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Are Fatwas Visible on New Media? Dissemination of the Fatwas of the Indonesian Ulama Council on Instagram

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ABSTRACT

The emergence of new media has a considerable impact on religion, including religious authorities' dissemination of religious information and fatwas. This article explored on how exposure to new media affects the dissemination of religious information. Specifically, this article aimed to analyze the dissemination of the Indonesian Ulama Council (MUI) fatwa on Instagram. The article is a normative legal study of contemporary Islamic laws. Data has been collected by observing posts by the Indonesian Ulama Council (MUI) on Instagram from 2017 to 2023. The data was analyzed using content analysis methods with a socio-legal approach. This approach highlighted how fatwas work as legal norms disseminated, accepted, and interpreted by society on social media. This study found that from 2017 to 2023, there were 1093 content posted on the official Instagram account of the Indonesian Ulama Council (MUI). However, of all the content, only 9.6% (105 posts) were related to fatwa. This study also found that the posted of fatwa content tends to be response-based rather than indeed programmed in a conceptualized and patterned way to build Islamic law literacy in the community. Based on these findings, it concluded that Instagram has yet to be used as a tool to build public fatwa literacy and a medium for disseminating Islamic law issued by the Indonesian Ulama Council has. The findings have significance as an academic reference for the Indonesian Ulama Council (MUI) and religious authority institutions in Indonesia in designing religious fatwa dissemination policies in response to the exposure of new media.

Keywords: Indonesian Ulama Council (MUI); Fatwa; New Media; Instagram;

ABSTRAK

Kehadiran media baru memberikan dampak yang cukup besar terhadap agama termasuk dalam diseminasi informasi dan fatwa keagamaan oleh otoritas agama. Artikel ini

ditujukan untuk melihat bagaimana terpaan media baru tersebut terhadap penyebaran informasi keagamaan. Secara spesifik artikel ini bertujuan untuk menganalisis diseminasi fatwa Majelis Ulama Indonesia (MUI) di instagram. Artikel ini merupakan studi hukum normatif terkait hukum Islam kontemporer. Data dikumpulkan dengan melakukan observasi postingan Majelis Ulama Indonesia (MUI) di instagram sejak tahun 2017 hingga 2023. Data dianalisis menggunakan metode konten analisis dengan pendekatan sosiologi hukum. Pendekatan tersebut menyoroti bagaimana fatwa berfungsi sebagai norma hukum yang disebarluaskan, diterima, dan diinterpretasi oleh publik di media sosial. Kajian ini menemukan bahwa pada rentang waktu tahun 2017 hingga 2023 ada 1093 konten yang diposting di akun instagram resmi Majelis Ulama Indonesia (MUI) namun dari semua konten tersebut hanya 9,6 % (105 postingan) yang terkait dengan fatwa. Kajian ini juga menemukan bahwa konten fatwa yang diposting cenderung bersifat responsif ketimbang benar-benar diprogramkan secara terkonsep dan terpola untuk membangun literasi hukum Islam kepada masyarakat. Berdasarkan temuan tersebut maka dapat disimpulkan bahwa instagram belum benar-benar digunakan sebagai saluran membangun literasi fatwa publik dan medium diseminasi hukum Islam yang telah difatwakan oleh Majelis Ulama Indonesia. Temuan dalam kajian ini memiliki signifikansi sebagai sumber akademik Majelis Ulama Indonesia (MUI) dan institusi otoritas keagamaan di Indonesia dalam merancang kebijakan diseminasi fatwa keagamaan dalam merespon terpaan media baru.

Kata Kunci: Majelis Ulama Indonesia (MUI); Fatwa; Media Baru; Instagram;

Introduction

As Indonesia's most prominent religious authority, the Indonesian Ulama Council (hereinafter MUI) has issued numerous religious fatwas related to religious rituals, social, political, and environmental issues. However, the exposure of new media has caused MUI to no longer be the only source of fatwa, referred to Muslims in Indonesia. Before the new media era, MUI's fatwa was highly dominating as it was the only accessible source of religious authority. However, the presence of new media allows everyone to access religious knowledge from any source easily.¹ Moreover, exposure to new media provides an opportunity for every Muslim to become a consumer of religious knowledge and, at the same time, a producer of religious information. In line with Hepp and Krotz' findings on shifts in people's behavior due to new media, Muslims' behavior in seeking and accessing religious knowledge has also shifted.² In other words, exposure to new media

¹Ekatul Hilwatis Sakinah and Syahidil Mubarik Mh, "The Spread of Salafi Ideology in Digital Media: Exploring Al-Qur'an Interpretation in Rumaysho.Com," *NALAR: Jurnal Peradaban Dan Pemikiran Islam* 8, no. 2 (2024): 178–208, <https://e-journal.iain-palangkaraya.ac.id/index.php/nalar/article/view/9114>.

²Andreas Hepp and Friedrich Krotz, "Mediatized Worlds -" Understanding Everyday Mediatization," in *Mediatized Worlds* (Palgrave Macmillan, n.d.), <https://doi.org/10.1057/9781137300355.0004>.

has led to democratizing access to religious knowledge. In Bruinessen's view, this condition has implications for the democratization of fatwas and religious views.³

The exposure of new media to fatwas and religious authority requires MUI to adapt it in disseminating fatwas. Therefore, the Vice President of the Republic of Indonesia for the 2019-2024 period, Ma'ruf Amin, stated that the digitization of fatwas is needed to make easy access for Muslims to access Islamic law and peaceful Islamic understandings.⁴ In this context, the digitization of fatwas can be an effort to minimize the mistakes of Muslims in understanding religious doctrine, as Ertit worried.⁵ Based on the background, this study aims to explore the dissemination of fatwa conducted by MUI in new media, especially Instagram. Two aspects become the focus of this study: the types and the pattern of fatwa dissemination on the official Instagram account of the Indonesian Ulama Council (MUI).

Studies related to the fatwa of the Indonesian Ulama Council (MUI) have been conducted with various study perspectives. There are eight topics of previous studies related to the fatwa of the Indonesian Ulema Council (MUI). First, studies related to the methodology and process of making fatwas.⁶ Second, studies related to Maqashid Sharia

³Martin. Van Bruinessen, "The Production of Islamic Knowledge in Western Europe: Discipline, Authority, And Personal Quest," in *Producing Islamic Knowledge: Transmission And Dissemination In Western Europe* (London: Roudledge, 2010), 1–27.

⁴Wakil Presiden Republik Indonesia, "Permudah Akses Informasi Tentang Hukum Islam, Wapres Dukung Sistem Digitalisasi Fatwa - Wakil Presiden Republik Indonesia," n.d., <https://www.wapresri.go.id/permudah-akses-informasi-tentang-hukum-islam-wapres-dukung-sistem-digitalisasi-fatwa/>.

⁵Faruk Karaarslan, "Endişeli Muhafazakarlar Çağı: Dinden Uzaklaşan Türkiye," *İnsan & Toplum Dergisi (The Journal of Human & Society)* 5, no. 9 (June 2015): 151–155, <https://doi.org/10.12658/human.society.5.9.d0102>.

⁶N Hosen, "Behind the Scenes: Fatwas of Majelis Ulama Indonesia (1975-1998)," *Journal of Islamic Studies* 15, no. 2 (May 2004): 147–179, <https://doi.org/10.1093/jis/15.2.147>; Iiz Izmuddin, "Fatwa Methodology of National Sharia Board of Indonesian Ulama Council in Islamic Economics," *MIQOT: Jurnal Ilmu-Ilmu Keislaman* 42, no. 1 (August 2018): 43, <https://doi.org/10.30821/miqot.v42i1.499>; Muhammad Sholihin and Fuad Zein, "Maslahah Reasoning behind Fatwa of the Indonesian Ulema Council: Between Ijtihad's Method and Pragmatism," *Ijtihad* 36, no. 2 (2020): 1–10, <https://journals.fasya.uinib.org/index.php/ijtihad/article/viewFile/36/18>; Heri Fadli Wahyudi and Fajar Fajar, "Metode Ijtihad Komisi Fatwa Majelis Ulama Indonesia Dan Aplikasinya Dalam Fatwa," *Cakrawala: Jurnal Studi Islam* 13, no. 2 (December 2018): 120–133, <https://doi.org/10.31603/cakrawala.v13i2.2402>.

in MUI fatwa.⁷ Third, studies related to the substance aspect of MUI fatwa.⁸ Fourth, studies related to the controversy of fatwas issued by the Indonesian Ulama Council (MUI).⁹ Fifth, studies related to the political economy of fatwa.¹⁰ Sixth, studies related to various social religious practices of the community based on MUI's fatwa.¹¹ Seventh,

⁷Hasan Matsum, "Fatwas of the Indonesian Ulama Council (MUI) on National Strategic Issues 2006-2018 in the Perspective of Maqashid Al-Syariah," *Al-Ulum* 23, no. 1 (June 2023): 153–174, <https://doi.org/10.30603/au.v23i1.3646>; Zakaria Syaifei, "Tracing Maqasid Al-Shariah in The Fatwas of Indonesian Council of Ulama (MUI)," *Journal of Indonesian Islam* 11, no. 1 (July 2017): 99, <https://doi.org/10.15642/jiis.2017.11.1.99-124>.

⁸J M Muslimin, Rizky Fauzi Iskandar, and Yulia Fatma, "Islam and Medicine: A Study on The Fatwa of Indonesian Ulama Council on Vaccines," *Al-Istinbath : Jurnal Hukum Islam* 6, no. 1 (May 2021): 85, <https://doi.org/10.29240/jhi.v6i1.2496>; Pofrizal Pofrizal, Akhmad Muslih, and Ardilafiza Ardilafiza, "Judicial Analysis on The Position of Legal Opinion (Fatwa) of Indonesian Council of Ulama' (MUI) in Statutory Regulation System of Indonesia," *Bengkoelen Justice : Jurnal Ilmu Hukum* 11, no. 2 (December 2021): 180–190, https://doi.org/10.33369/j_bengkoelenjust.v11i2.19782; Muhammad Shuhufi et al., "Islamic Law and Social Media: Analyzing the Fatwa of Indonesian Ulama Council Regarding Interaction on Digital Platforms," *Samarah* 6, no. 2 (2022): 823–43, <https://doi.org/10.22373/sjhk.v6i2.15011>; Syahril Siddik, "Challenging the Scared: The Fatwa of the Indonesia Ulama Council on the Recitation on Translation During the Prayer," *Afkaruna* 10, no. 1 (2014): 1–16, <https://doi.org/10.18196/aiijis.2014.0027.1-16>; R Cecep Lukman Yasin, "The Fatwa of The Council of Indonesian Ulama on Inter-Rreligious Marriage," *De Jure: Jurnal Hukum Dan Syar'iah* 1, no. 1 (June 2009), <https://doi.org/10.18860/j-fsh.v1i1.326>.

⁹Mun'im Sirry, "Fatwas and Their Controversy: The Case of the Council of Indonesian Ulama (MUI)," *Journal of Southeast Asian Studies* 44, no. 1 (December 2012): 100–117, <https://doi.org/10.1017/s0022463412000641>; Mohammad Syifa Amin Widigdo and Homaidi Hamid, "The Power of Fatwā in Indonesia: An Analysis of MUI's Controversial Fatwās," *Afkaruna* 14, no. 2 (2018), <https://doi.org/10.18196/aiijis.2018.0085.146-165>.

¹⁰Ahmad Muhtadi Anshor, "The Ulama and The State Politics During Pandemic: A Study on the Covid-19 Related Fatwa of the Council of Indonesian Ulama," *Dialogia* 21, no. 2 (August 2023): 239–264, <https://doi.org/10.21154/dialogia.v21i2.7080>; Syafiq Hasyim, "Fatwas and Democracy: Majelis Ulama Indonesia (MUI, Indonesian Ulama Council) and Rising Conservatism in Indonesian Islam," *TRaNS: Trans-Regional and -National Studies of Southeast Asia* 8, no. 1 (November 2019): 21–35, <https://doi.org/10.1017/trn.2019.13>; Tim Lindsey, "Monopolising Islam: The Indonesian Ulama Council and State Regulation of the 'Islamic Economy,'" *Bulletin of Indonesian Economic Studies* 48, no. 2 (August 2012): 253–274, <https://doi.org/10.1080/00074918.2012.694157>.

¹¹Yuli Andriansyah, "Analysis of Fatwas by the National Sharia Board-Indonesian Council of Ulama on the Stock Market," *Millah: Journal of Religious Studies* 22, no. 2 (2023): 525–552, <https://doi.org/10.20885/millah.vol22.iss2.art9>; P Gillespie, "Current Issues in Indonesian Islam: Analysing the 2005 Council of Indonesian Ulama Fatwa No. 7 Opposing Pluralism, Liberalism and Secularism," *Journal of Islamic Studies* 18, no. 2 (February 2007): 202–240, <https://doi.org/10.1093/jis/etm001>; Riyanta et al., "The Dynamic of Worship and Responses of Nahdlatul Ulama Members in Bantul, Yogyakarta, Toward the Indonesian Council of Ulama's Fatwa on the Worship During the Covid-19 Pandemic," *AL-IHKAM: Jurnal Hukum & Pranata Sosial* 17, no. 1 (June 2022): 136–164, <https://doi.org/10.19105/al-lhkam.v17i1.5638>.

studies related to the implications and contributions of MUI fatwas in people's lives.¹² Eighth, the study related to the urgency of the MUI fatwa.¹³

The previous studies have provided much information related to the fatwa of the Indonesian Ulama Council and its existence in the dynamics of Muslim life, especially in Indonesia. However, tracing the previous studies has not found any study related to the mainstreaming of MUI fatwa through dissemination in new media. In other words, there is a gap in the study that specifically analyses the practice of fatwa dissemination by MUI in its official Instagram account. Therefore, this study aims to fill the gap where the findings are used as an academic reference for the Indonesian Ulama Council (MUI) and religious authority institutions in Indonesia in designing religious fatwa dissemination policies in response to new media exposure.

Method

This article is a normative legal study of contemporary Islamic laws. Data was obtained from the official Instagram account of the Indonesian Ulama Council (MUI). The account can be accessed at <https://www.instagram.com/muipusat>. Data has been collected by observing all posts by the Indonesian Ulama Council (MUI) on Instagram from October 2017 to December 2023. The data collected posts related to MUI's fatwa on the account. The fatwas posted on the official account of the Indonesian Ulama Council were then thematically classified based on fatwa categories and the pattern of fatwa posts. The data was analyzed using content analysis methods with a socio-legal approach. This approach highlights how fatwas work as legal norms disseminated,

¹²La Jamaa, "Fatwas of the Indonesian Council of Ulama and Its Contributions to the Development of Contemporary Islamic Law in Indonesia," *Indonesian Journal of Islam and Muslim Societies* 8, no. 1 (July 2018): 29, <https://doi.org/10.18326/ijims.v8i1.29-56>; Abdurrohman Kasdi, "Contribution of National Sharia Council Fatwa of Indonesian Council of Ulama (DSN-MUI) in The Islamic Economic Development in Indonesia," *IQTISHADIA* 11, no. 1 (July 2018): 47, <https://doi.org/10.21043/iqtishadia.v11i1.3187>; Muhammad Asrul Maulana and Fahmiyah Tsaqofah Islamiy, "Pengaruh Fatwa Majelis Ulama Indonesia Nomor 44 Tahun 2020 Terhadap Pembuatan Produk Politik," *Politea: Jurnal Politik Islam* 6, no. 2 (November 2023): 142–158, <https://doi.org/10.20414/politea.v6i2.8138>; Ibnu Elmi Achmat Slamet Pelu and Jefry Tarantang, "Fatwa Majelis Ulama Indonesia Sebagai Solusi Permasalahan Umat Islam Di Indonesia," *Al-Manahij: Jurnal Kajian Hukum Islam* 14, no. 2 (December 2020): 307–316, <https://doi.org/10.24090/mnh.v14i2.3927>.

¹³Aidil Novia, "Kontribusi Fiqh Legal Maxim Dalam Fatwa-Fatwa Ekonomi Syariah Dewan Syariah Nasional Majelis Ulama Indonesia (DSN-MUI)," *TSAQAFAH* 12, no. 1 (May 2016): 79, <https://doi.org/10.21111/tsaqafah.v12i1.369>; Elsy Renie, "The Urgency of Fatwa in The Law of Sharia Economics in Indonesia," *JURIS (Jurnal Ilmiah Syariah)* 20, no. 2 (December 2021): 201, <https://doi.org/10.31958/juris.v20i2.4059>.

accepted, and interpreted by society on social media. Then, the data analysis was conducted through data display, reduction, and conclusion.¹⁴

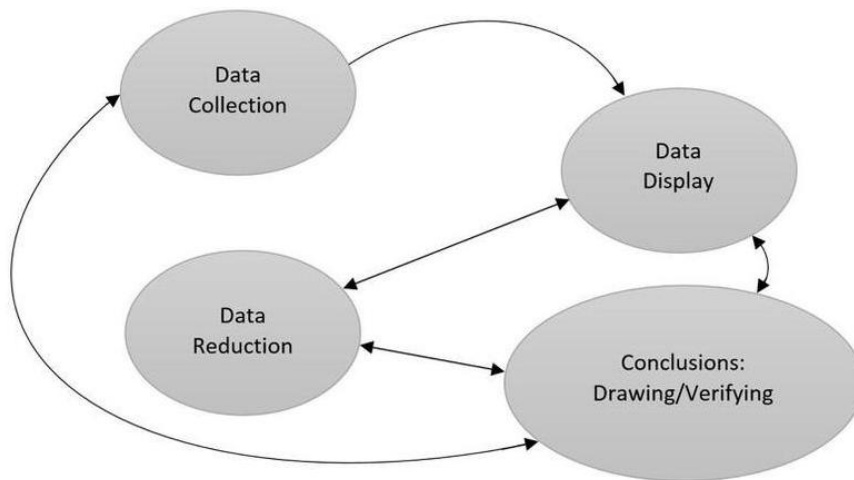


Figure 1. Data Analysis Process

Findings and Discussion

From Ritual to Social: Mediatising Fatwa in Instagram Posts

Instagram is one of the media pillars owned by the Indonesian Ulama Council (MUI) in interacting with the public digitally.¹⁵ The MUI's Instagram account created on 14 October 2017 and the first post was the official logo of MUI. To December 2023, there have been 1093 posts on the official MUI Instagram account with 81.4 thousand followers. It shows that MUI is not only active in offline reality but also active in online reality for sharing various religious information with the public. Of 1093 posts found, only 105 posts related to the fatwa issued by the Indonesian Ulama Council. Specifically, the number of MUI fatwa posts each year is presented in the following chart:

¹⁴Matthew B. Miles, A. Michael Huberman, and Johnny Saldana, *Qualitative Data Analysis: A Methods Sourcebook* (SAGE Publications, 2018).

¹⁵Majelis Ulama Indonesia, "Ketua Komisi Infokom MUI Resmikan Launching Website MUI.OR.ID Reborn," n.d., <https://www.mui.or.id/baca/berita/ketua-komisi-infokom-mui-resmikan-launching-website-muiorid-reborn>.

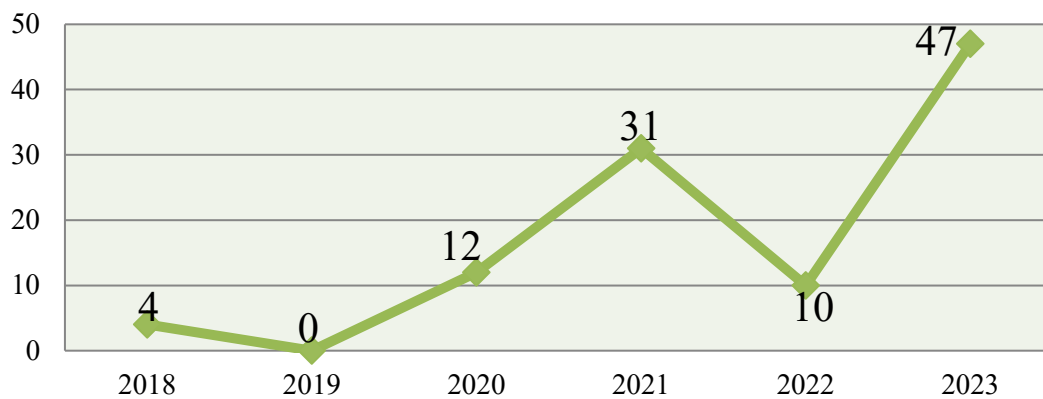


Chart 1. Number of fatwa posts every year on MUI's Instagram

The graph shows the uneven number of fatwa disseminations on the official Instagram account of the Indonesian Ulama Council every year. In 2019, there were no fatwa-related posts made. In 2020 and 2021, there was an increase in the number of posts where posts -in those two years- were dominated by fatwas related to the Covid-19 pandemic. The findings show that the Indonesian Ulama Council (MUI) provide peace to Muslims facing various life problems, which is in the context at Covid-19 pandemic. In this context, MUI's fatwa has the urgency to respond to the needs of the people related to certain Islamic legal certainty during an emergency, such as Covid-19.¹⁶ In responding to this emergency condition, it considers aspects of religious teachings, science, and public participation.¹⁷

Fatwas of the Indonesian Ulama Council (MUI) on Instagram can be found in various forms of content such as photos, infographics, videos, and live streaming. Fatwas that obtain high attention from the public are usually posted several times with different content but the same substance. It aims to show the importance of obeying the fatwa. For example, during the Covid-19 pandemic, Muslims experienced anxiety and confusion about worship, especially those carried out together. On the other hand, worship is an obligation as a Muslim, but there is a concern that if worship is still carried out together,

¹⁶Muhammad Maulana Hamzah, "Peran Dan Penaruh Fatwa MUI Dalam Arus Transformasi Sosial Budaya Di Indonesia," *Millah: Journal of Religious Studies*, February 2018, 127–154, <https://doi.org/10.20885/millah.vol17.iss1.art7>; Muhammad Rasyid et al., "Science And Its Role In Changes In Islamic Legal Thought (An Analysis Of Changes In The Fatwa Of The Indonesian Ulema Council Due To Recent Scientific Findings)," *Syariah: Jurnal Hukum Dan Pemikiran* 23, no. 2 (2023): 120–37, <https://jurnal.uin-antasari.ac.id/index.php/syariah/article/view/11361>.

¹⁷Maulana and Tsaqofah Islamiy, "Pengaruh Fatwa Majelis Ulam Indonesia Nomor 44 Tahun 2020 Terhadap Pembuatan Produk Politik."

it will potentially be exposed to Covid-19.¹⁸ In this condition, there are even differences in attitudes in the community between those who choose to continue to worship together and prefer to worship individually.¹⁹ Responding to this problem, the Indonesian Ulama Council issued fatwa number 14 of 2020 concerning the implementation of worship in a situation of the Covid-19 outbreak. This fatwa was posted four times in a row but with different content.²⁰



Figure 2. Post of fatwa number 14 of 2020

The Indonesian Ulama Council (MUI) posts on Instagram are not only related to fatwas of religious rituals, but also other aspects of life, such as the environment and politics. Overall, 33 fatwas are specifically posted on the official Instagram account of

¹⁸Zülfünaz Özer, Meyreme Aksoy, and Gülcan Bahcecioglu Turan, "The Relationship Between Death Anxiety and Religious Coping Styles in Patients Diagnosed With COVID-19: A Sample in the East of Turkey," *OMEGA - Journal of Death and Dying* 87, no. 1 (December 2021): 299–311, <https://doi.org/10.1177/00302228211065256>; Orhan Koçak, "How Does Religious Commitment Affect Satisfaction with Life during the COVID-19 Pandemic? Examining Depression, Anxiety, and Stress as Mediators," *Religions* 12, no. 9 (August 2021): 701, <https://doi.org/10.3390/rel12090701>; Dadang Darmawan et al., "Sikap Keberagamaan Masyarakat Menghadapi Wabah COVID-19," *Religious: Jurnal Studi Agama-Agama Dan Lintas Budaya* 4, no. 2 (May 2020): 115–124, <https://doi.org/10.15575/rjsalb.v4i2.8596>.

¹⁹Sudirman Sudirman, Edi Gunawan, and Muh Rusdi Rasyid, "Covid-19 Dan Ibadah (Resistensi Perubahan Hukum Islam Dalam Mempertahankan Rutinitas Ibadah)," *Aqlam: Journal of Islam and Plurality* 6, no. 1 (June 2021), <https://doi.org/10.30984/ajip.v6i1.1583>.

²⁰Ahmad Saeful, "Menelaah Kembali Fatwa MUI Tentang Penyelenggaraan Ibadah Dalam Situasi Terjadi Wabah Covid-19," *SYAR'IE* 3, no. 2 (2020): 156–71, [https://download.garuda.kemdikbud.go.id/article.php?article=2349027&val=22647&title=Menelaah Kembali Fatwa MUI Tentang Penyelenggaraan Ibadah Dalam Situasi Terjadi Wabah Covid-19](https://download.garuda.kemdikbud.go.id/article.php?article=2349027&val=22647&title=Menelaah%20Kembali%20Fatwa%20MUI%20Tentang%20Penyelenggaraan%20Ibadah%20Dalam%20Situasi%20Terjadi%20Wabah%20Covid-19).

the Indonesian Ulama Council (MUI), which is classified into four categories. The classification of these fatwas is presented in the table 1:

<i>Fatwa Category</i>	<i>Fatwa Number</i>	<i>Fatwa Title</i>
Religious Worship and Rituals	4 of 2005	Prohibition of interfaith marriages
	10 of 2008	Unregistered marriages
	5 of 2010	Qibla direction
	20 of 2017	The law on <i>Jum'ah</i> prayers for people who are outside the area for a certain time
	49 of 2019	Ruling on looking at the <i>mushaf</i> during prayer
	14 of 2020	Organizing worship in a situation of COVID-19 outbreak
	17 of 2020	Guidelines for the efficacy of prayer for health workers who wear personal protective equipment (PPE) when caring for and handling Covid-19 patients
	18 of 2020	Guidelines for managing the bodies of Muslims infected with Covid-19
	28 of 2020	Guide to the benefits of takbir and Eid prayers during Covid 19
	36 of 2020	Eid al-Adha prayers and sacrificial animal slaughter during the Covid-19 outbreak
	24 of 2021	Guide to Organizing Worship in the Months of Ramadan and Shawwal 1442 H
	32 of 2022	Laws and guidelines for carrying out sacrificial services during an outbreak of foot and mouth disease
	13 of 2021	Law on Covid-19 vaccination while fasting
Social and Politic	287 of 2001	Pornography and pornographic action
	4 of 2003	Standardization of halal fatwas
	3 of 2004	Terrorism
	12 of 2009	Halal slaughter certification standards
	28 of 2013	Donate Breast Milk (ASI)
	53 of 2014	Punishment for producers, dealers, and drug abusers
	57 of 2014	Lesbian, Gay, Sodomy, and Obscenity
	24 of 2017	Guidelines for practicing charity on social media
	83 of 2023	Legal support for the Palestinian cause
Health and Environments	4 of 2014	Conservation of rare animals
	41 of 2014	Waste Management to Prevent Environmental Damage
	30 of 2016	Forest and land burning law and its control
	30 of 2020	Medicine and treatment
	2 of 2021	COVID-19 Vaccine Products from Sinovac and PT Bio Farma
	14 of 2021	Legal Use of Astrazeneca Covid-19 Vaccine Products
	8 of 2022	Covid-19 vaccine product from PT. Biotics Pharmaceuticals Indonesia
Food and life style	33 of 2011	Law on food and drink coloring from Cochineal insects
	10 of 2018	Food and drinks containing alcohol / ethanol

37 of 2019	Preservation and distribution of sacrificial meat in processed form
23 of 2013	Standards for halal cosmetic products and their use

Table 1. Classification of fatwas posted on the official MUI's Instagram account

The data shows that the Indonesian Ulama Council (MUI) on Instagram are not only posted fatwa about religious rituals, but also related to political and social humanitarian issues. Moreover, fatwa posts related to rituals and worship are less on number than fatwa related to social, political, and humanitarian issues. The data represents the fatwa paradigm in the Indonesian Ulama Council (MUI), which is a balance between ritual and social needs as a human being. Within this context, the Indonesian Ulama Council (MUI) is in the midst of a very dynamic society. Moreover, Indonesian society is highly heterogeneous, thus it is possible to rise a various social humanity problems that are not specifically referenced in the Qur'an and *Hadith*.²¹ Therefore, it is reasonable if many fatwas issued by MUI are responses to the reality of life faced by Muslims, especially in Indonesia, such as democracy²² and inter-religious harmony.²³

Bringing Fatwas Online: The Fatwa Post as a Response to the Current Socio-Religious Dynamics

Fatwa is an Islamic law product that in its drafting considers various aspects, including the linguistic aspects of converting the fatwa in the text.²⁴ According to Kaptain, the language of fatwas is often formal and formulated with careful vocabulary.²⁵ The official text of a fatwa is often difficult for the general public to understand. Moreover, in a fatwa text, there may be many specialised terms that are not found in everyday

²¹Matsum, "Fatwas of the Indonesian Ulama Council (MUI) on National Strategic Issues 2006-2018 in the Perspective of Maqashid Al-Syariah"; Izmuddin, "Fatwa Methodology of National Sharia Board of Indonesian Ulama Council in Islamic Economics"; Rasiam Rasiam et al., "Integration of New Media and Prophetic Communication Enhanced for Zakah, Infāq, Ṣadaqah, and Waqf Fundraising: A Case Study of Baitulmaal Munzalan Indonesia," *JIL: Journal of Islamic Law* 4, no. 1 (February 2023): 28–46, <https://doi.org/10.24260/jil.v4i1.1167>.

²²Hasyim, "Fatwas and Democracy: Majelis Ulama Indonesia (MUI, Indonesian Ulema Council) and Rising Conservatism in Indonesian Islam"; Nur Najmi Anggraeni et al., "Ulama in Indonesia's Political Contestation: The Indonesian Ulama Council's Election Posts on Instagram," *NALAR: Jurnal Peradaban Dan Pemikiran Islam* 8, no. 1 (June 2024): 116–140, <https://doi.org/10.23971/njppi.v8i1.8196>.

²³Agus Fatuh Widoyo et al., "Moderation of Religion in the Fatwa of Majelis Ulama Indonesia about the Ethics of Da'wah in the Digital Age," *Jurnal Ilmu Dakwah* 43, no. 1 (July 2023): 107–119, <https://doi.org/10.21580/jid.v43.1.16053>.

²⁴Irma Suryani et al., "Integration of Islamic Law in Regional Development in Indonesia," *Juris: Jurnal Ilmiah Syariah* 22, no. 1 (2023): 1–11, <https://doi.org/10.31958/juris.v22i1.8770>.

²⁵Nico J G Kaptein, "The Voice of the 'Ulamā': Fatwas and Religious Authority in Indonesia," *Archives de Sciences Sociales Des Religions* 125 (2004): 115–130, <https://doi.org/10.4000/assr.1038>.

conversation.²⁶ At the same time, the public tends to only know the substance of the fatwa. Therefore, for the substance of the fatwa are well understood by the public, the Indonesian Ulama Council (MUI) needs to disseminate the fatwa using familiar language to the public and packaged with interesting content. In this context, Instagram is the right and appropriate social media to disseminate the substance of the fatwa in the digital space as Instagram's features allow messages to be packaged attractively through visual and audio-visual content.²⁷ Moreover, compared to other social media, Instagram is also more potential to improve the perception and understanding of a message or idea²⁸, including in disseminating the fatwa of the Indonesian Ulama Council (MUI).

However, the study found that Instagram has not been utilised optimally by the Indonesian Ulema Council as a means of disseminating fatwas to the public. It is seen from the fact that fatwa posts are not done consistently, routinely, and well-patterned, for example, every month or every week. Additionally, only a few posts are aimed at disseminating fatwas or certain legal opinions by MUI.²⁹ Posts related to fatwa responsive, which is a form of response to various realities and dynamics, especially in Indonesia.

Specifically, there are three forms of situations responded to by the Indonesian Ulama Council (MUI) through its fatwa posts on Instagram. First, the response to something is widely asked about legal issues by the community. The response is outlined in the content of the fatwa which often begins with a question related to the issue. Then, an answer is given based on the fatwa relevant to the question. Second, the response to social issues and upheavals are "trending" in society. Against the social upheavals or problems, several times the Indonesian Ulama Council (MUI) responded by formulating

²⁶Diky Faqih Maulana, Makhrus, and Hamidatul Hasanah, "The Urgency of MUI Halal Fatwa about Food, Beverage, Medicine and Cosmetic Products for the Consumer Protection," *Volksgeist: Jurnal Ilmu Hukum Dan Konstitusi* 5, no. 2 (2022): 199–214, <https://doi.org/10.24090/volksgeist.v5i2.6421>.

²⁷Saleem Alhabash and Mengyan Ma, "A Tale of Four Platforms: Motivations and Uses of Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and Snapchat Among College Students?," *Social Media and Society* 3, no. 1 (2017), <https://doi.org/10.1177/2056305117691544>; Richard Rogers, "Visual Media Analysis for Instagram and Other Online Platforms," *Big Data & Society* 8, no. 1 (January 2021), <https://doi.org/10.1177/20539517211022370>; Haruna Dahiru and Raudatu Inuwa, "Using Digital Economy in Collection and Disbursement of Zakah Proceeds in Nigeria," *Al-Risalah* 15, no. 1 (2024): 242–61, <https://doi.org/10.34005/alrisalah.v15i1.3410>.

²⁸Daniel Belanche, Isabel Cenjor, and Alfredo Pérez-Rueda, "Instagram Stories versus Facebook Wall: An Advertising Effectiveness Analysis," *Spanish Journal of Marketing - ESIC* 23, no. 1 (2019): 69–94, <https://doi.org/10.1108/SJME-09-2018-0042>.

²⁹Khairul Hamim, Lalu Supriadi Bin Mujib, and Ahmad Muhasim, "Religious Fatwā and Human Security: Managing Public Health through the Lens of Islamic Jurisprudence in Indonesia and Saudi Arabia," *Khazanah Hukum* 6, no. 3 (2024): 234–50, <https://doi.org/10.15575/KH.V6I3.40478>.

new fatwas aimed at these problems. The new fatwa is then posted on Instagram. For example, fatwa number 83 of 2023 on the law of support for the Palestinian struggle.³⁰ Third, the response to national and life conditions such as environmental damage and elections.



Figure 3. Posting fatwas that respond to social and religious realities in Indonesia

As an institution of the religious authority in Indonesia, the response of the Indonesian Ulama Council (MUI) to various public questions is crucial.³¹ On the other hand, the Indonesian Ulama Council (MUI) also needs to consistently and continuously disseminate fatwas in new media to literate and inform the public about various Islamic law knowledge. Simultaneously, the continuity of fatwa dissemination can counter

³⁰Majelis Ulama Indonesia, “Fatwa Terbaru MUI Nomor 83 Tahun 2023: Mendukung Agresi Israel Ke Palestina Hukumnya Haram,” n.d., <https://mui.or.id/baca/berita/fatwa-terbaru-mui-nomor-83-tahun-2023-mendukung-agresi-israel-ke-palestina-hukumnya-haram>; Abd Rauf Muhammad Amin et al., “Problematic Fatwa: An In-Depth Sociological Investigation of MUI’s Fatwa on Supporting Palestine’s Struggle,” *El-Usrah* 7, no. 1 (2024): 237–52, <https://doi.org/10.22373/ujhk.v7i1.22020>; Doli Witro, “State Islamic University Students’ Perceptions of Israel-Affiliated Products: A Study After the Fatwa of Indonesia Ulema Council No. 83 of 2023 Concerning the Law on Support for the Palestinian Struggle,” *Al-Manahij: Jurnal Kajian Hukum Islam* 18, no. 1 (2024): 145–60, <https://doi.org/10.24090/mnh.v18i1.10554>.

³¹Sholihin and Zein, “Maslahah Reasoning behind Fatwa of the Indonesian Ulema Council: Between Ijtihad’s Method and Pragmatism”; Iffaty Nasyiah, “Urgency of Fatwa on Domestic Psychological Violence in Indonesia as an Effort to Protect Women’s Rights,” *De Jure: Jurnal Hukum Dan Syaria’iah* 16, no. 1 (2024): 118–40, <https://doi.org/10.18860/j-fsh.v16i1.26403>.

religious fatwas that proliferate in new media and are obtained from non-authoritative sources.

The use of new media, such as Instagram, is needed by the Indonesian Ulama Council (MUI) for disseminating fatwas. Because of the presence of new media, there is a tendency for some people to prefer to search for religious knowledge online. Religious authorities, such as *Ulama* and *Kiai*, are not always the first source in obtaining religious knowledge. Accessing religious knowledge is enough to type keywords on certain websites. For this situation, Campbell stated the new media has changed the way people access and consume religious information.³² Some research findings further strengthen the shift in religious authority in society due to the presence of new media. Before the existence of new media, people were not authorised to convey religious teachings. It means that people were mostly just consumers of religious information/knowledge from *imams* or preachers. However, with the presence of new media, everyone, including content creators and artists, has the potential to become "producers" of religious information or knowledge.³³ In line with Ertit, there will be misunderstanding of religious knowledge if only learns from social media but does not take to the source of religious knowledge or social media references.³⁴

Conclusion

Data analysis leads to two findings. First, a limited number of fatwas was posted on the official Instagram account of the Indonesian Ulama Council (MUI) compared to the total number of posts from 2017 to 2023. Specifically, only 105 (9.6%) fatwa contents were posted compared to 1093 total posts from 2017 to 2023. However, the fatwas posted are not only related to rituals but also social and political fatwas. Second, the posting content of fatwas on the official Instagram of the Indonesian Ulama Council is not well programmed and patterned. The posted fatwas tend to be responsive rather than focussed on building public literacy on Islamic law by disseminating all fatwas issued by the

³²Heidi Campbell, *When Religion Meets New Media* (Routledge, 2010), <https://doi.org/10.4324/9780203695371>.

³³Bryan S Turner, "Religious Authority and the New Media," *Theory, Culture & Society* 24, no. 2 (March 2007): 117–134, <https://doi.org/10.1177/0263276407075001>; Inayatul Ulya and Ahmad Salehudin, "Artists Religiosity on Social Media: Between Rules, Religious Commodification and Media Capitalism," *Ijtima' Iyya Journal of Muslim Society Research* 8, no. 2 (September 2023): 195–206, <https://doi.org/10.24090/ijtimaiyya.v8i2.9206>.

³⁴Karaarslan, "Endişeli Muhafazakarlar Çağı: Dinden Uzaklaşan Türkiye."

Indonesian Ulama Council (MUI). Based on these two findings, it concluded that the Indonesian Ulama Council has not indeed used Instagram as a platform to build public fatwa literacy and a medium for disseminating Islamic law that the Indonesian Ulama Council has issued. The lack use of new media by the Indonesian Ulama Council to disseminate fatwas will have implications for Muslim literacy and understanding of Islamic law. In today's increasingly digitized society, new media tends to be the primary source of access and consumption of religious information. At the same time, new media significantly influence the form of society's religious understanding, perceptions, and practices. Additionally, the lack of systematic use of new media in disseminating the fatwas of the Indonesian Ulama Council (MUI) also impacts the role of fatwas as an authoritative source of Islamic law in the lives of Muslims. Based on these findings, this article recommends that religious authorities, especially the Indonesian Ulama Council, develop structured digital policies and strategies to fulfil their normative function of disseminating the fatwas.

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