



Digital Literacy of Islamic Religion Educators as a Companion to the Halal Product Process Through the *Sihalal* Application for Snack Food Businesses in Serdang Bedagai District

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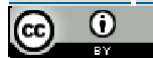
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ABSTRACT

This research aims to analyze the digital literacy skills of Islamic Religious Counselors who have additional duties as Halal Product Process Assistants in halal applications. The qualitative method with a descriptive approach is the method used in this research. The results of this research show that Islamic Religious Counselors still need to be equipped with adequate digital literacy skills in order to face technological developments. The phenomenon occurs when Islamic Religious Counselors who serve as Halal Product Process Assistants carry out activities in the field turns out that there are still many snack business actors who do not know the registration procedures and other matters related to the obligation to register the snack food business products of these business actors

INTRODUCTION

The percentage of the population in Indonesia who adhere to Islam is 86.7% of the total population in Indonesia (Rizaty, 2022). However, at the global level (Datanesia, 2022), Indonesia's position in the halal industry is still far below that of Malaysia. Referring to the "State of the Global Islamic Economy (SGIE) Report 2022" data launched by Dinar Standard, Indonesia is still in fourth place out of 81 countries with a score of 68.5.

Halal products are a part of world business that has enormous and promising value, not only for Muslim but non-Muslim communities. However, currently, there are still many business actors who do not know about the halal certification process. This occurs due to several factors, namely business actors who do not care about their products, consumers who do not prioritize the presence or absence of a halal certificate, and the perception that the cost of registering for halal certification is expensive (Pamuji, 2021). To obtain this halal certificate, micro and small business actors are given an estimated time from the start of applying for a halal certificate until it is issued, targeted for completion within 12 working days. The existence of this regulation is a protection from the government for Muslim consumers (Indah, 2022).

Halal Product Process Assistant or often abbreviated as P3H is someone who has been trained to assist with halal product processes, as well as verify and validate business actors' halal statements (Yuwana & Hasanah, 2021). This registration process requires experience and understanding regarding digital media in using the application launched by the Ministry of Religion when registering business products owned by business actors. Therefore, P3H must understand the use of halal applications not only in assisting with halal product inspections but also in assisting during the process of uploading business actor data.

In the midst of ever-growing global market dynamics, a deep understanding of the principles and implications of halal products and services is crucial. This is not only important from a religious perspective, but also in an effort to encourage the country's economic growth (Hidayat et al., 2023). Humans can connect with other people through communication, whether in daily activities at home, at work, in society, and wherever they are. There is no human who is not involved in communication (Manopo, 2014). In conveying communication, you also have a communication strategy. Therefore, so that communication activities can be realized well, figures are needed who can see the social conditions of society, such as Islamic Religious Counselors (Rahmadani, 2022).

Humans began to develop technology to talk to each other and stay connected. (Astuti et al., 2021; Gobang, 2019) Digital literacy means knowing how to use the internet and digital things. Some people think that being very good at using technology is the most important part of digital literacy, but it is actually more than that (Kusumastuti et al., 2021; Dinia, 2012). On August 13, the Ministry of Religion announced the recruitment of batch I of Halal Product Process Assistants. The Halal Product Guarantee Administering Agency (BPJPH) began recruiting 6,179 Halal Product Process Assistants (P3H). The recruitment

process was carried out online from 15 to 31 August 2022 last year on the ptsp.halal.go.id page. Head of BPJPH Muhammad Aqil Irham explained that this recruitment was carried out to accelerate the target of 10 million Halal certified products by 2022. Aqil said that the recruitment of Halal Product Process Assistants was carried out in 229 sub-districts in 13 provinces in Indonesia, namely Bali, Banten, DI Yogyakarta, DKI Jakarta, West Java, Central Java, East Java, East Kalimantan, Bangka Belitung and Riau Islands, Central Sulawesi, South Sulawesi and North Sumatra. (Ministry of Religion, 2022)

The importance of digital literacy skills in extension workers is because halal certification is one of the things considered by Muslim consumers, especially when owning products. The reason is that not all consumer products circulating on the market meet the halal category as required by the Islamic religion. Therefore, both Halal Product Process Facilitators and MSME players need to understand which product categories must be halal certified to support the sustainability of their business. Not all products in circulation must be given a halal certificate.

The existence of halal certification in general is a form of fulfilling the State's obligation to provide protection to its citizens. This is in accordance with the 1945 Constitution where the State guarantees the freedom of every resident to embrace their own religion. This is the basis that the State needs to provide protection and guarantee the halalness of products consumed or used by the public. (Tami, 2022). Apart from that, micro, small and medium enterprises are one of the main pillars of the national economy which must receive the main opportunities, support, protection and development as wide as possible as a form of firm support for people's economic business groups, without ignoring the role of large businesses and government agencies. State-Owned Enterprises (Hanim & MS. Noorman, 2018).

Therefore, to increase sales value and improve the economy of business actors, the government, in this case the Indonesian Ministry of Religion, requires business actors, especially in the food and beverage sector, to have a halal certificate. Based on the description above, the author is interested in starting research on the Digital Literacy of Islamic Religious Instructors as a Companion to the Halal Product Process through the Sihlal Application for Snack Food Business Actors in Serdang Bedagai Regency. Islamic religious instructors need digital world skills in the mentoring process so that it meets the expected goals, so that they can provide information that is right on target, especially to MSME business actors in Serdang Bedagai Regency.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Digital media is media whose content is a combination of data, text, sound and various types of images stored in digital format and disseminated via networks based on broadband optical cables, satellites and microwave systems (Flew, 2008:2-3). New media is used to explain the emergence of digital, computerized and networked media as an effect of the increasing development of information and communication technology (Arshano, 2014; Jhon & Foss, 2009). Technological advances and ease of communication in this era cannot be separated from the role of the Internet of Things (IoT), a concept that connects

the digital world with human activities, which greatly facilitates human activities (Lister et al., 2006).

Through this digital platform, Religious Counselors have the main task of providing guidance and counseling as well as development using religious language to the community (Rohman & Nugraha, 2022). Even though they both convey religious messages through guidance and counseling activities, the main point is to try to present religious messages that contribute to the development in the religious sector for Indonesia as a common home (Mukzizatin, 2020). This is as stated by (Rohman & Nugraha, 2022), that training or technical guidance contributes to improving competence in skills, attitudes and knowledge that are directly related to tasks and work.

Religious instructors must have problem solving education that is oriented towards the act of teaching something, modernizing, motivating, but regulating and not implementing non-educative programs (Tommy, 2004). With extension activities, it is hoped that there will be equal opportunities to access and obtain the same information and assistance (Permata, 2014). The role of communication in extension cannot be denied. But until now, this is still "ignored by" policy makers. If we look at the role of communication such as human resource development, we can see that communication has an important role, especially when dealing with religion (Gumilar, 2009).

The form of communication used in outreach activities has informative and educational functions, consisting of personal communication, group communication and mass communication (Andrian, 2019). Islamic religious instructors have a moral and social responsibility to carry out activities to defend the people/society from various threats, disturbances, obstacles and challenges that are detrimental to faith, disrupt worship and damage morals. (Ramin, 2017)

METHODOLOGY

Qualitative methods are research procedures that attempt to analyze social life by describing the social world from an individual's perspective in a natural setting, in other words the researcher understands how an individual interprets or describes the social world he sees. Sudaryono (2018). A qualitative approach certainly involves the use and collection of various empirical materials, such as case studies, personal experiences, introspection, life histories, interviews, observations of interactional and visual historical texts that describe routine and problematic moments and their meaning in individual and collective life (Pujileksono, 2015). Researchers conducted in-depth interviews to obtain accurate information from direct sources as primary data. In the interview process, of course, the researcher was helped by the research instrument, namely a recording device in the form of a voice recorder (Komariah, 2013). Researchers also collect data by making observations. Observation is a process carried out by observation followed by systematic, logical, objective and rational recording (Kriyantono, 2018). The data analysis technique in this research was carried out during data collection and after data collection was completed, at the time of data collection the researcher had carried out an analysis of the information received, this took place and after completing data collection, at the time of data collection the researcher had carried out an analysis of the information. received, this takes

place interactively and continuously until completion so that the data is saturated (Miles, Huberman & Saldana, 2014).

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The researcher started by asking several opening questions before conducting the main interview with the informants, the aim of which was to open up and bring back the informants' awareness of topics related to digital literacy in assisting using the halal application, as well as obtaining perception data or initial responses from the informants regarding phenomena that occur related to assistance to business actors. There were several opening questions such as questioning the digital literacy skills of Islamic Religious Counselors in using the Sihahal Application, asking for informants' responses to several obstacles in providing assistance to business actors. Researchers also observed Islamic religious instructors who had the status of Halal Product Process Companions when communicating with business actors. So that more or less researchers can increase their knowledge about the communication skills and digital literacy of Islamic Religious Counselors when carrying out outreach and assisting in the registration of halal products.

Digital Literacy of Serdang Bedagai Regency Islamic Religious Instructors as Companions for Halal Product Processes in Socializing Sihahal Applications to Snack Food Business Actors

Digital literacy is the ability to understand and use information in a variety of formats from various sources when presented via a computer. Digital literacy, also known as computer literacy, is a component of media literacy skills, namely proficiency in using computers, the internet, telephones, PDAs, and other digital devices. Digital literacy refers to efforts to recognize, search for, understand, assess, analyze and use digital technology (Kustiawan et al., 2023). There are ten important benefits of digital media literacy: saving time, learning faster, saving money, making it safer, always connected, making better decisions, making better decisions, puts you to work, and impacts the world.

In this study, researchers found that the literacy skills of Islamic Religious Extension Workers as Halal Product Process Assistants were still low. This can be seen from several answers from informants regarding the digital literacy of Serdang Bedagai Regency Islamic Religious Counselors as P3H. This statement is also validated by triangulation of sources which states that Islamic Religious Counselors as P3H in Serdang Bedagai Regency are still relatively low, this can be seen from the results of the issuance of halal certificates in a year (2022-2023) only amounting to approximately 62 certificates issued by Religious Counselors Islam who serves as a Companion to the Halal Product Process. In fact, the number of Islamic Religious Counselors who passed the selection as Halal Product Process Assistants was approximately 31 people.

Based on data obtained in the field, the digital literacy of Islamic religious instructors who serve as Halal Product Process Assistants fulfills several digital literacy concepts according to Gilster in (Pearce, 2017) explaining that when working with digital media, Gilster places more emphasis on critical thinking processes than skills. technical skills such as core digital literacy skills and the

ability to explore through digital media rather than the technical skills required to access those digital media. Gilster defines the ability to learn to organize knowledge and gather information, alongside the art of critical thinking.

Researchers also found that the communication competence described by Seller in (Fostin Hokianto, 2023), consists of context, namely knowledge in the ongoing communication environment, and message content, namely the content of the message that will be given to the recipient of the message. Thus, the communication competence of Islamic Religious Counselors is achieved by their skills in one's knowledge of a topic to form, send messages, receive, translate and understand the words conveyed. So the researchers concluded that the communication competence of Islamic Religious Counselors in implementing the digital literacy Sihahal application was still inadequate. This can be seen from the delivery of messages and completion of registration to obtain a halal certificate.

Research (Yuwana & Hasanah, 2021) explains the increase in knowledge and understanding related to halal certificates and halal labels, apart from that, business actors are also very active and enthusiastic in participating in outreach activities. By increasing participants' knowledge and understanding of halal certificates, it is hoped that it can have a positive impact, namely increasing public awareness of halal products and encouraging MSMEs to apply for halal certification for the products they produce.

Obstacles faced by Serdang Bedagai Regency Islamic Religious Counselors when Serving as P3H for Snack Food Businesses.

Obstacles from the sender of the message, for example the message to be conveyed is not clear to him or the sender of the message. This obstacle occurs when business actors and Islamic Religious Counselors as Halal Product Process Assistants do not fully understand the meaning of the information provided about the benefits of halal certificates. So the existence of halal applications is not yet something important to understand more deeply.

Barriers in encoding/symbol. This can happen because the language used is not clear so it has more than one meaning, the symbols used between the sender and the recipient are not the same or the language used is too difficult. Barriers to conveying messages that have different meanings result in differences in understanding between business actors and assistants when carrying out the registration process on the Sihahal application.

Media barriers are obstacles that occur in the use of communication media, for example network interference. In submitting data on business actors by assistants, obstacles due to network interference are also an important problem, where quite a few companions give up halfway through the halal certificate processing process. Obstacles from the recipient of the message. For example, a lack of attention when receiving/listening to a message, a prejudiced attitude towards wrong responses and not seeking further information. Most business people sometimes don't pay attention when the assistant explains the products that can register for a halal certificate for free. So quite a few business actors insist on continuing to submit their products, but their products are included in the paid category because they are not snack products.

The Phenomenon of Conveying Messages from Islamic Religious Instructors as Companions to Halal Products to Snack Food Business Actors

This research uses the Interpretative Phenomenologic Analysis (IPA) method. Science is concerned with the detailed examination of human life experiences. It aims to carry out the examination in a way that as far as possible the experience is expressed in its own terms, not according to a predetermined system of categories (Hutagalung et al., n.d). Research that seeks to describe the essence of a phenomenon by exploring it from the perspective of those who have experienced it.

In this research, researchers found that the informants had the point of view that many business actors did not know about the use of halal certificates and also that business actors had little interest in issuing halal certificates, because there were no real sanctions yet.

The phenomenon of delivering messages to business actors is still considered very minimal. This can be seen from the number of business actors who do not know about the government program regarding free registration to obtain a halal certificate for business actors who have snack products.

DISCUSSION

This section allows you to describe your research findings academically. You may not enter figures related to your statistical tests here; instead, you should explain those numbers here. You should structure your discussion with academic support for your studies and a good explanation according to the specific area you are investigating.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The digital literacy of Islamic religious instructors as assistants in the halal product process is still relatively low. This is due to the complexity of the application registration process until the halal certificate is issued. Apart from that, the task of being a Halal Product Process Assistant is an additional task of an Islamic Religious Instructor, not a mandatory task. So there is no intervention when instructors who pass the selection as Halal Product Process Assistants do not provide assistance at all. Obstacles faced by Islamic Religious Counselors when serving as Halal Product Process Assistants for snack food business actors, include the fact that applications often experience maintenance, so the assistants have to wait a few more days to continue submitting product data for business actors. Another obstacle is the complexity of the registration system which is connected to the Ministry of Investment website. This collaboration takes the form of business actors being required to have an NIB (Business Identification Number) first, after that the companion can register the business actor's data in the Sihalal application. The next obstacle is the uneven delivery of messages to the public regarding the importance of registering halal products and obtaining halal certificates. The current phenomenon of delivering messages from Islamic Religious Instructors as Companions to Halal Products to Business Actors is that there are still many business actors who do not know the benefits and appeal to register their products. So there are quite a few business actors who don't want

to register their products because they feel they are less useful, and there are also those who are worried about misuse of their data.

ADVANCED RESEARCH

After looking at the research results, there are several things that can be used as a follow-up or research which can be carried out theoretically, academically and also practically. Some suggestions that researchers can convey are as follows: Research on Digital Literacy of Islamic Religious Counselors when they are Halal Product Process Assistants can continue to be developed using different paradigms or methodologies. The results of this research can also be a reference for academics who will conduct research on the Digital Literacy of Islamic Religious Instructors when serving as Halal Product Process Assistants for snack business actors. Practically, this research can be input for Islamic Religious Counselors in Serdang Bedagai Regency, especially those who have passed the selection as Halal Product Process Assistants. This research can be input for Halal Product Supervisors so that they can monitor and remind Islamic Religious Instructors to carry out their duties even though being a Halal Product Process Assistant is not a required job. This research is also input for related agencies, which are directly related to this halal certificate program.

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