. Consumers have easy access to information and opinions of other users, which can influence their perception of a brand or product. Discussions on Instagram can also be a source of reference for consumers who want to make wiser purchasing decisions that are in line with their values.

Overall, the discussion of the halalness of Mixue products on Instagram shows how important the halal factor is in influencing consumer preferences. This discussion reflects the dynamics that exist in the food and beverage industry, where brands and consumers continue to interact and influence each other through social media. Such discussions provide an opportunity for brands to communicate with their consumers, build trust, and increase transparency in conveying information about the halalness of their products.

Discussion and criticism of the halalness of a food product on Instagram social media can take place in the comments column of a post or Instastory of a particular account. This is because the virtual world community has a high curiosity that makes them able to ask questions anytime and anywhere. Even criticism of a food product can also be conveyed directly on Instagram social media. Questions and criticisms raised in the public space can be responded to

by anyone. Responses are not only obtained from Instagram account owners or post owners, but all Instagram users in cyberspace.

Discussions about halal food products in the public sphere are not only limited to bagging halal certification of certain products. Discussions include many things, be it about the staple food ingredients, the manufacturing process, to the packaging and how to sell these food products. The number of halal food products available in the market helps the Muslim community to identify other food products. This is because halal food products are not only judged by their shape and presentation.

The parties involved in the discussion of halal food products themselves consist of several parties, both men and women, and there is no age limit in the chat. Discussion participants can come from communities that are enthusiastic about halal products themselves. But it can also involve product owners, to the general public.

Discussions on halal food products conducted through public spaces indirectly contribute positively to public literacy. By participating in such discussions, people can gain better knowledge about halal food products, improve their understanding of the importance of halal product consumption, and strengthen awareness of halalness in daily life. This can help improve the quality of consumers in choosing halal products, as well as provide a positive impetus for manufacturers to improve the quality of their halal products.

D. CONCLUSION

Muslim public space is an area in cyberspace that includes mass media and social media that is widely used by Muslim communities. Public space itself can be utilized to do various things, one of which is discussing halal food products. Halal food products are one of the current issues that are widely followed by the Muslim community. So that the dissemination of information related to halal food products is often discussed in online mass media and Instagram social media. Discussions of halal food products in public spaces such as online mass media can be seen through articles that examine government

policies related to the legality of halal food products in Indonesia. Meanwhile, discussions of halal food products on Instagram social media itself often occur through content that discusses information about food raw materials, manufacturing processes, serving, and the legality of a food product.

The utilization of public space as a forum for discussion of halal food products can increase public insight. The Muslim community itself can increase understanding regarding the consumption of halal food products that are widely produced and circulated. In addition to benefiting the public as consumers, these halal food products also encourage for producers to improve the quality of their products. The results of this study can be used as a reference for further research related to the utilization of digital public spaces. Researchers can discuss further about other social media such as Twitter or TikTok which are part of the digital public sphere. Because the digital public sphere itself includes social media that is widely used by digital society today.

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