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Strengthening the Trust and Authority of Fatwa Institutions in the Digital Era: Lessons from Indonesia

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Abstract

Objectives: This study explores how digital platforms, especially YouTube, influence public perception and trust in fatwas issued by institutions such as the Indonesian Ulema Council (MUI) in an increasingly digital world. It specifically examines MUI fatwas on cryptocurrencies, vaccinations, and boycotts of Israeli products, assessing the impact of digital dissemination on these religious edicts.

Methodology: This study employed qualitative content analysis using QSR NVivo 12, focusing on sentiment and thematic elements in YouTube discussions. The methodology incorporates sentiment coding to assess general perceptions and thematic coding to explore the nuances of digital dissemination, public understanding, and trust in religious guidance online.

Results: The analysis indicates a predominantly negative sentiment within the Indonesian online community towards MUI's fatwas on vaccines, cryptocurrencies, and boycotting Israeli products. This negativity reflects a disconnect between the public's understanding and acceptance of these religious edicts. Additionally, variations in netizens' comprehension of religious and economic concepts significantly shape their responses to fatwas. This study highlights the need for broader education and more effective communication strategies concerning fatwas, stressing the importance of transparency and context.

Originality: This research underscores the criticality of aligning fatwas with Indonesia's contemporary socio-economic and cultural contexts. It advocates for enhancing the capacity and credibility of fatwa institutions in the digital era, focusing on improving communicative capabilities and increasing religious knowledge to ensure fatwas' continued relevance and effectiveness in addressing contemporary challenges.

Keywords: Fatwa; Digital sphere; Islamic law; Religious authority; Sentiment analysis

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تعزيز نفوذ مؤسسات الفتوى والثقة فيها في العصر الرقمي: دروس من إندونيسيا

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ملخص البحث

أهداف البحث: يستكشف هذا البحث كيف تؤثر المنصات الرقمية، وخاصة يوتيوب، على تصورات الجمهور وثقتهم في الفتاوى الصادرة عن مؤسسات مثل المجلس العلمي الإندونيسي (MUI) في عالم متزايد الرقمية. يركز بشكل خاص على فتاوى MUI حول العملات المشفرة والتطبيقات ومقاطعة المنتجات الإسرائيلية، مقيماً تأثير النشر الرقمي على هذه الأحكام الدينية.

منهج البحث: يستخدم البحث تحليل المحتوى النوعي باستخدام QSR NVivo 12، مركزاً على العناصر العاطفية والموضوعية في مناقشات يوتيوب. تتضمن المنهجية تفسير المشاعر لتقييم التصورات العامة وتفسير الموضوعات لاستكشاف دقائق النشر الرقمي وفهم الجمهور وثقته في التوجيه الديني عبر الإنترنت.

النتائج: تشير التحليلات إلى سيادة المشاعر السلبية في المجتمع الإندونيسي عبر الإنترنت تجاه فتاوى MUI حول اللقاحات والعملات المشفرة ومقاطعة المنتجات الإسرائيلية. تعكس هذه السلبية فجوة في فهم وقبول هذه الأحكام الدينية بين الجمهور العام. كما أن التباين في فهم مستخدمي الإنترنت للمفاهيم الدينية والاقتصادية يؤثر بشكل كبير على ردودهم على هذه الفتاوى. يسلط البحث الضوء على الحاجة إلى تعليم أوسع واستراتيجيات اتصال أكثر فعالية فيما يتعلق بالفتاوى، مؤكداً على أهمية الشفافية والسياسات.

أصالة البحث: يؤكد البحث على أهمية توافق الفتاوى مع القضايا الاجتماعية والاقتصادية المعاصرة والسياق الثقافي في إندونيسيا. يقترح تعزيز القدرة والمصادقية لمؤسسات الفتوى في العصر الرقمي، مركزاً على تحسين القدرات التواصلية وزيادة المعرفة الدينية للحفاظ على صلة وفعالية الفتاوى في مواجهة التحديات الحديثة.

الكلمات المفتاحية: الفتاوى، الفضاء الرقمي، الشريعة الإسلامية، السلطة الدينية، تحليل المشاعر

للاقتباس: واحد، صالح سحن وخصوصينه، أنجار وعبد الله، فؤادي. «تعزيز نفوذ مؤسسات الفتوى والثقة فيها في العصر الرقمي: دروس من إندونيسيا»، مجلة كلية الشريعة والدراسات الإسلامية، جامعة قطر، المجلد ٤٣، العدد ٢ (٢٠٢٥).

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© ٢٠٢٥، واحد وخصوصينه وعبد الله. مجلة كلية الشريعة والدراسات الإسلامية، دار نشر جامعة قطر. تم نشر هذه المقالة البحثية وفقاً لشروط Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial 4.0 International (CC BY-NC 4.0). وتسمح هذه الرخصة بالاستخدام غير التجاري، وينبغي نسبة العمل إلى صاحبه، مع بيان أي تعديلات عليه. كما تتيح حرية نسخ، وتوزيع، ونقل العمل بأي شكل من الأشكال، أو بأية وسيلة، ومزجه وتحويله والبناء عليه، طالما يُنسب العمل الأصلي إلى المؤلف. -4.0/by-nc/creativecommons.org/licenses

1. Introduction

Islamic law, also known as Sharia law, serves as the primary legal system in Islam and guides Muslims' daily lives.¹ However, there is an ongoing debate about who can enforce Sharia law, as states cannot impose it on their citizens.² The mufti, an expert in Islamic law, plays a crucial role in providing authoritative opinions in the Muslim community, leading to the adoption of Sharia law as an alternative legal system in Indonesia.³

In Indonesia, fatwas play an important role in guiding decision-making, although they do not have a legally binding power.⁴ Fatwas provide legal opinions and can influence the behavior of society, as seen in the case of the ban on the Ahmadiyah group. The Ahmadiyah group was founded by Mirza Ghulam Ahmad Qadyani who claimed to be a prophet, the Messiah (*mahdī*), and a reformer and renewer of Islamic thought (*mujaddid*).⁵ Despite their lack of legal consequences, fatwas can affect the social, economic, and political development of the Muslim community.⁶

In Indonesia, fatwas play a role in guiding decision-making that extends beyond religious edicts and significantly impacts the social, economic, and political spheres. Research has shown that fatwas serve as an ethical embedding mechanism in Muslim societies, influencing the formation and development of

- 1 Clark B. Lombardi, "Designing Islamic Constitutions: Past Trends and Options for a Democratic Future," *International Journal of Constitutional Law* 11-3 (2013): 615-45.
- 2 Wael B. Hallaq, *The Formation of Islamic Law* (London: Routledge, 2016); Asifa Quraishi-Landes, "The Sharia Problem with Sharia Legislation," *Ohio Northern University Law Review* 47 (2013): 46-47; Lombardi, "Designing Islamic Constitutions," 615-45.
- 3 Jan Michiel Otto, *Sharia and National Law in Muslim Countries: Tensions and Opportunities for Dutch and EU Foreign Policy* (Leiden: Leiden University Press, 2008); David S. Powers, "Wael B. Hallaq on the Origins of Islamic Law: A Review Essay," *Islamic Law and Society* 17-1 (2010): 126-57; Nur Haida, "Analisis Implementasi Produk Hasanah Card Pada BNI Syariah Kota Cirebon," *Ecobankers: Journal of Economy and Banking* 1-2 (2020): 28-43; Wael B. Hallaq, "From *Fatwās* to *Furū'*: Growth and Change in Islamic Substantive Law," *Islamic Law and Society* 1-1 (1994): 101-103.
- 4 Mukhsin Achmad et al., "Positivation of MUI Fatwa: From Morally Binding to Legally Binding, Case Study MUI Fatwa Against Madurese Shi'ite in Sampang, Madura," *KnE Social Sciences*, 5 (2022): 210-18; Khoiruddin Nasution and Masnun Tahir, "Morality of Fatwa in the Islamic Law Thinking," *Millah: Journal of Religious Studies*, 10(Special Issue), (2010): 85-97; Ahmad Ulil Albab Al Umar et al., "Analysis of Cryptocurrency in Islamic Perspective and its Existence in Indonesia," in *1st Virtual Workshop on Writing Scientific Article for International Publication Indexed SCOPUS* (2022), 85-90; Mohd Harifadilah Rosidi, "The Impact of Social Media on The Acceptance of Fatwas Among Malaysian Muslims," *Journal of Fatwa Management and Research* 1 (2021): 17-36.
- 5 The Ahmadiyya has faced enduring criticism within the Muslim world due to its controversial theological views, such as its belief in Mirza Ghulam Ahmad as a prophet after Prophet Muhammad—a claim regarded by the overwhelming majority of Sunni and Shia scholars as a direct repudiation of the Islamic tenet of *khatm al-nubuwwa* (finality of prophethood), which affirms that Muhammad is the last prophet. As a result, the Ahmadiyya have been declared non-Muslim by numerous religious bodies and states. For more on this issue, with more focus on the Indonesian context, see, e.g., Andi Muhammad Irawan, "They are not Muslims: A Critical Discourse Analysis of the Ahmadiyya Sect Issue in Indonesia," in *Discourse and Society*, 28-2 (2017): 162-181. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0957926516685462>
- 6 Rosidi, "The Impact of Social Media," 17–36; Wahyudi Akmaliah, "The Demise of Moderate Islam: New Media, Contestation, and Reclaiming Religious Authorities," *Indonesian Journal of Islam and Muslim Societies* 10-1 (2020): 1-24; Achmad et al., "Positivation of MUI Fatwa," 210-18.

communities through various discursive and non-discursive relationships.¹ This influence is not confined to Indonesia alone; in Bahrain, fatwas have been a prominent factor in shaping the behavior and beliefs of individuals and groups, especially amid volatile political and social situations, thereby impacting political dynamics.²

Furthermore, in Indonesia, fatwas issued by the Majelis Ulama Indonesia (MUI) have played crucial roles in both inciting and mediating sectarian violence, opening avenues for constructive discourse within society.³ From 1975 to 1988, MUI fatwas in Indonesia targeted objectives such as gaining societal acceptance, maintaining good relations with Muslim organizations and the government, and encouraging Muslim participation in national development.⁴ Additionally, the issuance of these fatwas has influenced rising conservatism, affecting democratic values and the political landscape, thereby highlighting their significant role in shaping social and political contexts.⁵ Fatwas have also played a regulatory role in socio-political issues, exerting influence on public consciousness to maintain stability and prevent conflicts.⁶

However, the digital era has brought new challenges and opportunities for scholars and muftis to issue fatwas.⁷ For instance, fatwas issued by the Indonesian Ulema Council (MUI) on varied subjects such as cryptocurrencies, vaccinations, and the boycott of Israeli products have elicited diverse reactions, particularly from the digital era. Although these fatwas are not legally binding, their influence on societal behavior and choices is significant, as they present dilemmas and guidance for Muslims navigating modern issues.

One of the main changes brought about by the digital era is the increased prevalence of digital fatwas. These fatwas are issued through digital channels, such as websites and social media platforms. This allows

- 1 Yudi Harimurti et al., "The Role of Majelis Ulama Indonesia and its Fatwas within the Indonesian Governance System," in *Proceedings of The International Conference on Environmental and Technology of Law, Business and Education on Post Covid 19, ICETLAWBE, 26 September 2020, Bandar Lampung, Indonesia* (EAI, 2020), 1-5.
- 2 Rashed Alrasheed and Simon Mabon, "Fatwas and Politics in Bahrain: Exploring the Post 2011 Context," *Middle Eastern Studies* 57-1 (2020): 151-65.
- 3 Soleh Hasan Wahid, "Pola Transformasi Fatwa Ekonomi Syariah Dsn-Mui Dalam Peraturan Perundang-Undangan Di Indonesia," *Ahkam: Jurnal Hukum Islam*, 4, No.2, (2016), 171-198.
- 4 Mun'im Sirry, "Fatwas and Their Controversy: The Case of the Council of Indonesian Ulama (MUI)," *Journal of Southeast Asian Studies* 44-1 (2013): 100-117.
- 5 Ibid.
- 6 Omer Awass, *Fatwa: The Evolution of an Islamic Legal Practice and its Influence on Muslim Society* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2014).
- 7 Imam Yahya and Akhmad Arif Junaidi, "Authority of Fatwa in Digital Era: Methodology and Transmission of Nahdlatul Ulama's Bahtsul Masail in Indonesia", *Webology* 18-2 (2021): 654-74; Rosidi, "The Impact of Social Media on the Acceptance of Fatwas Among Malaysian Muslims"; Mohamad Dahlan, "Respons Jamaah Tabligh Terhadap Fatwa Majelis Ulama Indonesia Tentang Covid-19", *Qiyas, Jurnal Hukum Islam Dan Peradilan* 5, No. 1 (2020): 53-69; Alexandre Caeiro, "Cyber-Muftis, Digital Fatwas - the Ongoing Transformation of Religious Authority", *Daily Sabah*, 2019, <https://www.dailysabah.com/op-ed/2019/03/27/cyber-muftis-digital-fatwas-the-ongoing-transformation-of-religious-authority>; Alexandre Caeiro, "The Politics of Family Cohesion in the Gulf: Islamic Authority, New Media, and the Logic of the Modern Rentier State", *Chroniques Yéménites*, No. 10 (2018), <https://doi.org/10.4000/cy.3762>.

for faster and wider dissemination of fatwas, but also raises questions about the legitimacy and authority of digital fatwas.¹

Several studies have investigated various issues related to fatwas in Muslim societies. Iman and Samsuri examined cryptocurrency from an Islamic perspective and its permissibility in Indonesia, highlighting the need for further research to clarify this issue.² Amrin and Amirullah studied the theory of fatwa change according to Yusuf Qardhawi, demonstrating that fatwa change reflects societal changes and needs.³ Additionally, studies have investigated the impact of digital technology on the issuance of fatwas in Muslim societies. Achmad et al. analyzed the effects of the MUI fatwa on the Shi'a community in Sampang, Madura, and discovered its significant impact on the community.⁴ Finally, Akmaliah researched the effects of new media on the decline of moderate Islam and the contestation of religious authority, revealing the emergence of conservative and extremist voices and a decrease in the influence of moderate ones.⁵ Another study on fatwas in the digital sphere by Al-Zanki suggests that fatwas issued through various satellite channels have a significant potential risk of error, including misinterpretation of the text, relying on old information to understand the nature of the question at hand, failing to guide the questioner to what is best for him, and being confused.⁶

Several studies have examined various issues related to fatwas in Muslim societies, especially those related to the digital age. A recent study conducted by Suaedy examined the position of the Indonesian Council of Ulama (Majelis Ulama Indonesia or MUI) in the digital era, highlighting the challenges that the digital revolution poses to the MUI's authority in issuing fatwas.⁷ This qualitative study focused on the language used in MUI's regional fatwas and mapped the discourse generated by these fatwas, revealing symptoms of fatwa de-bureaucratization and the impact of celebrity ulama in the digital age.⁸

In addition, a study by Caeiro discusses the emergence of cyber-muftis and online fatwas, analyzing how the internet has become a central aspect of community life in Muslim societies since the 1990s. This

1 Rusli, "Tipologi Fatwa Di Era Modern: Dari Offline Ke Online", *Hunafa: Jurnal Studia Islamika* 8, No. 2 (2011); Rusli and Nurdin Nurdin, "Understanding Indonesia Millennia Ulama Online Knowledge Acquisition and Use in Daily Fatwa Making Habits", *Education and Information Technologies* 27, No. 3 (19 April 2022): 4117–40; Rusli Muhammad Syarif Hasyim, and Nurdin Nurdin, "A New Islamic Knowledge Production and Fatwa Rulings: How Indonesia's Young Muslim Scholars Interact with Online Sources", *Journal of Indonesian Islam* 14, No. 2 (1 December 2020): 499.

2 "Cryptocurrency; Financial Risk and Shariah-Compliant Alternative Concept", *Equilibrium: Jurnal Ekonomi Syariah* 10, No. 1 (2022): 109.

3 "Contemporary Legal Istimbat: Study on the Theory of Changes in Fatwa According to Yusuf Qardhawi", *Mizan: Journal of Islamic Law* 6, No. 1 (17 April 2022): 89.

4 "Positivisation of MUI Fatwa: From Morally Binding to Legally Binding (Case Study MUI Fatwa Against Madurese Shi'ite in Sampang, Madura)": 210-218.

5 "The Demise of Moderate Islam: New Media, Contestation, and Reclaiming Religious Authorities". 1-24.

6 Salih Karim Al-Zanki, "A Critical Reading of Fatwas on Satellite Channels," *Journal of College of Sharia and Islamic Studies*, Vol. 35, No. 2 (2018). 137-199.

7 Suaedy et al. "Language, Authority, and Digital Media: The Impact on the Legitimacy of Fatwas." *Ahkam: Jurnal Ilmu Syariah* 23, No. 1 (2023): 1–24.

8 Suaedy et al. "Language, Authority, and Digital Media."

development has created new conditions for the exercise of religious authority, providing easy access to Islamic moral guidance and extending the reach of muftis deep into the social fabric.¹ In addition, the study highlighted the changing nature of online fatwa consultations, where cyber-muftis face a variety of demands and expectations from individuals, including acting as spiritual, legal, and even financial advisors.² This study highlights the opportunities and challenges that the digital age presents for religious authorities, marking a significant shift in how religious guidance is sought and provided in the modern world.³

These studies underscore the evolving nature of fatwa institutions in the digital age, highlighting the need for adaptation and transformation to maintain their trust and authority. They also highlight the expanding role of muftis and religious scholars, not only as issuers of legal rulings but also as multifaceted guides in a rapidly changing world.

Online platforms have increased accessibility and transparency for scholars issuing fatwas, but also pose challenges in balancing state control and religious autonomy, as well as ensuring autonomy in the online fatwa system. Social media has played a significant role in increasing awareness and accessibility of fatwas among Malaysian Muslims. However, verifying the authenticity and credibility of fatwas disseminated on social media platforms is challenging.⁴ Scholars have also played a crucial role in shaping the use of the internet for religious purposes, including the dissemination of fatwas, in Saudi Arabia.⁵

Additionally, it should be noted that while the literature review includes several studies on the impact of digital technology on the issuance and dissemination of fatwas, there appears to be none that specifically address the factors influencing the digital response to MUI fatwas in Indonesia. This study aims to fill this major research gap.

In this context, the roles of muftis and fatwa institutions have evolved beyond traditional realms. Studies have revealed that in the digital age, Muslims increasingly turn to online muftis for guidance that extends beyond mere legal rulings.⁶ These muftis are now tasked with not only providing religious decrees but also navigating the complexities of modern life challenges, which often require them to consult specialists in various fields. This shift has sparked the need for muftis to redefine their roles and assert the relevance of Islamic legal traditions in contemporary times. However, there is a noticeable gap in research exploring how the digital era, specifically responds to fatwas from institutions such as the MUI, highlighting an area that requires further exploration and understanding.

1 Cyber-Muftis, Digital Fatwas - the Ongoing Transformation of Religious Authority". Daily Sabah, 2019. <https://www.dailysabah.com/op-ed/2019/03/27/cyber-muftis-digital-fatwas-the-ongoing-transformation-of-religious-authority>.

2 Ibid.

3 Ibid.

4 Rosidi, "The Impact of Social Media on the Acceptance of Fatwas Among Malaysian Muslims".

5 Shaheen Sardar Ali, "Cyberspace as Emerging Muslim Discursive Space? Online Fatawa on Women and Gender Relations and its Impact on Muslim Family Law Norms", *International Journal of Law, Policy and the Family* 24, No. 3 (1 October 2010): 338–60.

6 Caeiro, "Cyber-Muftis, Digital Fatwas - the Ongoing Transformation of Religious Authority"; Caeiro, "The Politics of Family Cohesion in the Gulf: Islamic Authority, New Media, and the Logic of the Modern Rentier State".

2. Objectives

This study examines the impact of digital technology on the authority and trust of fatwa institutions, focusing on the Indonesian Ulema Council (MUI) and its fatwas on cryptocurrencies, vaccinations, and boycotts of Israeli products. The study includes an analysis of social media conversations on YouTube. The aim is to explore how digital platforms influence public perceptions of these fatwas, as well as to identify the evolution of the digital public's trust in fatwa institutions.

3. Methods

This study employs Qualitative Content Analysis to explore the trust and authority of the Majelis Ulama Indonesia (MUI) regarding its fatwas on cryptocurrencies, vaccinations, and boycotts of Israeli products. Our research uses QSR NVivo 12 sentiment analysis software and focuses exclusively on data collected from two major digital platforms: (1) YouTube,

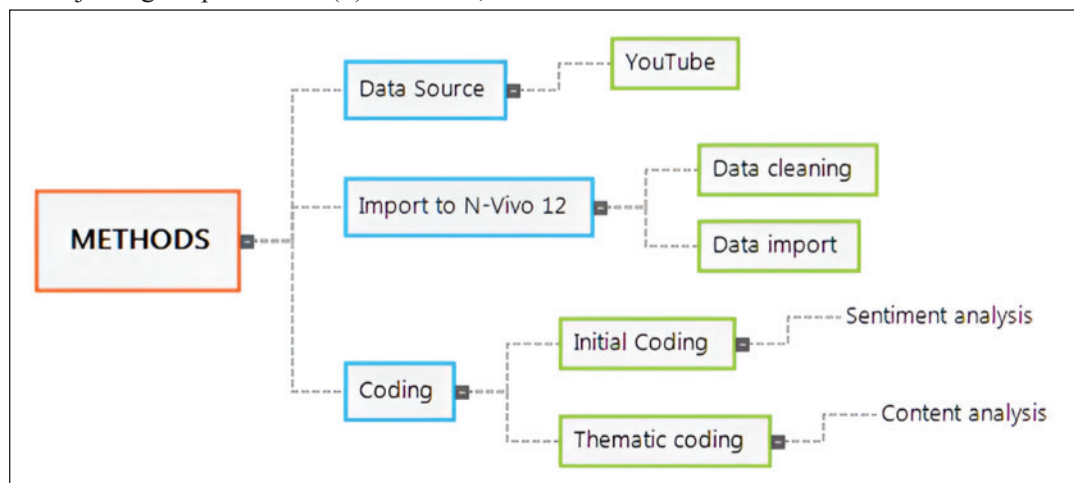


Fig. 1: Diagram of QSR NVivo 12 Sentiment Analysis Method

We selected YouTube as the main source of data collection because of its substantial influence in shaping public opinion and widespread use. YouTube is a leading platform for detailed content, comprising videos and discussions that provide insights into thoughtful and reflective viewpoints. With its extended format, YouTube enables a thorough examination of topics, rendering it an invaluable resource for comprehending nuanced perspectives on fatwas.

This study employs QSR NVivo 12 for Qualitative Content Analysis to comprehensively understand digital attitudes towards fatwas and analyze the connection between netizens and fatwa institutions. The data collection ranges across various digital discussions, systematically sorted per source in NVivo, for extensive examination. Our methodology employs sentiment coding to identify broad perceptions of fatwa institutions and thematic coding to explore deeper themes related to digital dissemination, public perception, and trust in religious guidance on the internet. The accuracy and validity of our findings were fortified by cross-checking them with external sources.

Our research utilizes NVivo's analytical tools to analyze patterns and offer insights into how digital technology is reshaping the dissemination and perception of fatwas by religious institutions. This methodology provides a comprehensive and contextual understanding of the topic, highlighting the evolving dynamics of trust and authority in fatwa institutions in the digital landscape.

4. Results and Discussion

4.1 Negative Sentiment Dominance of Netizens towards Fatwa

4.1.1 Negative Sentiment Dominance of Netizens towards the Vaccine Fatwa

In the present analysis, data from 134 Indonesian YouTube comments from Beritasatu, CNN Indonesia, iNews, and Kompas TV were meticulously examined to discern the sentiment surrounding the discussion of vaccine-related fatwas. Table 1 below indicates a weighted distribution of sentiment, with a pronounced inclination towards negative perceptions.

Table 1: Sentiment Analysis of Vaccine Fatwa by Media Type

Media	A : Very positive	B : Moderately positive	C : Moderately negative	D : Very negative
1 : Beritasatu	0	0	13	2
2 : CNN Indo	1	0	10	1
3 : iNews	0	0	2	0
4 : Kompas TV	1	0	80	24

Analyzing the sentiment distribution in Figure 2, we observe that Beritasatu and Kompas TV are the primary contributors to the 'Moderately Negative' and 'Very Negative' categories. Beritasatu shows a higher count of 'Moderately Negative' references, whereas Kompas TV leads with 'Very Negative' sentiments, suggesting a critical perspective on vaccine-related fatwas within their coverage.

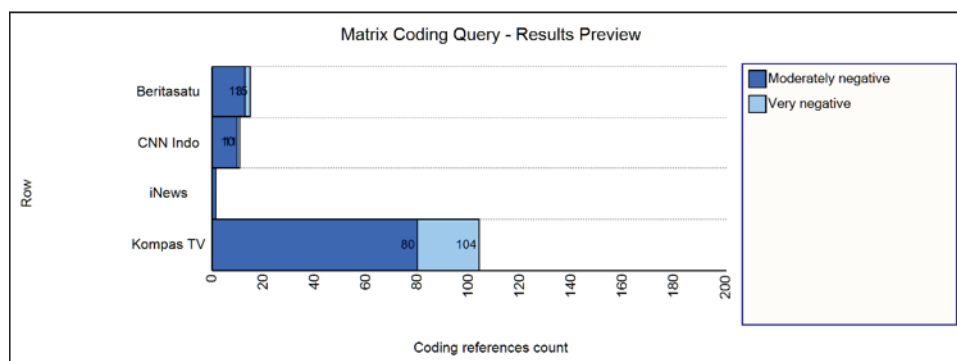


Fig. 2: Negative Sentimen on Vaccine Fatwa

Turning to Figure 3, we observe a stark contrast in the distribution of positive sentiments. Both CNN Indonesia and Kompas TV have 'Moderately Positive' references, but Kompas TV stands alone with a 'Very Positive' sentiment, indicating a more favorable view in some of its reporting.

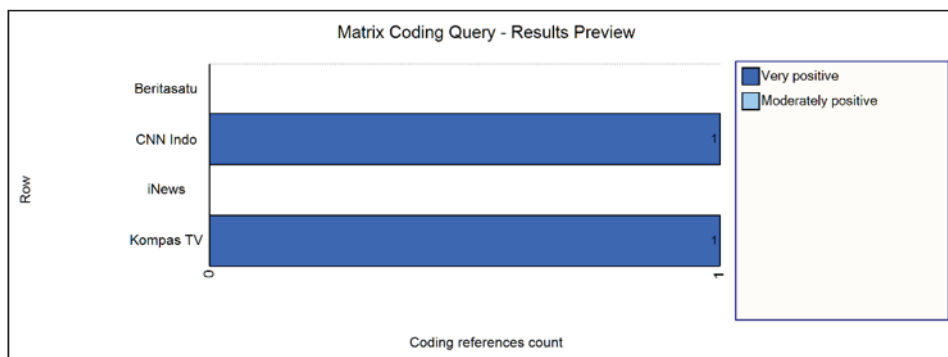


Fig. 3: Positive Sentiment on Vaccine Fatwa

Finally, Figure 4 combines all sentiment categories to provide a comprehensive overview of the media sentiment landscape. Beritasatu and Kompas TV maintained their lead in negative sentiment but also showed a considerable number of ‘Moderately Positive’ sentiments, pointing to a more nuanced reporting stance. CNN Indo showed a notable balance across all sentiment categories, which may reflect a more measured editorial approach.

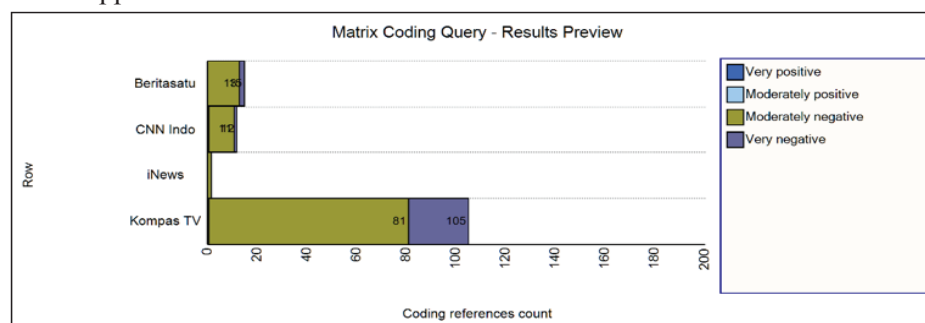


Fig. 4: Negative and Positive Sentiment on Vaccine Fatwa

In summary, these figures collectively suggest a diverse range of sentiments in Indonesian media coverage of vaccine-related fatwas. Beritasatu tends towards critical reporting, Kompas TV displays both supportive and critical stances, and CNN Indonesia shows a balanced sentiment representation. This distribution highlights the complex interplay between media narratives and public sentiment, underscoring the influence of reporting on shaping public discourse on health and religious edicts.

4.1.2 Negative Sentiment Dominance of Netizens towards the Fatwa on Cryptocurrency

In this study, data were analyzed from the comments of netizens found on several YouTube pages, such as Kumparan, CNN, Kompas, iNews, and BeritaSatu, that discussed MUI and NU fatwas related to cryptocurrency. A total of 1,344 netizen comments were processed using N-Vivo software with several sentiment categories: very positive, somewhat positive, very negative, and somewhat negative. The results

showed that negative sentiment was more dominant than positive sentiment.¹

Table 2: Sentiment Analysis of MUI Cryptocurrency Fatwa Based on Media Type

Media Type	Very Positive	Positive	Negative	Very Negative
FATWA MUI Beritasatu	21	87	37	53
FATWA MUI CNN INDO	10	35	146	267
MUI iNews FATWA	4	10	112	0
FATWA MUI Kompas Tv Youtube 2	5	27	57	92
FATWA MUI Kompas TV Youtube 1	0	0	64	1
FATWA MUI KUMPARAN	0	8	28	62
FATWA NU CNN INDO	0	10	13	8
Fatwa NU Kompas	0	20	6	161

Table 2 was analyzed using NVivo software in several categories: very positive, fairly positive, very negative, and fairly negative. The results indicate that negative sentiment is more dominant than positive sentiment.

The lack of a comprehensive understanding of the content and context of fatwas is one of the factors that causes many negative comments, as shown in Table 1. Therefore, fatwa institutions such as the MUI and NU need to better socialize these fatwas to the public through social media. In addition, scholars and muftis must educate the public about the concepts of Islamic economics and their application in the context of cryptocurrency. Based on the previous analysis, several classifications of netizens' responses were found as follows:

1. Some netizens feel that the Crypto Fatwa is an appropriate action because it reminds people of religious provisions regarding transactions and investments.
2. However, some netizens consider the Crypto Fatwa a form of government intervention in investment freedom.
3. Some doubt the credibility of the Crypto Fatwa because it is considered too slow to respond to the cryptocurrency phenomenon that has been present for several years.
4. However, some view the Crypto Fatwa as an important action to maintain national economic stability and protect the public from unclear investment risks.

1 kumparan, "MUI Terbitkan Fatwa Haram Uang Kripto, Bitcoin Dan Pinjol", 2021, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Rhi6qKb-bXtY>; Cnn Indonesia Tv, "VIDEO: Nahdatul Ulama Jatim Keluarkan Fatwa Haram Uang Kripto", 2021, <https://www.cnnindonesia.com/tv/20211104162420-407-716688/video-nahdatul-ulama-jatim-keluarkan-fatwa-haram-uang-kripto>; KOMPASTV, "MUI Terbitkan Fatwa Haram Pinjol Dan Kripto", 2021, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VOQH0UQ9DfQ>; iNews id, "Ijtima Ulama MUI Putuskan Uang "Crypto" Haram", 2021, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=a0JpWN0KYPc>; BeritaSatu, "MUI Haramkan Mata Uang Kripto", 2021, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vDRXEBTWRCI>.

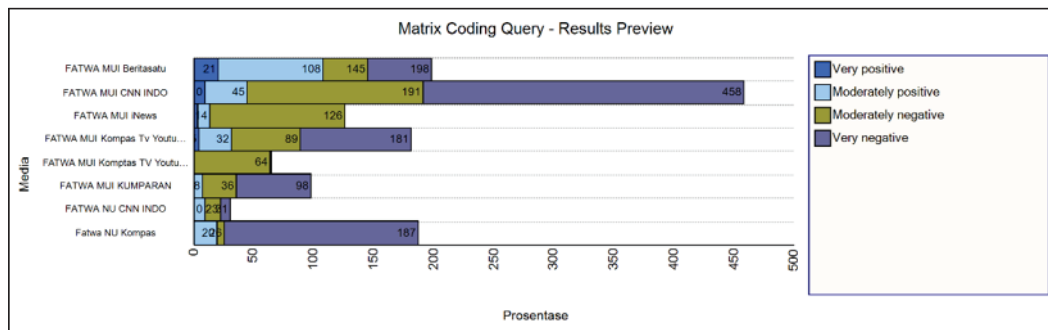


Fig. 5: Sentiment Analysis of Coding Matrix based on Media Type

The sentiment of netizens towards cryptocurrency fatwas, as shown in Figure 2, can vary depending on various factors, such as the level of religious and technological understanding, views on investment, and personal experience. Some Netizens may support the fatwa because they believe that cryptocurrency investment is contrary to Islamic principles, such as usury and speculation. However, some netizens question the relevance of the fatwa given the constantly evolving economic and technological conditions.

Of the 1,344 netizen comments analyzed, 18% had a positive sentiment and 82% had a negative sentiment towards the MUI and NU fatwas related to cryptocurrency. To better understand the results, Figures 6 and 7 were created, showing the sentiment of each comment and providing a visual understanding of the findings of this study. Figures 6 and 7 can help identify patterns and trends in comment sentiment.

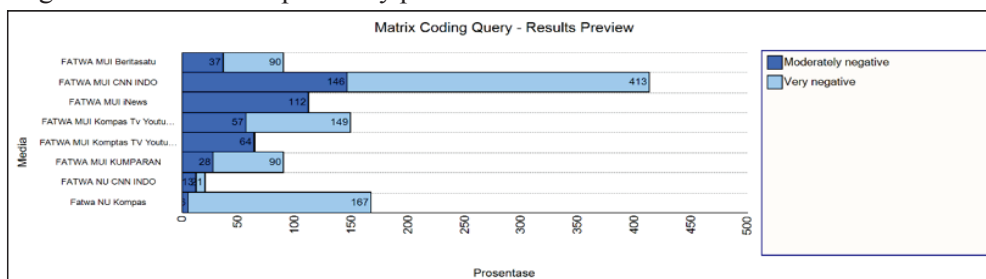


Fig. 6: Patterns and trends of Matrix Coding in sentiment based on Media Type

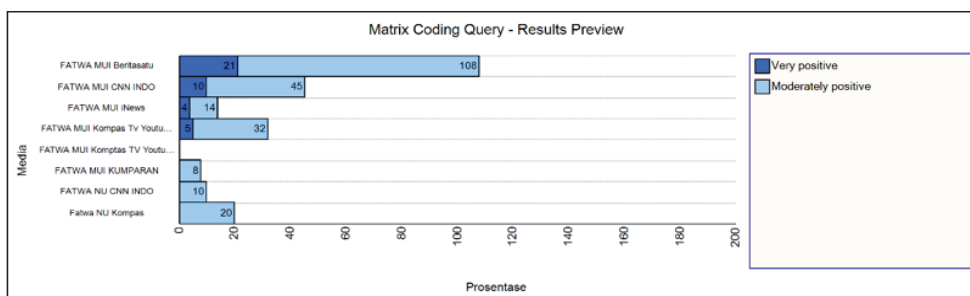


Fig. 7: Patterns and trends of Matrix Coding in sentiment based on Media Type

According to Figures 6 and 7, the analysis by CNN Indo shows that most people held negative views on the decision (Fatwa) about cryptocurrency by a religious organization called MUI. Of the 413 comments

on the decision, 90% expressed negative sentiment. This negative sentiment is consistent across various platforms, such as Kompas 1's YouTube news, which has 100% negative comments, and Kompas 2, which has 82% negative comments. The only platform where sentiment towards the decision is less negative is Beritasatu's YouTube news, where only 45% of comments are negative. This trend indicates dissatisfaction and general disagreement with the MUI's stance on cryptocurrency among internet users. Additionally, the Beritasatu and CNN Indo YouTube accounts received the most positive responses compared to other news sites, as shown in Figures 3 and 4.

4.1.3 Negative Sentiment Dominance of Netizens towards the Boycott Israel Fatwa

In this study, data were analyzed from netizens' comments found on official YouTube sites such as BBC News, CNBC Indo, CNN Indo, Kompas TV, and tvOneNews discussing the fatwa for the boycott of Israeli products issued by MUI. A total of 10,134 netizens' comments were processed using NVivo software with multiple sentiment categories. The results of the study show netizens' reactions to the fatwa.

Table 3: Sentiment Analysis of the Boycott Fatwa by Media Type

Media	A : Moderately negative	B: Very negative	C : Very Positive	D : Moderately Positive
1: BBC News_Boycott Fatwa	139	130	32	102
2: CNBC Inso_Boycott Fatwa	1774	1401	696	1375
3: CNN Indo_Boycott Fatwa	1399	858	398	747
4: Kompas TV_Boycott Fatwa	56	41	14	24
5: tvOne News_Boycott Fatwa	291	244	145	268

CNN Indonesia received 1,399 negative references and 398 positive references, showing considerable engagement from netizens on the platform (Table 3). In contrast, CNBC Indonesia received the highest number of negative references (3,175), indicating significant viewer sentiment towards this subject.

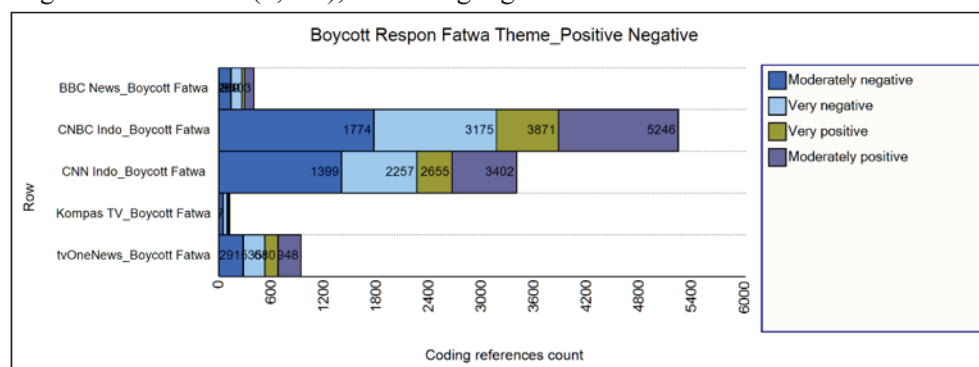


Fig. 8: Positive and Negative Sentiment on Boycott Fatwa

In contrast, Figure 8 shows that positive responses, as shown in the figure, although in lower numbers, also show a significant trend, particularly on the CNBC Indonesia platform, with 2,071 positive references. This suggests that there are groups of netizens who support or have a more balanced view of the boycott fatwa. However, when we consider that TVOneNews only shows 145 positive references compared to 535 negative references, it is clear that there is an even dominance of negative sentiment across almost all

platforms.

This pattern indicates that there is significant room for MUI to develop more depth and nuance in their communication. Given the dominance of negative sentiments, as clearly seen through these numbers, the need for a more inclusive and educative dialogue is crucial. This will not only address the concerns and confusion that netizens may face but also help shape a more positive public perception of future fatwa decisions.

Given the mainly unfavorable netizen sentiment towards the product boycott fatwa, MUI could surpass the standard socialization strategy by presenting interactive dialogues that enable a live exchange of ideas, including Q&A sessions on social media, where inquiries can be asked and answered in real time, which could advance the clarification of misunderstandings. Collaborating with influential Muslim community members can enhance the effectiveness of this message by presenting fatwas in an engaging and relatable manner. This approach not only sheds light on the Islamic economic principles upon which the fatwa is based but also highlights the practical implications of adhering to it in the contemporary economic context. By presenting concrete case studies and real-life examples, MUI can assist individuals in envisioning the positive impact of guidance. It also promotes more informed decision-making by providing a comprehensive exploration of how these principles apply to various economic situations. This comprehensive approach can deepen one's understanding of contemporary economic issues and reduce the uncertainty that Muslim practitioners may feel.

4.2 Netizens' Perspectives on Fatwa MUI

4.2.1 Netizens' Perspectives on the MUI's Vaccine Fatwa

The word cloud in Figure 9 is drawn from the discourse of the Indonesian Ulema Council's (MUI) fatwa on COVID-19 vaccines, focusing on the dominant concerns and sentiments in society. Words such as "emergency," "vaccine," "healthy," and "sacred" are dominant, as shown in the figure. The significant size of "emergency" indicates the urgency of the issue being responded to about the MUI fatwa, while the words "vaccine" and "healthy" reflect the understanding of the public health response as a priority. Simultaneously, the presence of the word "sacred" suggests an ongoing dialogue about how these actions align with or challenge religious principles.



Fig. 9: World Cloud Theme on Vaccine Fatwa

Figure 10 illustrates the results of an NVivo auto-coding analysis, categorizing netizen responses to the MUI fatwa on vaccines across different media sources. Each bar represents the number of references to specific themes—‘emergency,’ ‘halal,’ ‘haram,’ ‘vaccine,’ and ‘word’—within the content from news sources such as Beritasatu, CNN Indonesia, iNews, and Kompas TV. Notably, ‘vaccine’ was the most referenced theme, particularly in Kompas TV’s content, suggesting a high level of engagement with the topic. References to Halal are also prominent, especially in the iNews data, indicating significant discussions around religious dietary laws. In contrast, the themes of ‘emergency,’ ‘haram,’ and ‘word’ have fewer references, suggesting that these aspects were less dominant in the discourse captured from the analyzed media sources.

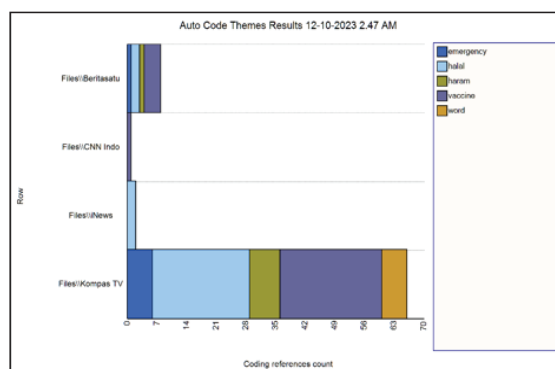


Fig. 10: Theme Coding Result on Vaccine Fatwa

4.2.1.1 Evaluating Emergencies through a Religious Lens

Upon closer examination, the conversation thread revealed concerns about the vaccine content concerning the laws governing halal food, which are central to the Islamic faith. Users such as @M.AZIZI.93 and @santringarep3072 raised concerns about the use of potentially non-halal ingredients, such as pork oil, suggesting a broader unease about the ethical composition of vaccines. The discussion also delved into the justification for the use of vaccines in “emergency” situations, with comments by users such as @irwanf7143, asking ‘whether the urgency of the situation had been thoroughly considered by religious authorities?’ This question suggests a critical examination of the conditions under which religious exemptions are made, especially in life-threatening situations.

4.2.1.2 The Quest for Clarity and Transparency

Moreover, this discourse underscores the demand for transparency and decisiveness in religious decision-making, with netizens such as @sutanmudokhalifah calling for a clear demarcation between what is ‘halal’ and ‘haram.’ This clarity is not only for spiritual peace but also for practical compliance. The mention of “family,” “time,” and “desire” indicates that personal and family priorities are heavily influenced by religious statements. In addition, the comments imply a questioning of the role of government and religious institutions in the vaccine rollout, evidenced by a level of skepticism or distrust subtly suggested in comments such as @rikihariyanto1571’s vague “umbrella corp 👍 this...”.

4.2.1.3 *Skepticism and the Role of Authority*

The analysis also uncovered a thread of skepticism toward the roles of government and religious institutions in vaccine distribution, with comments hinting at distrust. The vague reference to an “umbrella corp” by @rikihariyanto1571 potentially alludes to conspiracy theories or corporate mistrust within the vaccine narrative. This element introduces a subtext of governance and institutional trust, which interlaces with the ‘Vaccine’ theme, showing that netizens’ responses are informed not only by religious guidance but also by perceptions of institutional integrity.

4.2.1.4 *Communication as the Keystone of Public Health Initiatives*

The collective narrative shaped by these comments highlights the essential role of effective communication in the acceptance and success of public health initiatives, particularly when they intersect with the deeply held religious values of the community. This necessitates sensitive, inclusive, and well-articulated responses from religious leaders and health authorities. Additionally, this discourse requires that religious decisions take into account the complexities of modern medical science and that they are communicated in ways that are accessible and reassuring to the public. The intricate relationship between religion, health, and governance exposed by this analysis underscores the challenges of managing health emergencies in religiously observant societies.

Through content analysis, the netizens’ discourse surrounding MUI’s vaccine fatwa was revealed to be a complex dialogue intertwining ethical considerations, personal values, and institutional trust. The interplay of these themes offers a nuanced view of how a religiously observant society navigates the challenges posed by a pandemic, highlighting the critical need for clarity, empathy, and transparency in the interdependent realms of religion, health, and governance.

4.2.2 Netizens’ Perspectives on the MUI’s Cryptocurrency Fatwa

The exploration of netizens’ perspectives on the MUI’s cryptocurrency fatwa revealed a multifaceted debate infused with comparisons to established financial instruments and concerns about legal and economic legitimacy. This section navigates through the complex views held by netizens, drawing parallels between the decentralized nature of cryptocurrencies like Bitcoin and familiar digital payment platforms such as Gopay. Through their discourse, we uncover a tapestry of opinions that challenge the fatwa’s validity, framed by their understanding of cryptocurrencies’ functions and their place in the modern economic ecosystem.

4.2.2.1 *Cryptocurrency is seen by netizens as similar to Gopay*

Digital netizens view cryptocurrency as similar to Gopay (an e-wallet service in Indonesia). This understanding has triggered their opposition to the fatwa on cryptocurrency issued by the MUI and NU.

“If there is a concrete form of buying and selling, buying and selling services, there is also no concrete form. Gopay is also the same. If it is called a cryptocurrency asset, it is not clear what

it is, and a cryptocurrency asset is worth how much. It is clear how much it costs and where it can be bought or sold, based on its underlying value. If there is none, then there will be no buying and selling. If the transaction is money for money, forex is a more money-for-money transaction. Buying dollars and rupiah for exchange is money for money. If the speculative price of TTG increases, it goes back to the issue of stocks. Stocks are also speculative. The rise and fall in land prices, the rise and fall in gold prices, etc., are all based on assumptions. If there is no guarantee, it is a blockchain system, and its validation is decentralized. If it is called gambling, it could be speculative again. Going back to stocks, gold, land, forex, oil, etc., are all the same. In addition, if the price fluctuates, the cooking oil also fluctuates. Vegetables in the market are also fluctuating.”¹

4.2.2.2 *Crypto is equal to Rupiah (IDR)*

Netizens believe that if the Rupiah (IDRO can be used as a medium of exchange and the Rupiah (IDR) does not have an underlying asset, then the conditions are the same as for crypto.

“Buy crypto in Indonesia using Rupiah, sold also in Rupiah, crypto is not a currency in Indonesia, I really want to hear the explanation. 2. Cryptocurrency is a part of blockchain technology. Have you understood the blockchain? 3. Currently, the technology sector is working on integrating blockchain; for example, this news is only on the YouTube platform; in the future, it will also be on the blockchain platform; this will become a unity in our daily lives. This statement is far from its basic understanding and is not connected.”²

“Crypto speculation, stocks are also the same speculation. The stock price is also not in line with the actual value of the company; if no one buys the stock, the stock price will not rise. All speculation when talking about speculation. Stocks can also rise based on the law of supply and demand. Prices rise not based on the company’s performance. If you prohibit crypto but justify stocks, then you need to explore and re-examine; it is true/false, as you say. It should not be simply called halal/haram. Stocks and crypto are the same; if someone answers stocks, there is an underlying asset, namely the company itself, while crypto does not have one. Do electric tokens have physical assets? Does the credit on your phone include physical assets? Now, I ask, is there really an underlying asset? Is there a reserve? Even if there is an underlying asset, what underlies it is trust. We believe that the dollar has value, the dollar has value, even though the dollar is just printed paper and there are no reserves. Crypto Haram Halal Stocks? You enter stocks, the gambling agent throws tens of thousands of lots, and as a result, the stock price decreases. Is this speculation? Is it not harmful? The point is that if one thing is haram, everything is haram because of the way they work together, and crypto is the same; the ebb

1 CNN Indonesia, “VIDEO: Nahdatul Ulama Jatim Keluarkan Fatwa Haram Uang Kripto”, 2021, <https://www.cnnindonesia.com/tv/20211104162420-407-716688/video-nahdatul-ulama-jatim-keluarkan-fatwa-haram-uang-kripto>.

2 Ibid.

and flow is based on supply and demand, the law of demand and supply; if demand (buyers) is high but supply (sellers) is low, then the price will go up, and vice versa, if demand is low but supply is high, then the price will go down, stocks and crypto are the same. Crypto was created to fight against banks. If you hold fiat money every year, it is subject to inflation, and its value continues to decrease. If you hold crypto, its value will continue to grow because the supply is limited, unlike fiat money, which can be printed as much as desired. Sending crypto from one person to another or from one country to another is also peer-to-peer without going through a third party. The cost is cheap, whether transferring small or large amounts, the costs are the same, and the process is also fast, in seconds, it reaches the recipient. It can transfer 1 million, 10 million, 100 million, 1M, and 100m/1T, and the cost will not change; only the \$1 transaction fee is required, and the lightning process takes seconds. When sending fiat money between countries, can it be done in seconds? Can the price be so low? It must go through a third party, which takes a long time and is expensive. Is crypto harmful? Crypto is far more useful, but is it legitimate? You need to learn again, because if it is only religious knowledge, it is.¹

4.2.2.3 Cryptocurrency is not the same as Rupiah because it is illegal

Another perspective arises from internet users, who generally understand the reasons behind the prohibition of cryptocurrency in Indonesia. They believe that legal protection for cryptocurrency in this country is still lacking, making it deserving of its illegal status.

“It should be emphasized that cryptocurrency is haram because it is not recognized in Indonesia as a currency/payment, because what is legitimate according to the law is Rupiah and not cryptocurrency, unless it is not used as a currency, it is allowed, for example, for trading, investment, or the like, with certain conditions.”²

“The problem is that if cryptocurrency is used as a currency, it is not stable, unlike the Rupiah, which is maintained by BI with foreign exchange reserves. If it is a commodity, it is also not possible because cryptocurrencies like Bitcoin do not have real value; by real value, I mean the usefulness of the object. For example, gold and silver can still be used in jewelry and electronics. As for stock ownership in companies, if it is done for trading, I think it is haram because it is called an investment; it is better to earn money from the company’s profits, not from buying and selling stocks.”³

“In reality, it is possible, but if it is a pure asset like Bitcoin, it cannot be done. If an object is said to be an asset, it can be used like gold, which is used as jewelry, or rice, which can be

1 Ibid.

2 BeritaSatu, “MUI Haramkan Mata Uang Kripto”.

3 KOMPASTV, “MUI Terbitkan Fatwa Haram Pinjol Dan Kripto”.

eaten. As a currency, it is clear that it can be used, but there must be an institution that makes its value stable, such as BI, which maintains the value of the Rupiah to remain stable by using foreign exchange reserves, so that it is not too high in two arrivals and also does not suddenly fall. For example, the Rupiah is stable at 15 thousand, rising to 14 thousand for a long time, which is good so that buyers and sellers do not feel disadvantaged.”¹

4.2.2.4 *The Weakness of Fatwa Literacy among Netizens*

This study also found that the understanding of the position of fatwa among internet users is still weak. Internet users believe that fatwas should be followed, but they also equate the conditions of fatwas from country to country. This shows that there is a lack of understanding of the nuances and contexts surrounding fatwas. A fatwa is a religious decision or opinion issued by a scholar or Muslim legal expert. This decision can vary depending on the specific context and issues being addressed. For example, a fatwa issued in one country may not apply in another because of different cultural and legal contexts.

“The new law from MUI is clearly a fintech progress. In countries like the UAE, they don’t know if it will happen, and in New York, there will be a crypto school curriculum.”²

“A smart Muslim should comply with the MUI fatwa that prohibits CRYPTO, you should sell it completely and you will enter heaven ... and I bought all of it, oh happy moment ... the most beautiful moment.”³

“However, this fatwa is speculative and harmful (ghoror). It is funny to issue a haram fatwa against something that is not fully understood. If you ask about the form, it is a digital asset. The term digital is understood as being equated with a physical object. If asked about its function, ask the actors/investors/holders, and the fact is that they can gain many benefits. Hopefully, the MUI administrators will learn and be aware of technology, so it’s not even funnier.”⁴

In conclusion, the study found that internet users have a weak understanding of the position of fatwas and tend to equate the conditions of fatwas from one country to another. This highlights the need for education and awareness of the nuances and contexts surrounding fatwas. Individuals need to understand that fatwas are not legally binding and can vary depending on the circumstances. Overall, everyone must have a proper understanding of this topic before making any assumptions.

4.2.3 *Netizens’ Perspectives on the MUI’s Boycott Fatwa*

Based on N-Vivo, we found that there were different reactions to the fatwa on boycotting Israeli products issued by the MUI. The themes that dominated this discussion included “boycott,” “countries,” “fatwa,” “halal,” and “Palestine,” as shown in the figure:

1 Ibid.

2 CNN Indonesia, “VIDEO: Nahdatul Ulama Jatim Keluarkan Fatwa Haram Uang Kripto”.

3 Ibid.

4 Ibid.

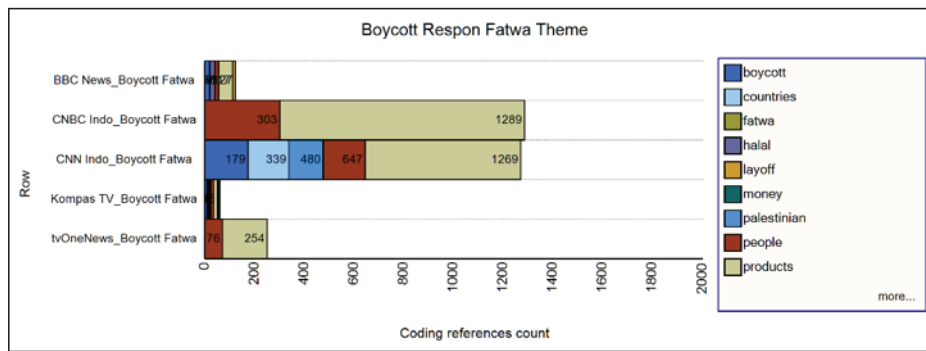


Fig. 11: Theme Coding Result on Boycott Fatwa

On the CNN Indonesia platform, there were 1,269 references relating to the fatwa, suggesting that netizens' responses mirrored the sense of urgency regarding the issue. Analyzing netizens' responses to the MUI fatwa shows a noteworthy split in opinion. On one side, @putrabastem4927 expressed positive responses by endorsing the boycott as a form of solidarity. However, netizens like @MariCerdas-gr5wf expressed a negative response, critiquing the fatwa as a political instrument insufficiently grounded in religious support. Similarly, @rehanchaniago5264 criticized the arbitrary issuance of fatwas. These reactions represent a broader social conversation on the role and influence of religious establishments in public policy and social affairs. The discourse surrounding MUI's fatwa on the boycott of Israeli products was influenced by various factors.

4.2.3.1 *Boycott Fatwa as a Form of Solidarity with Palestine*

Positively, individuals such as @putrabastem4927 supported the boycott as an act of solidarity. Discussions on specific products often involve political and ethical considerations. Advocates of boycotting Israeli products, such as @kacer_mania, demonstrate how product selection can serve as a means of political expression and solidarity. In this context, the focus of netizens' consideration leans more towards aspects of solidarity than compliance with the fatwa itself. Comments from users like @kacer_mania endorsing the boycott are indicative of solidarity with Palestine, underscoring the continued relevance of the Palestinian issue in international politics.

4.2.3.2 *Implications of Boycott Fatwa on Product Halalness*

The issue of halal certification in the context of the boycott fatwa is a significant topic among netizens. Individuals such as @suryantosurya1580 voiced confusion regarding the application of halal labels amid the boycotts. Conversely, @sandibarkah criticized the use of halal labels, suggesting their potential misuse for political or social objectives.

4.2.3.3 *Boycott Fatwa and Its Oversight of Macroeconomic Aspects*

From a financial perspective, some view the boycott, like @jobsekeers5856, as a matter of personal choice, reflecting a positive attitude toward individual consumption freedom. However, concerns raised by @RahmatIsmail-jp4bj emphasize the negative effects of boycotts on economic and social welfare. Public

worries about policy impacts are clear, with @aunusanebre3053 highlighting the risk of employee layoffs due to the boycott. The issue of layoffs in the context of specific product boycotts is further supported by an anonymous comment in the subsequent quotation, stressing the potential for widespread job loss.

4.2.3.4 *Boycott Fatwas and International Relations*

In terms of international relations, particularly concerning Israel, netizens such as @nonae commented on the influence of international dynamics on the Israeli economy. Others, such as @petrussole3223 and @hjsriatyhadiatyhadi6919, expressed concerns about the interplay between international politics and domestic economic conditions. For instance, @nonae noted the interconnectedness between global political trends and the Israeli economic landscape.

4.2.3.5 *Boycott as a Personal Choice*

The boycott of certain products, notably those associated with Israel, garnered support from some netizens. For instance, @kacer_mania asserts, “Do not hesitate to boycott; a decision to boycott does not require prolonged deliberation.” Similarly, @azizpr4t4m47 commented on the need to reduce dependency on foreign products. In these discussions, netizens generally viewed product boycotts favorably, yet emphasized their nature as a personal decision, thereby questioning the necessity of a fatwa in this context.

4.3 **Ideal Model for Dissemination of Fatwa: Learning from the Negative Responses to MUI’s Fatwa in Indonesia**

Understanding and appropriately responding to various netizens’ reactions to fatwas issued by the Indonesian Ulema Council (MUI) is essential for developing an effective fatwa dissemination strategy in Indonesia. In an ever-evolving digital age, religious institutions encounter unique challenges in conveying their guidance and decisions to an increasingly online society. The following outlines an ideal model for fatwa dissemination in the digital age:

4.3.1 *Inclusive Approach and Marketing Fatwas*

The necessity for an all-encompassing method and proficient communication is especially apparent when contemplating netizens’ reactions to MUI fatwas. In the present digital epoch, the dynamics of religious discourse demand an astute comprehension of how digital platforms alter the mode of delivering and construing theological messages. The online environment presents new prospects for religious discourse, requiring various inclusive communication strategies to efficiently involve a broad online audience. This aligns with Hoover and Echchaibi, who explored the impact of digital media on religious communication.¹ Digital platforms provide new arenas for religious discourse, requiring inclusive and varied communication strategies to engage diverse online audiences.

1 *The Third Spaces of Digital Religion, The Third Spaces of Digital Religion* (Taylor & Francis, 2023), <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781003048190>.

Moreover, the role of digital media in shaping public discourse is crucial. Papacharissi underscores the significance of digital media in shaping public discourse.¹ This research is relevant to the discussion on how fatwas are received and debated online, emphasizing the importance of inclusive communication that engages netizens in meaningful debates about such religious decrees. The internet, functioning as a new public sphere, offers a unique platform for deliberation and discussion of religious decisions such as fatwas. This electronic platform necessitates cautious navigation to ensure the widespread dissemination and constructive debate of religious messages while accommodating diverse audiences.

In the realm of religious communication, particularly in the dissemination of fatwas by Majelis Ulama Indonesia (MUI), intercultural understanding is increasingly vital. Given the Muslim community's multifaceted composition, which spans a broad spectrum of cultural and ethnic identities, tailoring religious messages, such as fatwas, is crucial. This customization ensures that these significant pronouncements resonate across various groups, acknowledging and respecting their diverse cultural and interpretative frameworks. In this vein, MUI fatwas should be crafted with a keen awareness of these varied backgrounds and interpretive lenses. This approach not only ensures comprehensive and inclusive communication but also fosters a deeper understanding and respect for the plurality of interpretations and practices within the Muslim community.

The necessity of employing marketing strategies in the dissemination of fatwas is underscored by their significant influence on Muslim consumer behavior, particularly in the context of social issues and economics. According to Hashim and Mizerski, fatwa rulings have been shown to directly impact marketplace behaviors, guiding Muslims in their choices regarding permissible and prohibited products and brands.² This influence is further nuanced by the fact that Muslim consumers tend to source information on controversial fatwa rulings through informal channels, suggesting diverse information sources and preferences. In this context, the strategic marketing of fatwas is essential. It involves not only understanding the religious and ethical implications of these rulings but also navigating the complex landscape of consumer behavior. Effective marketing strategies should focus on clear communication, accessible fatwa rulings through various channels, and sensitivity to the diverse interpretations and needs of Muslim consumers. This approach can ensure that fatwa rulings are not only religiously sound but also culturally and contextually relevant, aiding their broader acceptance and application in the daily lives of Muslims.

In summary, the combination of theoretical perspectives emphasizes the need for an inclusive and efficient communication strategy for MUI fatwas. This strategy should engage diverse and digitally connected audiences, encourage constructive dialogue, and boost overall Islamic legal literacy within the Muslim community.

1 "The Virtual Sphere: The Internet as a Public Sphere", *New Media and Society* 4, No. 1 (2002): 9–27, <https://doi.org/10.1177/1461444022226244>.

2 "Exploring Muslim Consumers' Information Sources for Fatwa Rulings on Products and Behaviors", *Journal of Islamic Marketing* 1, No. 1 (26 March 2010): 37–50, <https://doi.org/10.1108/17590831011026213>.

4.3.2 Strengthening the Trust and Authority of Fatwa Institutions

According to a survey conducted by the Indonesian Survey Institute (LSI) in 2020, the majority of Indonesians (approximately 73%) still trust the authority of the MUI Fatwa Council to determine Islamic law.¹ This indicates that fatwa institutions still hold significant influence over the Indonesian population.²

Furthermore, in practice, fatwa decisions issued by the MUI Fatwa Council also significantly impact government policy and community religious practices.³ For example, the MUI fatwa on vaccination in 2020 influenced the Indonesian government's policy in addressing the COVID-19 pandemic.⁴ The fatwa also affected the public's perception and behavior towards vaccination.⁵

Systematically, the supervision of the MUI Fatwa Council by the National Sharia Council (DSN) and the Indonesian Ulama Council (MUI) can also strengthen the authority of the fatwa.⁶ This supervision is carried out to ensure that the issued fatwas are in accordance with the basic principles of Islamic law and are not contradictory to the values of Pancasila and the Constitution.

However, why did negative responses occur towards the fatwa? The answer is that the authority and its relationship with sources of power influence the strength of a fatwa. Therefore, scholars and muftis must improve their expertise and authority as fatwa issuers and strengthen their support from prominent scholars and the community.

In addition, the expertise and reputation of scholars and muftis involved in the fatwa-issuing process can

- 1 Hadikusuma Riza and Sabar Waluyo Yoyok, "Sikap Dan Pandangan Masyarakat Terhadap Fatwa-Fatwa Majelis Ulama Indonesia (MUI) (Studi Kasus Pada Civitas Akademika Politeknik Negeri Jakarta)", *Epigram*, 2014, 68–79, <https://jurnal.pnj.ac.id/index.php/epigram/article/view/450>; Majelis Ulama Indonesia, "Survei: MUI Lembaga Non-Pemerintah Paling Dipercaya Masyarakat", 2019, <https://mui.or.id/berita/24913/survei-mui-lembaga-non-pemerintah-paling-dipercaya-masyarakat/>.
- 2 Riza and Yoyok, "Sikap dan Pandangan Masyarakat Terhadap Fatwa-Fatwa Majelis Ulama Indonesia (MUI) (Studi Kasus Pada Civitas Akademika Politeknik Negeri Jakarta)", 68–79.
- 3 Akrom Auladi, "Kuasa Pengetahuan Masyarakat dan Analisis Hirarki Maqâsid Syari'ah Terhadap Fatwa MUI Tentang Pencegahan Penyebaran Covid-19", *Syariati: Jurnal Studi Al-Qur'an dan Hukum* 6, No. 1 (2020): 31–42.
- 4 Auladi. Kuasa Pengetahuan Masyarakat dan Analisis Hirarki Maqâsid Syari'ah Terhadap Fatwa MUI Tentang Pencegahan Penyebaran Covid-19.
- 5 T. N. Putri, "Efektivitas Fatwa Mui No 33 Tahun 2018 Tentang Penggunaan Vaksin MR (Measles Rubella) Produk Dari Sii (Serum Intitute of India) Untuk Imunisasi (Studi Kasus Di Kecamatan Jetis Kabupaten Ponorogo)" (IAIN Ponorogo, 2019), [http://etheses.iainponorogo.ac.id/5620/1/TRISTINNA NAWIDIA PUTRI %28210214189%29 EFEKTIVITAS FATWA MUI NO 33 TAHUN 2018 TENTANG PENGUNAAN VAKSIN MR.pdf](http://etheses.iainponorogo.ac.id/5620/1/TRISTINNA%20PUTRI%20%28210214189%29%20EFEKTIVITAS%20FATWA%20MUI%20NO%2033%20TAHUN%202018%20TENTANG%20PENGUNAAN%20VAKSIN%20MR.pdf); S. M. Kusumaninghati, "Pengaruh Religiusitas Dan Pengetahuan Tentang Fatwa MUI No. 33 Tahun 2018 Terhadap Keputusan Masyarakat Menggunakan Vaksin MR Untuk Imunisasi Di Desa ...", (IAIN Ponorogo, 2020), <http://etheses.iainponorogo.ac.id/12296/>; Nur Alifyah Darwis, "Tinjauan Yuridis Fatwa Majelis Ulama Indonesia Terhadap Vaksin Covid-19", *Skripsi Universitas Hasanuddin* (Universitas Hasanuddin, 2022).
- 6 Ahmad Badrut Tamam, "Kedudukan Fatwa Majelis Ulama Indonesia (MUI) dan Fatwa Dewan Syariah Nasional (DSN) Dalam Sistem Hukum Indonesia", *Al-Musthofa: Journal Of Sharia Economics* 4, no. 2 (2021): 172–81; Noor Kholifah Hidayati, Ro'fah Setyowati, and Ninik Zakiyah, "Peran Dewan Pengawas Syariah (DPS) Dan Dewan Syariah Nasional Majelis Ulama Indonesia (DSN-MUI) Dalam Pengembangan Industri Wisata Halal Indonesia", *Jurnal Masharif Al-Syariah: Jurnal Ekonomi Dam Perbankan Syariah* 6, no. 3 (2021): 688, <https://doi.org/10.30651/jms.v6i3.7585>.

strengthen the fatwa's authority.¹ For example, fatwas issued by scholars or muftis recognized as authorities in their fields, such as Quraish Shihab, will be more respected by the public and have greater influence than fatwas issued by lesser-known or perceived as less competent scholars or muftis.²

Furthermore, support from fatwa officials and the community is important to strengthen the authority of the fatwa. Fatwa officials, such as the MUI, DSN, and the Indonesian Ulama Council, must continue to strengthen their capacity and credibility in providing fatwas that are in line with Indonesia's social, cultural, and political contexts.³ In addition, the community needs to be encouraged to continually strengthen their religious literacy so that they can understand and apply fatwas correctly and promptly.

In this analysis, we also investigated the complex relationship between religious fatwas, public opinion, and vaccine acceptance, particularly in the context of the Indonesian Ulema Council (MUI) fatwa on COVID-19 vaccines. Regarding this issue, Ayuniyyah et al. stated that vaccine fatwas in Muslim-majority countries such as Indonesia significantly influence people's decisions.⁴

Empirical data collected from netizens' responses provide insights into public sentiment. A word cloud analysis dominated by terms such as "emergency," "vaccine," "healthy," and "holy" underscores the urgency and complexity of addressing the public health crisis within a religious framework. These data corroborate Ayuniyyah et al.'s findings on the importance of religious adherence in vaccine production, emphasizing how public trust relies on religious support.⁵

Furthermore, the N-Vivo coding results, which highlighted themes such as 'halal,' 'haram, and 'vaccine,' aligned with theoretical discussions around the role of religious authority in vaccine acceptance. The prominence of 'halal' discussions in public discourse also aligns with the concerns raised by Wilkins et al. about ingredients such as pig derivatives, which are crucial in shaping public opinion in an Islamic context.⁶ Citizens' calls for clarity and transparency in religious law complement Sukardani et al.'s observations

1 Jajat Burhanuddin, *Ulama & Kekuasaan : Pergumulan Elite Muslim Dalam Sejarah Indonesia* (NouraBooks, 2012).

2 M. Haras Rasyid, "Fatwa Ulama dan Eksistensinya Dalam Menyelesaikan Problema Umat Islam Di Indonesia (Studi Terhadap Fatwa MUI Dalam Pelaksanaan Ibadah Akibat Kasus Corona)", *Ash-Shabah* 7, No.1, (2021): 19; Mohd Kamel Bin Mat Salleh, Mohd Al Adib Bin Samuri, and Mohd Izhar Ariff Bin Mohd Kashim, "Kedudukan Fatwa Dan Pendapat Mufti Sebagai Autoriti Di Mahkamah Syariah Malaysia", *Journal of Contemporary Islamic Law* 1, No. 1 (2016): 1–23; Abidah Masrurah and Muzalifah Muzalifah, "Urgensi Fatwa Mui Dalam Pembangunan Sistem Hukum Ekonomi Islam Di Indonesia", *Indonesian Journal of Shariah and Justice* 2, No. 1 (2022): 67–91, <https://doi.org/10.46339/ijss.v2i1.27>.

3 Nur Indahsari, "Pengalaman Masyarakat Mengimplementasikan Fatwa MUI Tentang Ibadah Dalam Masa Pandemi Covid-19 Di Desa Bonto Birao Kabupaten Pangkep (Tinjauan Sosiologi Agama)", *Makassar: Universitas Muhammadiyah Makassar*, 2021, ii–118; Raudhah Tul Jannah, "Fenomena Dan Respon Atas Fatwa Haram MPU Aceh Terhadap Game Online Higgs Domino Island Dalam Masyarakat Gampong Panjang Baru Kecamatan Susoh Kabupaten Aceh Barat Daya" (UIN Ar-Raniry, 2021).

4 Ayuniyyah et al. "Factors Affecting Consumers' Decision in Purchasing MUI Halal-Certified Food Products." *Tazkia Islamic Finance and Business Review* 10, No. 2 (2017), 112–143.

5 Ayuniyyah et al. "Factors Affecting Consumers' Decision."

6 "The Acceptance of Halal Food in Non-Muslim Countries: Effects of Religious Identity, National Identification, Consumer Ethnocentrism and Consumer Cosmopolitanism", *Journal of Islamic Marketing* 10, No. 4 (11 November 2019): 1308–31, <https://doi.org/10.1108/JIMA-11-2017-0132>.

on the Indonesian Ulema Council's (MUI) influence on vaccine marketing and acceptance. This finding indicates that transparency is an absolute requirement for MUI to accept the vaccine.¹

Moreover, as seen in netizen discourse, skepticism towards the government and religious institutions underscores a deeper narrative of trust and legitimacy in the context of health emergencies. This scepticism, coupled with the demands for effective communication, highlights the critical need for an inclusive and empathetic approach by religious leaders and health authorities.

4.3.3 *Mature Consideration Needed before Issuing a Fatwa*

The complex nature of contemporary issues such as cryptocurrencies, vaccines, and product boycotts requires a deep understanding from muftis, especially regarding the technological, ethical, and social dimensions. Public reaction to fatwas, as observed from netizens' comments, significantly depends on the depth of understanding of these topics by the commenters. The Indonesian Ulama Council's (MUI) fatwa on digital currencies, for example, sparked debates comparing it with traditional financial instruments. Furthermore, the fatwa on vaccines triggered more discussions on halal compliance, emergency conditions, transparency, and ethical consequences. The focus of product boycotts is on their political and social impact. This pattern suggests that it is important for muftis to assimilate technical expertise with social and economic insights, in addition to the ijihad method itself, to promote a wider understanding and acceptance among the public.

In Islamic jurisprudence, the stance on cryptocurrencies varies significantly, reflecting the complexities of integrating modern financial technologies within traditional religious frameworks. The Egyptian Council of Ulema's 2021 fatwa exemplifies a progressive view, permitting cryptocurrency in trading as long as it aligns with Islamic Shariah, and recognizing its potential to enhance financial transactions and payment efficiency. In stark contrast, the Indonesian Council of Ulema (MUI) in 2019 deemed cryptocurrencies incompatible with Islamic financial systems, citing their potential use in illicit transactions and a lack of adherence to the principles of justice in Islam.² This dichotomy underscores the nuanced and context-dependent nature of Islamic rulings regarding emerging financial technologies.

The contrasting approaches of Islamic councils towards cryptocurrencies underscore the necessity of a comprehensive understanding of modern financial technologies within the Islamic legal framework. The Egyptian Council of Ulama's acknowledgment of the potential benefits of cryptocurrencies starkly contrasts with the Indonesian Council of Ulema's concerns about their compatibility with Islamic finance. This dichotomy is not merely a theological debate; it reflects the broader challenge of integrating emerging technologies into established religious doctrine.

1 "Halal Lifestyle: Current Trends In Indonesian Market", in *Proceedings of the 1st International Conference on Social Sciences (ICSS 2018)* (Paris, France: Atlantis Press, 2020), <https://doi.org/10.2991/icss-18.2018.68>.

2 Afrizal Afrizal, Marliyah Marliyah, and Fuadi Fuadi, "Analisis Terhadap Cryptocurrency (Perspektif Mata Uang, Hukum, Ekonomi dan Syariah)", *E-Mabis: Jurnal Ekonomi Manajemen dan Bisnis* 22, No. 2 (2021): 13–41, <https://doi.org/10.29103/e-mabis.v22i2.689>.

Public discourse, particularly among netizens, complicates this narrative. In Indonesia, the debate around the MUI fatwa on cryptocurrencies is multifaceted, with some netizens drawing parallels between cryptocurrencies and conventional digital payment platforms like Gopay, questioning the fatwa's basis, and highlighting the similarities in speculation and value determination with other financial instruments. Others have pointed out the legal and regulatory ambiguities surrounding cryptocurrencies, arguing for a more cautious approach. This divergence in opinion reflects the complexities inherent in understanding and interpreting Islamic law in the context of modern financial systems and signifies the critical role of public perception and awareness in shaping the acceptance and implementation of religious edicts.

Many countries have regulated the use of cryptocurrencies in their financial systems. Some countries have allowed the use of cryptocurrency, whereas others have banned it. This indicates the importance of considering the legal implications of cryptocurrency use before issuing fatwas.¹ In this regard, opinion polls and netizens' public tests are relevant for identifying the indicators that muftis should consider before making a legal decision (fatwa).

From these examples, it can be seen that the approach to issuing fatwas can vary and depend on the interpretation made by the fatwa-giver. However, the expertise and authority of fatwa givers are crucial in determining the strength of fatwas and their impact on society. Therefore, it is important to thoroughly consider cryptocurrency technology and its implications for society before issuing fatwas.

In the context of vaccine fatwas and boycotts of Israeli products, Faidah's study of the AstraZeneca fatwa in Indonesia highlights the critical gap between religious fatwas and public understanding, especially regarding halal certification.² This gap challenges the expectation that religious endorsement directly leads to public acceptance, underscoring the need for effective communication and public education to align religious laws with public perception and knowledge.

Similarly, an analysis of consumer boycott fatwas, particularly those targeting Israeli products, illustrates the substantial social and economic impact of religious decisions.³ These fatwas, which constitute a form of non-violent resistance, have significant implications beyond the immediate religious context, affecting international economics and politics.⁴ This phenomenon suggests that while fatwa institutions focus on religious and ethical considerations, there is a critical need to understand and educate the broader implications of such decisions in international conflicts.

1 Asep Zaenal Ausop and Elsa Silvia Nur Aulia, "Teknologi Cryptocurrency Bitcoin untuk Investasi dan Transaksi Bisnis Menurut Syariat Islam", *Jurnal Sositologi* 17, No. 1 (30 April 2018): 74–92, <https://doi.org/10.5614/sostek.itbj.2018.17.1.8>; Itok Dwi Kurniawan et al., "Transformasi Penggunaan Cryptocurrency Melalui Bitcoin Dalam Transaksi Komersial Dihubungkan Dengan Diskursus Perlindungan Hukum (Legal Protection) Konsumen Di Indonesia", *Jurnal Hukum Mimbar Justitia* 7, No. 1 (2021): 65–86.

2 "Astrazeneca Vaccine Fatwa and Netizen's Responses: Indonesian Experience", *Journal of Contemporary Islam and Muslim Societies* 6, no. 1 (2022): 55–81, <https://doi.org/10.30821/jcims.v6i1.11242>.

3 Leor Halevi, "The Consumer Jihad: Boycott Fatwas and Nonviolent Resistance on the World Wide Web", *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 44, No. 1 (27 February 2012): 45–70, <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0020743811001243>.

4 Ibid.

The call for locally-based fatwa councils in Australia suggests a movement towards a more decentralized and context-aware Islamic jurisprudence.¹ Such councils, by being closely attuned to the local context, can better understand and address the specific needs, challenges, and aspirations of their communities.² This can lead to fatwas that are not only religiously sound but also practically relevant, thus bridging the gap between religious doctrine and contemporary societal reality.

Moreover, the emphasis on context-specific fatwas aligns with the need for Islamic scholars and muftis to assimilate a broad range of knowledge to address contemporary issues.³ This includes an understanding of local laws, cultural norms, technological trends, and ethical considerations relevant to specific communities. In doing so, fatwa councils can enhance the credibility, acceptance, and effectiveness of their rulings, ensuring that they resonate with the lived experiences and expectations of the local Muslim population.

In addition, the findings imply that fatwa institutions should consider the social and political impact of their decisions in greater depth. Establishing an open dialogue with the public and other stakeholders can ensure that fatwas are consistent with Islamic principles and are sensitive to social and economic dynamics. This approach can bridge the gap between religious authority and public response, thus promoting a more comprehensive understanding of the implications of fatwas in the modern sociopolitical context.

4.3.4 Improving the efficiency and effectiveness of fatwa dissemination through interactive dialogue

An analysis of Indonesian netizens' comments on YouTube regarding various fatwas, including those on vaccines, crypto, and boycotting Israeli products, revealed a significant dominance of negative sentiment. In the context of the vaccine fatwa, of the 134 comments analyzed, most showed negative views. Meanwhile, on the topic of crypto fatwas, 82% of the 1,344 words were negative. Furthermore, out of 10,134 comments, the majority also tended to harm the fatwa of boycotting Israeli products. Fatihunnada et al. examined Twitter 'X' reactions to the Indonesian Ulema Council's (MUI) fatwa on abstention and discovered comparable results in conjunction with the aforementioned findings.⁴ The study reported that 42.95% of tweets demonstrated adverse responses, suggesting netizens' greater inclination to oppose rather than accept the fatwa.

Suaedy et al. analyzed MUI's position within the current institutional context, particularly in the digital era, and highlighted two major challenges.⁵ First, a de-bureaucratization symptom is characterized by more national issues being discussed and decided by MUI regions. Second, depersonalization, as celebrity clerics increasingly issue fatwas during forums and recitals they attend. The strategy and model utilized by this

1 Shaheen Whyte, "Are Fatwas Dispensable? Examining the Contemporary Relevance and Authority of Fatwas in Australia", *Oxford Journal of Law and Religion*, 30 December 2022, <https://doi.org/10.1093/ojlr/rwac015>.

2 Ibid.

3 Ibid.

4 "Otoritas Fatwa Di Indonesia: Variasi Respons Pengguna Twitter Terhadap Fatwa MUI Tentang Haram Golput Pada Pemilu", *JISPO Jurnal Ilmu Sosial dan Ilmu Politik* 11, No. 2 (6 February 2022): 301–30, <https://doi.org/10.15575/jispo.v11i2.13879>.

5 Suaedy et al. "Language, Authority, and Digital Media."

prominent religious scholar, as stated by the author, should be implemented by the MUI.

This predominance of negative sentiment signals the need for a more interactive and dialogic dissemination strategy on platforms such as YouTube, which has proven effective in reaching a broad audience. A more dialogic presentation, such as a Q&A session or panel discussion that directly engages the audience, would allow for a more in-depth explanation of fatwa content and accommodate a variety of views. This approach can improve the understanding of fatwas and help shape a more positive and informed public perception of future fatwa decisions. Involving influential Muslim community members in this dialogue can also increase the effectiveness of the message by presenting the fatwa in an engaging and relevant manner, deepening the understanding of contemporary economic issues, and reducing the uncertainty that Muslim practitioners may feel.

This Q&A technique can also address Al-Zanki's concern that fatwas issued through various satellite channels carry significant potential risks of error, including misinterpretation of the text, reliance on outdated information to understand the nature of the question at hand, failure to guide the questioner to what is best for him, and confusion.¹

5. Conclusion

Based on the previous analysis, it can be concluded that negative sentiments are prevalent among the Indonesian online community towards religious edicts, especially those related to vaccines, cryptocurrencies, and boycotting Israeli products in the digital age. This phenomenon appears to highlight a deficiency in the comprehension and acceptance of the aforementioned edicts among the general public, which have been authorized by esteemed religious regulatory authorities, such as the Indonesian Ulema Council (MUI).

This study highlights the significance of broader education and socialization regarding fatwas, which should comprise clear and transparent information on their basis and context. It is vital to adopt more effective and inclusive communication approaches by leveraging digital platforms to enable wider and more interactive dialogues. In this regard, religious authorities and the government must enhance the trust and authority of fatwas by developing their capacity and credibility to provide relevant fatwas that align with Indonesia's social, cultural, and political norms.

Additionally, this conclusion highlights that variations in netizens' understanding of religion and economics strongly impact their responses to fatwas. This underscores the necessity for instruction on Islamic economic principles and their relevance to contemporary issues. Furthermore, this study emphasizes the significance of analyzing the societal and political consequences of fatwas and the need to reinforce the reliability and influence of fatwa organizations by garnering support from Muslim scholars and communities.

Overall, this study demonstrates the need for fatwa institutions to adjust to the challenges and opportunities of the digital age. This involves enhancing communicative capability and boosting religious knowledge among the populace to ensure that fatwas endure as pertinent, respected, and effective tools for addressing

¹ Al-Zanki, "A Critical Reading of Fatwas on Satellite Channels," 137-199.

contemporary matters and bridging the divide between religious leadership and public reception.

The primary limitations of this study include the limitations of the data sample used. This research relies on data from the online community in Indonesia, which may not reflect the views of the wider Indonesian society, especially those who are not active on social media or other digital platforms. Second, the research is limited by its temporal context and may not account for changes in views or attitudes that occur after the data collection period. Rapid social and cultural dynamics, particularly in the digital context, render research findings potentially less relevant over a longer period or in different contexts. These limitations underscore the importance of further in-depth and diverse research to understand public perceptions of fatwas in an evolving society.

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