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LPPOM MUI NORTH SUMATRA PUBLIC RELATIONS COMMUNICATION STRATEGY IN SOCIALIZING HALAL CERTIFICATION TO MEDAN CITY MSME

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Abstract: *This research aims to explore the communication strategies implemented by Public Relations of LPPOM MUI North Sumatra in socializing halal certification to MSME in Medan City. This study also aims to assess the level of effectiveness of this communication strategy. In the context of processing halal certification, which has significant relevance to products circulating in the Medan City community, a strategic communication approach was taken by LPPOM MUI North Sumatra to MSME traders in this region. This research uses a qualitative approach with the Grounded Research method, which allows researchers to conduct in-depth interviews with key sources. The research sources consisted of the Head of Public Relations of LPPOM MUI North Sumatra and three MSME traders operating on Jl. Tuasan, Medan City. The research results show that North Sumatra LPPOM MUI Public Relations uses various media such as print media, online media and social media in its communication strategy. However, the level of MSME product registration to LPPOM MUI North Sumatra shows a decline every year, with no registration in the 2022-2024 period. These findings indicate that the communication strategy implemented by the Public Relations of LPPOM MUI North Sumatra has not been effective in increasing awareness about halal certification among MSME traders, especially on Jl. Tuasan, Medan Tembung District. The implication is that MSME traders do not understand the process of processing halal certification both online and offline.*

Keywords: *Communication Strategy; LPPOM MUI SUMUT; Halal Certification; MSME.*

INTRODUCTION

The largest country in the world with a majority Muslim population is Indonesia. According to an article on the Ministry of Religion (Kemenag) website, the Muslim population in Indonesia is currently the majority, numbering up to 229.62 million people, or around 87.2% of the total 269.6 million population of Indonesia. If this population is extrapolated to the global Muslim population, which is predicted to reach 2.2 billion in 2030 (or 23% of the world's population), then the Muslim population in Indonesia reaches around 13.1% of all Muslims worldwide. Therefore, it is very important for the Indonesian government to supply local goods with halal certification. This is done with the aim of providing comfort and tranquility for the community, especially Muslims.

Research related to the North Sumatra LPPOM MUI Public Relations communication strategy in socializing halal certification to MSME, especially in the city of Medan, as far as researchers have conducted research, no one has focused on this problem. Therefore, this previous study wanted to map studies that intersect and have different objects but the same issues/problems. Among them, researchers found previous research from M. Ibror Putra HS regarding the Public Relations Communication Strategy of the Food, Drug and Cosmetic Research Institute (LPPOM) of the Indonesian Ulema Council (MUI) DKI Jakarta in Disseminating Halal Certification to MSME Traders. The findings from this research are that LPPOM MUI DKI Jakarta's public relations communication strategy includes internal and external communication strategies. The internal communication strategy aims to direct staff to provide the best performance for the community. Meanwhile, the external communication strategy is to disseminate information about halal product certification to MSME and the general public via websites and social media (PUTRA, 2023).

Furthermore, previous research from Difa Gita Ramadani regarding the Communication Strategy of Halal Inspection Institutions to Socialize the Urgency of Halal Certification. The findings from this research are that the LPH Surveyor Communication Strategy is carried out through three stages, namely, First, strategy formulation. This stage is LPH Surveyor Indonesia's planning regarding communicators and media that will be used in collaboration with many parties. Second, the Communication Implementation strategy fulfills the Who Says What In Channel To Whom With What Effect Communication element. Third, the strategy evaluation from this research provides answers regarding the selection of communicators, message formulation, media selection and audience selection and recognition (Gita Ramadani, 2022).

The next previous research was from Gayatri Atmadi and Sri Riris Wahyu Widati regarding LPPOM MUI's Communication Media Selection Strategy in the Socialization & Promotion of Halal Products in Indonesia. The findings from this research are that LPPOM MUI has used various communication media in society, such as; magazines, websites, Facebook, Halal Directories and exhibitions so that more and more people will get the latest information about halal products in Indonesia (Atmadi & Widati, 2013).

Then from previous research, namely M. Latif Manurung regarding the Communication Model of the Indonesian Ulema Council in Socializing Halal Certification in the City of

Medan. The findings from this research are that the Medan City MUI communication model in socializing halal certification emphasizes mass communication. Selected communication media include: Print media, such as: newspapers, magazines, written articles, brochures. Electronic media, such as: TV and radio. Special events, such as: MTQ, Counseling and Bazaar, by opening stands containing halal products (Manurung, 2017).

Based on the explanation of previous research, it can be concluded that the difference between previous research and this research lies in the different research objects, namely LPPOM MUI North Sumatra and Medan City MSME traders, as well as the focus of the research.

Article 5 Law no. 33 of 2014 concerning Halal Product Guarantees states that products traded or entering the food, beverage and cosmetics sector in Indonesia must be halal certified. Article 56 Law no. 33 of 2014 concerning imposes a maximum sentence of two billion rupiah or five years in prison to business actors who do not guarantee the halalness of their products (Charity, 2017). This means that the Indonesian Ulema Council (MUI) organization must mark products ranging from food ingredients to medicines as halal products.

The MUI halal label, which indicates clean and sanitary goods made from elements prohibited by Islamic law has a special meaning, so this label plays an important role in the distribution of food, medicine and cosmetic products (Syaifudin & Fahma, 2022). The halal mark indicates that a product is safe for consumption by the general public, which is the way people think about things like medicines and cosmetics (Puspita Ningrum, 2022). Seeing this situation, a number of Small, Micro and Medium Enterprises (MSME) traders have adjusted the halal certification process for their products in an effort to increase customer confidence, which naturally affects sales turnover targets for food products. However, there are still many MSME business actors who do not realize how important it is to get halal certification (Sri Wahyuni et al., 2021).

The Indonesian Ulema Council Food, Drug and Cosmetics Study Institute (LPPOM MUI) is one of the institutions or organizations in Indonesia involved in the halal certification process. The mandate from the Government/State to MUI to actively participate in overcoming the problem of lard in Indonesia in 1988 became the basis for the formation of LPPOM MUI. On January 6 1989, LPPOM MUI was established to carry out halal certification and inspection. Research, study, analysis and determination of the safety of food, medicine and cosmetic products from an Islamic perspective is the responsibility given to LPPOM MUI. This includes finding out whether the product is safe for consumption from both a health and religious perspective, as well as whether the product is halal, or suitable for consumption by Muslims. LPPOM MUI was founded based on decision letter number 018/MUI/1989, which was issued on January 6 1989, or 26 Jumadil Awal 1409 Hijriah (ZAHIDAH, 2019).

The LPPOM MUI organization controls goods circulating in society by issuing halal certification. Goods that have this certification are allowed to have a halal label. Because it does not contain haram ingredients and has passed testing to ensure it does not contain

ingredients that are forbidden by Islamic teachings, this shows that the product is suitable for consumption by Muslims (Faridah, 2019).

North Sumatra, West Sumatra, Java and Papua are several provinces in Indonesia where LPPOM MUI operates and manages halal certification management websites. As a result, LPPOM MUI North Sumatra is working to ensure that MSME products circulating in the North Sumatra region are certified halal. Due to the large area in North Sumatra, especially on Jalan Tuasan, Medan Tembung District, Medan City. And with the large number of MSME traders using Arabic halal logos without official halal certification from LPPOM MUI North Sumatra, researchers chose to focus on this province. This finding is supported by the results of the documentation in the discussion results.

Head of the North Sumatra Cooperatives and Small and Medium Enterprises (SME) Service, Naslindo Sirait, stated that around 80% of MSME in North Sumatra currently do not have halal certificates. This information is based on a website that quotes Indra Widyastuti on RRI.co.id (Radio Republik Indonesia) regarding MSME in the Halal Certificate Self-Declaration Facilitation event for 1,000 MSME in Medan on March 20 2024. This is due to their ignorance of the legality value and price of certification, and the efficiency of halal helpers. Knowledge about a product that a person or organization wants to use is known as halal knowledge. It takes more than just adding a halal mark to identify a product as halal or haram, customers must also know whether the food they buy is prepared using halal ingredients.

So LPPOM MUI must educate MSME business actors about the official halal label and the value of including this label on their products. Many traders still don't know how to get halal certification. Based on this explanation, the researcher plans to conduct a more in-depth analysis of the public relations communication approach carried out by LPPOM MUI North Sumatra to educate MSME traders in Medan City - especially those on Jalan Tuasan, Sidorejo Hilir Village, Kec. Medan Tembung regarding halal certification.

RESEARCH METHOD

This research uses qualitative research with a grounded research approach. The main motivation for using this approach is to support researchers' efforts to interview informants directly and in depth. Three MSME food traders on Jl Tuasan Kec. Medan Tembung, Medan City and Zulfahmi Lubis, S.Kom, head of general affairs and head of public relations for LPPOM MUI North Sumatra, were informants in this research. This writing was strengthened by involving three MSME traders along Jalan Tuasan Kec. Medan Tembung as complementary data, which shows the efficacy/effectiveness of the communication strategy carried out by the LPPOM MUI North Sumatra public relations team. This research was conducted on March 9 2024 at the LPPOM MUI North Sumatra Office Jl. Ulema Council No.3 Gaharu District. Medan The Medan City Team, North Sumatra and on March 22 2024 carried out direct observations on MSME traders on Jl. Tuasan, Medan City.

Primary data sources are Public Relations of LPPOM MUI North Sumatra and three informants of Medan City MSME traders, especially MSME traders on Jl. Tuasan, Medan Tembung District. Meanwhile, secondary data is library materials, books and journals related to this article. Data obtained and processed, data presentation is done by analyzing it. Data analysis was carried out using the inductive method. The inductive method is the drawing of specific facts or observations towards general conclusions which are only used to explain the variety of existing facts. Research data collection techniques use observation, interviews, document study and documentation methods.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Historical Traces of the Food, Drug and Cosmetic Research Institute (LPPOM) MUI North Sumatra

LPPOM MUI was formed by the MUI institution as an organization to carry out the MUI's obligations in maintaining public order by consuming food, medicine and cosmetics that are clearly halal. In a meeting on December 1 1998, the Minister of Religion, the Minister of Health, and the General Chair of the MUI issued a call to food and beverage producers that were truly free from haram components. A team was then formed by the MUI to inspect factories that might be operating illegally (LPPOM MUI, 2022).

Publications in mainstream media showing images of clerics eating noodles and drinking milk make consumers feel comfortable with the halalness of products affected by the pork content issue (PUTRA, 2023). The clerics have made enormous sacrifices to maintain the peace of the people and "straighten out opinions that invite controversy". MUI officially opened the Central LPPOM MUI on January 6 1989, with the aim of achieving inner peace for Muslims in the long term and preventing the recurrence of such incidents.

LPPOM MUI North Sumatra was founded in 2003. In order to uphold the community's right to obtain halal food, MUI North Sumatra marked this historical milestone by starting a new chapter in the evaluation of food, medicines and cosmetics. As the name suggests, LPPOM MUI's field of research is conducting research in accordance with its field to provide information to the MUI in determining the halalness of a product. To assist with this task, LPPOM MUI employs researchers from various relevant fields, including food technology, industrial engineering, chemistry, biochemistry, pharmacy, and so on. These experts also function as auditors (Salman et al., 2023).

Validation of halal certification by MUI, which is now recognized by around 39 institutions throughout Asia, Europe, America and Australia, allows for international collaboration. Before granting accreditation to an international certification authority, the MUI thoroughly investigates the organization in terms of sharia and management competency. The public has raised several concerns regarding the consistency of halal goods produced within the validity period of halal certificates, considering that certificates issued by the MUI have a validity period of two years. It is conceivable that the manufacturer will change the ingredients or manufacturing process at some point, thereby

making the product non-halal. In response to this, LPPOM MUI mandated the implementation of the Halal Guarantee System in all organizations holding halal certificates and also organizations applying for halal certification (Savitri & Putra, 2022).

The aim of the Halal Guarantee System (SJH) is to maintain the continuity of the halal production process in accordance with LPPOM MUI requirements by developing, implementing and maintaining an integrated management system that regulates materials, production processes, products, human resources and procedures. A Halal Management Team, which has the ability to develop, supervise and assess the Halal Guarantee system, must be formed by the company as proof that the Halal Guarantee System has been implemented within the organization. The team consists of various members working in various important departments including production, warehousing, quality control, research and development, and purchasing, among others. In order for the product produced to have halal status, as claimed by the business and will be known by its customers, all teams involved in crucial activities must have the necessary competence in carrying out their duties to maintain the halalness of materials as well as the production process and facilities used (Purwanto et al., 2020).

Since its founding until now, LPPOM MUI has regularly held lectures, discussions with experts, including sharia science experts, as well as conducting muzakarah and comparative studies. Everything is done to ensure that the procedures and requirements of the Halal Guarantee System and Halal Certification System, which are continuously refined by LPPOM MUI, are always in line with advances in science and religious teachings. The difficulties faced by MUI and LPPOM MUI are increasing as a result of technological advances and societal needs (Ula'm et al., 2023).

In this context, the MUI has upheld the belief that Muslim consumers in Indonesia, who constitute the majority in this country, must be protected in seeking information regarding halal food, drinks, medicines, cosmetics, genetically modified products, and second-hand goods. others - which are collectively referred to as halal products circulating in Indonesia (Subekhi & Oktavia, 2021). Therefore, it is inevitable that there will be laws governing halal goods. Because the law is needed to guarantee that those who violate it will face law enforcement.

To improve customer service, LPPOM MUI North Sumatra developed a Management Information System (SIM) that facilitates online halal certification applications at www.halalsumut.org, to meet the needs of business actors and the general public. The aim of various LPPOM MUI North Sumatra halal certification initiatives and policies is to continue to increase public access to halal goods and services. Therefore, to further strengthen the implementation of Halal Certification with a clear legislative framework, a law is needed that guarantees the availability of halal products for Muslim consumers in Indonesia.

Reasons Behind the Transformation of the Halal Logo of the Indonesian Ulama Council (MUI)

On March 12 2022, the MUI halal logo will change to a purple shadow puppet logo. The Ministry of Religion's Halal Product Guarantee Organizing Agency (BPJPH) has established a national halal logo. The process for determining a halal label is outlined in the Decree of the Head of BPJPH Number 40 of 2022 concerning Determination of Halal Labels. On February 10, 2022, the decision was made in Jakarta, and on March 1, 2022, Muhammad Aqil Irham, Head of BPJPH, signed it (Syarifudin & Fahma, 2022).



Figure 1 Old MUI Halal Label

Source: <https://halalsumut.org/>



Image 2 Latest Halal Logo

Source: <https://kemenag.go.id>

As stated by Muhammad Aqil Irham, Head of BPJPH, the aim of determining the halal label is to implement the law of Law Number 33 of 2014, especially Article 37 which regulates Halal Product Guarantees (JPH) (Lynarbi et al., 2020). "This choice is also part of carrying out the mandate of Government Regulation (PP) Number 39 of 2021

concerning the Implementation of JPH. "In order to fulfill the mandate of statutory regulations, in particular Article 37 of Law Number 33 of 2014 concerning Halal Product Guarantees, as we have officially stipulated in the Decree of the Head of BPJPH, BPJPH decided on a halal label in the form of a logo," said Aqil Irham in Jakarta, Saturday (03/12/2022).

Apart from that, the transfer of halal certification authority from LPPOM MUI to BPJPH Ministry of Religion was the reason behind the modification of the halal symbol, as reported by Detiknews. The MUI fatwa permitted the use of the previous halal logo for a period of five years, as stated by MUI Secretary General Amirsyah Tambunan. Yaqut Cholil Qoumas, Minister of Religion, said that the MUI's previous halal designation would eventually end. He claimed that the national halal label was determined by the Halal Product Guarantee Organizing Agency (BPJPH) of the Ministry of Religion. The halal label given by MUI will eventually be deemed no longer valid. According to law, the halal label belongs to local governments and organizations.

North Sumatra LPPOM MUI Public Relations Communication Strategy to Medan City Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (UMKM) Traders

A written fatwa from the MUI stating that a product is halal in accordance with Islamic law is known as halal certification. To obtain authorization from the authorized government agency to include a halal label on product packaging, a halal certificate is required. To provide peace of mind to consumers when consuming certain products, such as food, medicine, cosmetics and other goods, halal certification is carried out (Salman et al., 2023).

The communication strategy carried out by LPPOM MUI North Sumatra to MSME traders is through various media, namely social media, print media and online media. Communication strategies via social media can be seen from the official Instagram of LPPOM MUI North Sumatra regarding training activities and procedures for obtaining halal certification. And LPPOM MUI North Sumatra's public relations communication strategy is through online media in the form of the official website www.halalsumut.org from LPPOM MUI North Sumatra which can be accessed by business actors who wish to process halal certification. As well as the public relations communication strategy of LPPOM MUI North Sumatra through print media which is the public relations strategy of LPPOM MUI North Sumatra in disseminating information using the technique of distributing brochures regarding halal certification procedures to Medan City MSME traders, especially on Jl. Tuasan.

Based on a notification from the central LPPOM MUI based on the statement made by Zulfahmi Lubis as head of public relations for the North Sumatra LPPOM MUI, it was stated that October 17 2024 is the end time for the first stage of the halal certificate obligation. So MSME traders must process halal certification before October 17 2024. North Sumatra MSME business actors are communicated and socialized by the Halal Inspection Institute (LPH) LPPOM MUI North Sumatra. LPPOM MUI North Sumatra's public relations strategy also uses a direct approach, namely by socializing halal certification through seminars and formal events attended by MSME participants. Every week, these

events are held to promote social interaction and enlighten business stakeholders about the qualifications and protocols for obtaining halal certification.

Based on the results of an interview on March 9 2024, Zulfahmi Lubis as head of public relations for LPPOM MUI North Sumatra stated that there were 3 communication strategies carried out by LPPOM MUI North Sumatra to increase awareness of halal certification for MSME traders, especially on Jl. Tuasan District. Medan Tembung, Medan City, namely:

1. North Sumatra LPPOM MUI Public Relations Communication Strategy in Socializing Halal Certification Through Online Media

In the era of digitalization which is all online and everything is always made easy, it is a challenge for LPPOM MUI North Sumatra to socialize about the mandatory processing of halal certification. However, this is not an obstacle for LPPOM MUI North Sumatra in facing increasingly sophisticated technology (Puspita Ningrum, 2022). Therefore, LPPOM MUI North Sumatra has launched a breakthrough by creating an official website for LPPOM MUI North Sumatra to create easy and fast services. The LPPOM MUI North Sumatra website contains information regarding online halal certification procedures which can make it easier for business actors.

Public Relations of LPPOM MUI North Sumatra provided information about the halal certification process:

"We have conveyed the process of processing halal certification to MSME traders, that on the LPPOM MUI North Sumatra website there is various information about easy registration methods for processing halal certification. However, many MSME players still do not really understand how to use technology. Therefore, we strongly urge MSME traders who do not know how to use technology to come to the LPPOM MUI North Sumatra office. And they will be served as best as possible until the halal certification is issued" (Results of an interview with the Head of Public Relations of LPPOM MUI North Sumatra, March 9 2024 at 16.00 WIB).

The following is the official website of LPPOM MUI North Sumatra:



Figure 3 Home Page of the LPPOM MUI North Sumatera Website

Source: <https://halalsumut.org/>

Based on the image above, it shows the home page of the official website of LPPOM MUI North Sumatera regarding the process of obtaining halal certification by going through several halal certification procedures, starting from registering a Cerol account, namely the LPPOM MUI halal certification service system account online, then the business actor uploads the entire data. and will be processed by LPPOM MUI North Sumatera. Before that, MSME business actors prepare halal certification documents, carry out pre-audits and make payments for certification contracts. After the audit has been carried out and approved by the business actor's product to obtain halal certification, the actor can obtain halal certification in softcopy form on the Cerol account of the halal certification service system.

2. North Sumatera LPPOM MUI Public Relations Communication Strategy in Socializing Halal Certification Through Print Media

LPPOM MUI North Sumatera's communication strategy to Medan City MSME traders, especially on Jalan Tuasan, is currently by distributing brochures about procedures for processing halal certification. Due to the low level of technological understanding among MSMEs on Jl. Tuasan city of Medan, it is not enough if only socialization is carried out through online media (Nawawi & Rahmah, 2022). So LPPOM MUI North Sumatera carried out direct outreach to MSME traders by distributing brochures regarding procedures for processing halal certification.

North Sumatera LPPOM MUI Public Relations communication strategy with print media, which will make it easier for MSME traders to find out information about processing halal certification. However, there are still many MSME traders who do not

apply for halal certification at LPPOM MUI North Sumatra on the grounds that processing halal certification is complicated and difficult. Zul Fahmi Lubis as head of public relations for LPPOM MUI North Sumatra also added that at LPPOM MUI North Sumatra in processing halal certification they will be guided and directed until the MSME traders obtain halal certification.

Below is a form of brochure distributed by LPPOM MUI North Sumatra to MSME business actors:

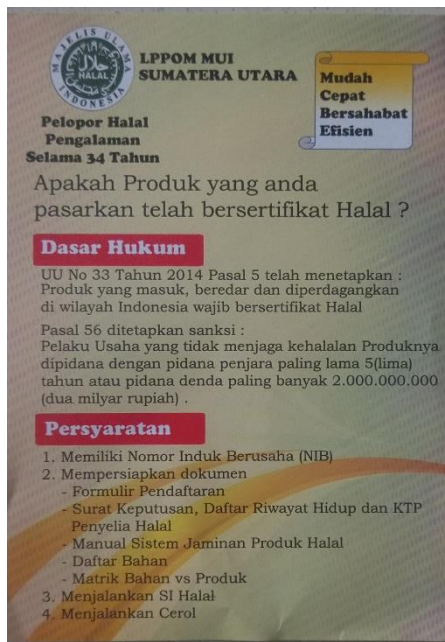


Figure 4 Halal Brochure Front View
Source: *Personal documentation*

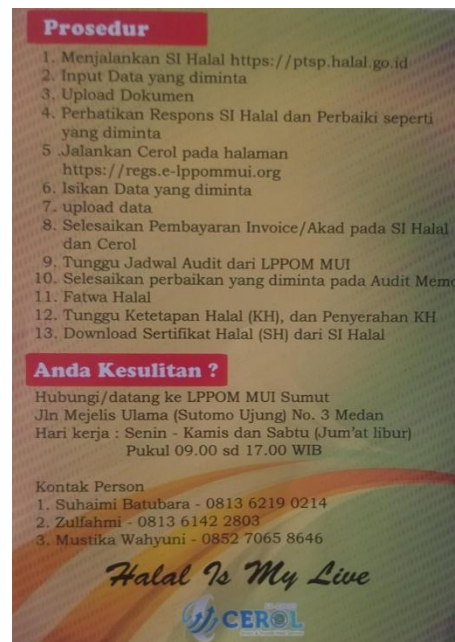


Figure 5 Halal Brochure Rear View
Source: *Personal documentation*

Based on the picture above, it shows the form of a brochure from LPPOM MUI North Sumatra regarding procedures for processing halal certification to be disseminated to MSME traders in North Sumatra Province, especially Jl. Tuasan District, Medan Tembung, Medan City. This brochure makes it easier for MSME traders to carry out the halal certification process with minimal technological knowledge. The first thing to do in the halal certification process based on the image above is to prepare all forms of documents, including registration forms and product ingredient lists. After that, the business actor ran the SI Halal website <https://ptps.halal.go.id> by filling in the required data. Then wait for a response from the Si Halal editor and make improvements as requested. Next, pay the invoice/contract so that the audit implementation schedule comes out from LPPOM MUI North Sumatra. Then make the corrections requested in the audit memo. Mui will carry out an MUI fatwa regarding halal regulations (KH). If approved, MSME business actors can download the halal certification on the SI Halal account website.

3. North Sumatera LPPOM MUI Communication Strategy in Promoting Halal Certification Through Instagram Social Media

LPPOM MUI North Sumatera not only carries out outreach to MSME traders through print media and online media, but social media Instagram is also no less important. LPPOM MUI North Sumatera continuously conveys information about the importance of the halal logo for MSME traders to increase peace of mind for the community and also increase sales turnover. In the Instagram account @lppommuisumut there are seminar activities carried out by the LPPOM MUI North Sumatera with related agencies including MSME traders as participants in these activities.

The LPPOM MUI North Sumatera Instagram account is a medium or tool for conveying information to the public to make it easier for MSMEs to get information quickly. The central LPPOM MUI Instagram account also continues to be active in disseminating information to the Indonesian public about halal products, including food, cosmetics, medicines and so on. The communication strategy via Instagram media carried out by LPPOM MUI North Sumatera can be a reference and knowledge in procedures for processing halal certification as well as halal products that are good to use.

The following is the LPPOM MUI North Sumatera Instagram account:

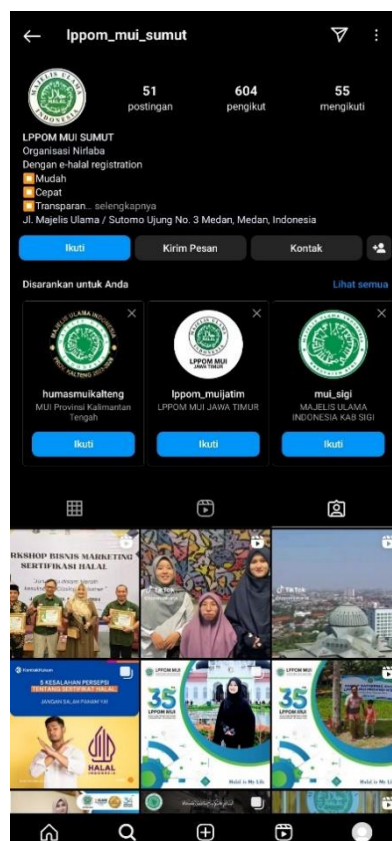


Figure 6 Instagram Account Profile Page LPPOM MUI North Sumatera

Based on the image above, it shows the LPPOM MUI North Sumatra Instagram account profile page which contains seminar activities and other interesting information. LPPOM MUI North Sumatra also promotes halal certification by creating attractively packaged videos to increase knowledge for social media users about halal certification. In the Instagram account there is also documentary evidence of activities shared by the LPPOM MUI North Sumatra Instagram social media regarding the Halal Guarantee System (SJH) and the delivery of halal certification to MSME traders.

The Effectiveness of LPPOM MUI North Sumatra's Public Relations Communication Strategy in Disseminating Halal Certification to MSME Traders in Medan City

According to Ravianto in Masruri, defining effectiveness is a measure of how well a job is done. In other words, this means that an action is considered effective if it is completed according to plan, both in terms of cost, time and quality (Yulianto & Nugraheni, 2021). Something is said to be effective if it is able to bring about change. The public relations communication strategy carried out by the LPPOM MUI North Sumatra public relations to Medan City MSME traders, especially Jl. Tuasan, Medan Tembung District, is declared effective if there are changes.

As is known, the level of knowledge of the people of Medan City is still low regarding halal law based on dissertation research by a postgraduate student at the State Islamic University of North Sumatra, namely a researcher named Milhan, entitled "Legal Awareness of the Muslim Community of Medan City in Consuming Food Not Labeled Halal". In this research, it was explained that the level of legal awareness of the Medan City Muslim community in consuming food that is not labeled halal is still low. This is based on confessions from 100% of informants that they have consumed food in restaurants, cafes or restaurants that are not labeled halal.

Therefore, based on the maqā perspective *ṣid syar'ah* that the command to consume halal food and avoid haram food is categorized *ḍarūriyyat*. People believe that food and drinks are halal based on indicators they understand, including the restaurant owner and waiter being Muslim, the seller displaying verses from the holy Koran or wearing Muslim clothing. The Muslim community in Medan City who consumes food that is not labeled halal does not receive legal protection, therefore the community is greatly disadvantaged. People can be deceived because there is no guarantee that the food they consume is halal (Milhan, 2020).

Researchers have taken several samples of MSME traders along Jl. Tuasan City of Medan, which only uses a halal logo with Arabic writing and does not use the official halal logo from the MUI on March 22 2024 using interview techniques and direct observation.

From the responsive trader "Burger FM" Jl. Tuasan managed by Fajar Riski Pane revealed that:

"The socialization carried out by LPPOM MUI North Sumatra from Instagram media regarding obligations in processing halal certification makes it very easy to get information. "But there are people who record my food product information and they say

it's from the MUI, but up to now they haven't taken care of my certificate."(Results of direct interviews with MSME traders on Jl. Tuasan, Medan City, March 22 2024 at 16.24 WIB).

An irresponsible person whose identity is unknown said he would manage and assist in the halal certification process, but from 2023 until now the halal certification process has not been carried out. The owner of Burger FM is afraid that his data will be distributed and used inappropriately. MSME traders do not have time to go directly to the LPPOM MUI North Sumatera office in Medan City.



Figure 7 Burger FM MSME Traders

Front View



Figure 8 Burger FM MSME Traders

of Banner

Source: *Personal Documentation*

Other MSME traders also gave their opinions about the socialization carried out by LPPOM MUI North Sumatera, namely the penyet chicken trader "SAHABAT" said that:

"From 2023 I have provided data regarding halal certificates, but until now they have not been provided at all. I hope that the LPPOM MUI of North Sumatera will immediately reduce the number of individuals who record my information because they fear that my data will be misused. "And I also hope that the MUI can come to the location of MSME traders to process halal certification without a long process."(Results of interviews with MSME food traders Penyet Sahabat Chicken, March 22 2024 at 15.55 WIB).

The lack of information obtained by MSME traders, especially penyet chicken traders, makes it easy for them to digest information that is not factual or a hoax. The owner of the penyet chicken "Sahabat" admitted that he made the halal logo only with Arabic words, but he intends to carry out official halal certification from LPPOM MUI North Sumatera. However, because the owner was deceived by the promise that he would help with the halal certification process, it turned out he didn't do it.



Figure 9 UMKM Traders of Sahabat Penyet Chicken Food

Source: *Personal Documentation*

Another MSME trader also added his opinion regarding the halal certification carried out by LPPOM MUI North Sumatra from the trader "BURUNG GORENG CABE IJO" saying that:

"I have provided data about my restaurant to a party who claims to be from the MUI and is irresponsible and promised to help in obtaining halal certification but it turns out it was not carried out from 2023 to 2024 now" (Results of interviews via WhatsApp with MSME traders, Burung Goreng Cabe Ijo, March 22 2024 at 21.00 WIB).



Figure 10 MSME traders of IJO chili fried bird food

Source: *Personal Documentation*

Information about halal certification carried out by LPPOM MUI North Sumatra is not carried out thoroughly. So this information does not reach MSME traders on Jl. Tuasan, Medan City. As previously discussed, LPPOM MUI North Sumatra's public relations communication strategy towards MSME traders is carried out through online website media, print media and Instagram social media. Based on the data obtained, the LPPOM MUI North Sumatra Instagram has been around since 2017, while the website www.halalsumut.org created in 2020.

Based on the data obtained, it is a list of LPPOM MUI North Sumatera clients since 2019-2021. And in 2022-2024 there will be no additional MSME data on halal certification registration on the LPPOM MUI North Sumatera website.

No	REGISTERING MSME	2019	2020	2021
1.	Foodstuffs	83	142	42
2.	Drugs	1	1	1
3.	Cosmetics		4	
Total			274	

Total: 2019 = 84

2020 = 147

2021 = 43

2022-2024 = no information

Based on the results of the data above, the communication strategy carried out by the public relations of LPPOM MUI North Sumatera has not been effective. Due to data results from the official website of LPPOM MUI North Sumatera www.halalsumut.org regarding the list of halal products, it has decreased every year after 2020 and even from 2022 to 2024 there is no data on MSME that have registered for halal certification at LPPOM MUI North Sumatera. As well as responsiveness from MSME traders who still lack information about halal certification. And also the statement mentioned in the introduction that the Head of the North Sumatera Cooperatives and SME Service, Naslindo Sirait, said that around 80% of MSME in North Sumatera do not have a halal certificate. This is due to a lack of awareness of the importance of legality, certification costs and the effectiveness of halal companions. Medan City MSME traders hope that the LPPOM MUI North Sumatera will be willing to go into the field to conduct outreach and convey information about processing halal certification and registering halal certification directly on the spot. Without procedures, this can make things difficult for MSME traders.

CONCLUSION

The Indonesian Ulema Council's Food, Drug and Cosmetic Study Institute (LPPOM MUI) is tasked with conducting research, study, analysis and determining the safety of food and related products, medicines and cosmetics for consumption and use by the public and whether it is halal for consumption by the public.

The communication strategy carried out by LPPOM MUI North Sumatera in increasing awareness of halal certification for MSME traders on Jl. Tuasan Medan City includes communication strategies through print media, online media and Instagram social media. Based on the results of the discussion regarding data, MSME registering their products with LPPOM MUI North Sumatera experienced a decline in each subsequent year and even in 2022-2024 there were no MSME traders registering their products with LPPOM MUI

North Sumatra. This proves that the communication strategy carried out by the public relations of LPPOM MUI North Sumatra has not been effective regarding awareness of halal certification for Medan City MSME traders, especially Jl. Tuasan, Medan Tembung District. Because the target of LPPOM MUI North Sumatra's communication strategy was not correct, MSME traders did not receive full information from LPPOM MUI North Sumatra. The importance of taking a direct communication strategy approach by LPPOM MUI North Sumatra to Medan City MSME traders, especially Jl. Tuasan, Medan Tembung District. In order to gain knowledge from MSME traders towards LPPOM MUI North Sumatra regarding understanding awareness of halal certification for their products.

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