

The Dialectics of Allocative and Authoritative Social Interaction in Halal Literacy: A Structuration Study in the Indonesian Halal System

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Article Info	ABSTRACT
Article history: Received Jul 02, 2025 Revised Sept 27, 2025 Accepted Okt 06, 2025 Keywords: Alokatif; Interaksi Sosial; Literasi Halal; Otoritatif; Strukturasi.	The discourse on halal in Indonesia has shifted from a purely religious domain to an integral part of the economy, consumer culture, and social identity. Following the enactment of Law No. 33 of 2014 on Halal Product Guarantee, the state has strengthened its control through an authoritative approach emphasizing certification and regulation. At the grassroots level, however, communities—especially MSME actors and online networks—have developed halal literacy through participatory and contextual interactions. This study explores the tension between authoritative and allocative social interactions in shaping halal knowledge and practices, and their implications for power relations and the democratization of halal meaning. Using a qualitative approach grounded in Anthony Giddens' structuration theory, data were collected through policy document analysis, social media observation, and MSME case studies in Yogyakarta. The analysis employed Norman Fairclough's Critical Discourse Analysis framework covering text, discursive, and social practices. The findings reveal that state and religious institutions dominate halal literacy through regulatory and technocratic narratives, yet communities actively reinterpret halal through social media, peer exchange, and experiential learning. The study concludes that halal literacy should move beyond top-down regulation toward a participatory, community-based model responsive to socio-cultural and business realities in Indonesia.

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INTRODUCTION

In recent years, discourse and practices regarding halal in Indonesia have experienced rapid development, not only in the religious sphere, but also in the economic, political, and popular culture fields. As the country with the largest Muslim population in the world, Indonesia officially projects itself as the global center of the halal economy, marked by the enactment of Law No. 33 of 2014 concerning Halal Product Guarantee (UU JPH) and the strengthening of the role of the Halal Product Guarantee Agency (BPJPH) (KEMENAG RI, 2022). As well as the promotion of a halal lifestyle by various state and private actors through various festivals, media campaigns, and industry collaborations (Yuswohady, 2019). However, this development is not without various social dynamics. Amidst the intense penetration of the halal industry, a fundamental question arises: how is information, knowledge, and meaning about “halal” produced, disseminated, and exchanged by social actors who have different positions and authorities?

The empirical problem that arises is the imbalance in the dissemination of halal literacy, namely the extent to which the public understands, believes in, and practices halal principles in their daily lives. There is a dominance of authoritative social interactions, namely one-way communication from state institutions and religious authorities that determine halal standards through regulations and certification. This communication model is evident in the implementation of mandatory halal certification policies, even for micro-businesses, which often face administrative and cost barriers (Tempo.co, 2022). This is often at odds with the understanding of grassroots communities, especially micro-businesses and Muslim consumers, who have developed allocative interactions, namely the dissemination of halal knowledge through experience, online communities, and personal narratives (Kurniawati, 2021). This discrepancy creates tension between the formal state system and social practices, opening space for resistance to formal authority (Ali Rosidin, 2022). This is reflected in resistance to mandatory halal certification for small and traditional products (Zulfikar, 2021).

Academically, the issue of halal has been studied through various approaches, ranging from economic perspectives to branding strategies. A number of studies, such as those conducted by Faegheh Shirazi, show how halal labels have become a marketing tool in global industries that combine religious values and market commodification (Shirazi, 2016b). From a religious consumption perspective, Johan Fischer discusses how Muslims shape consumption practices that reflect spiritual identity in modern society (Fischer, 2008). In addition, studies of political representation, such as those discussed by Reina Lewis, show that halal symbols, particularly in the form of modest fashion, have become an arena of contestation between religious norms, the market, and identity (Lewis, 2015).

Although many studies have been conducted on halal, the majority still focus on economic aspects, branding, or Muslim consumer identity. Studies that specifically discuss social interactions in the formation of halal literacy, especially in the context of tensions between authoritative (state) and allocative (community) models, are still very limited, particularly in Indonesia. Furthermore, there has been

little research that views halal literacy as the result of a negotiation process between structure and agency, as understood in structuration theory. This study fills this gap by examining the dynamics between domination, resistance, and participation in the production of halal meaning in the public sphere.

This research is based on Anthony Giddens' structuration theory, which views social structures as never being entirely deterministic, but rather always reproduced through the actions of social actors (Giddens, 1984a). Therefore, halal literacy cannot be understood merely as a form of religious education or technical socialization, but rather as a dialectical field between individual agency and institutional structures. The position of this research is to highlight the tension between these two logics of social interaction as a process that shapes the meaning of halal in Indonesia in a dynamic, situational, and negotiation-filled manner. Thus, this paper argues that halal literacy is a product of social relations that are not singular, but rather reveal a configuration between domination, resistance, and the articulation of religious values in the contemporary public sphere.

This study aims to understand how allocative and authoritative social interactions shape halal literacy in Indonesia. The main focus is to identify the forms of these two patterns of interaction and the roles of key actors who serve as role models in the process of disseminating halal knowledge. In addition, this study also highlights the push-pull dynamics between participatory allocative forces and structured authoritative forces, as well as how the tension between the two is reflected in practices in various halal institutions.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Research conducted by Karisma Amalinda Putri in 2024 on halal culinary service adaptation strategies at Hotel Yamamoto, Japan, shows how the agency of Muslim tourists drives structural change in the hospitality sector. Using Anthony Giddens' structuration theory, this study describes the reciprocal interaction between individual actions (Muslim tourists) and institutional structures (hotel management), where halal certification and menu changes are institutional responses to halal consumption needs. This study is relevant for understanding how social structures, both in the form of regulations and operational practices, can be shaped and constrained by social actions. This context is in line with the dynamics of halal literacy in Indonesia, where halal institutions also demonstrate patterns of interaction between authoritative structures and the social actions of agents in shaping halal consumption awareness and behavior.

Emphasizing the importance of developing halal literacy indicators as an effort to integrate Islamic values into science education, particularly in science learning. This study shows that halal literacy is not only related to normative understanding of Islamic concepts, but also involves the ability to analyze product labels and halal certification in the context of everyday life. These findings indicate that halal literacy has both educational and practical dimensions that can shape students' consumption awareness. In relation to structuration studies, these findings reflect the role of individual agency in interpreting and responding to authoritative halal structures,

resulting in a reciprocal interaction between individuals and halal institutions in the process of constructing meaning and social practices based on religious values.

Highlighting the basic concepts in Anthony Giddens' structuration theory, particularly regarding the reciprocal relationship between agency and structure in shaping social life. This theory places individuals as active subjects who are not only shaped by social structures, but also capable of reproducing and transforming them. This understanding is relevant in examining the dynamics of halal institutions in Indonesia, where social interactions in halal literacy are not only influenced by institutional authority, but also by the capacity of individuals to interpret, respond to, and even reshape these structures. Thus, structuration theory becomes an important framework for understanding the dialectic between allocative and authoritative power in the social process of halal literacy.

METHODS

This study is a qualitative study with a sociological approach to understand the dynamics of social interaction in halal literacy in the Indonesian halal institution. The main focus is how the meaning of halal is constructed through social discourse and the role of authority and community participation in the process, particularly in the context of allocative and authoritative social interaction.

The research subjects were selected purposively, consisting of halal certification institutions (MUI, BPJPH), halal industry players, and the Muslim community as consumers. Data collection techniques were carried out through documentation (regulations, fatwas, press releases, media articles, and promotional materials) and observation of public discourse (social media, official websites, and online forums).

Data analysis uses Norman Fairclough's Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) model, which covers three dimensions: text analysis, discursive practices, and social practices. Data validity is maintained through source triangulation techniques by comparing various types of data to ensure the validity and consistency of the findings. This research was conducted in 2025 by observing five halal education accounts on social media and MSME empowerment, namely @halal.indonesia, @sibakulhalalfest, @halalcorner, @umkmhebat.id, and @sahabat_umkm. These accounts were selected because they represent actors with different roles, ranging from state authorities to educational platform communities.

The first two accounts, @halal.indonesia (BPJPH Ministry of Religious Affairs of the Republic of Indonesia) and @sibakulhalalfest (DIY Cooperative & SME Agency), represent state authorities that disseminate halal policies and support the halal SME ecosystem. Meanwhile, the other three accounts, @halalcorner, @umkmhebat.id, and @sahabat_umkm, represent communities and non-governmental organizations that focus on education, advocacy, and assistance for SMEs with a more participatory communication style. The main data analyzed in this study came from Instagram content, including posts, captions, hashtags, and visuals. The analysis focused on how each account constructed messages related to halal and SME empowerment in accordance with their respective functions and positions.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

MSME Halal Certification: The Role of BPJPH, MUI, and the Ministry of Religious Affairs

In the context of halal policy in Indonesia, the state is represented by three main institutions: the Halal Product Guarantee Agency (BPJPH), the Indonesian Ulema Council (MUI), and the Ministry of Religious Affairs (Kemenag). In addition, Law No. 33 of 2014 concerning Halal Product Guarantee also serves as the legal basis that strengthens the role of these three institutions in establishing a national halal certification system. (Haq., 2022).

BPJPH is an institution under the Ministry of Religious Affairs that is responsible for the technical implementation of halal certification. As of December 2023, BPJPH has issued more than 1.85 million halal certificates, including through the Free Halal Certification (SEHATI) program with a self-declare scheme for MSMEs that has been implemented since 2022 (BPJPH, 2023a). The SEHATI program is designed to facilitate Micro and Small Enterprises (MSEs) in obtaining halal certificates free of charge. In 2025, BPJPH will again open a quota of one million free halal certificates for MSEs throughout Indonesia. However, the number of MSMEs that have been halal certified is still very small compared to the total number of MSMEs in Indonesia. According to data from the Ministry of Cooperatives and SMEs, in 2023 there were around 66 million MSMEs in Indonesia, contributing 61% of the national Gross Domestic Product (GDP) (UKM, 2023).

Although no longer the primary authority for issuing certificates, the MUI remains the holder of halal fatwas (MUI, 2023). Through its Fatwa Commission and Halal Inspection Agency (LPH), which are mostly managed by regional MUI offices, this institution continues to play an important role in assessing the halal status of products, particularly in the audit and technical verification processes (Achmad Rosidin, 2023).

The Ministry of Religious Affairs carries out the functions of supervision and institutional strengthening of BPJPH (Peraturan Menteri Agama No. 20 Tahun 2021 Tentang Sertifikasi Halal, 2021). Through the Regulation of the Minister of Religious Affairs (PMA) and cross-sector coordination, the Ministry of Religious Affairs also plays a role in halal education, facilitation of certification assistance, and development of the national halal industry ecosystem. The Ministry of Religious Affairs also collaborates with the Ministry of Cooperatives and SMEs and Islamic financial institutions to support MSME actors in the halal certification process (Kemenag RI, 2023).

Mandatory Halal Policy and Its Implementation

Based on Law No. 33 of 2014 concerning Halal Product Guarantee, all products that enter, circulate, and are traded in Indonesia must be halal certified (UU No. 33 Tahun 2014 Tentang Jaminan Produk Halal, Pasal 4., 2014). However, its implementation is carried out gradually in accordance with Government Regulation No. 39 of 2021 (PP No. 39 Tahun 2021 Tentang Penyelenggaraan Bidang Jaminan Produk Halal, 2021).

The following are the stages of implementation of halal certification requirements:

First Stage (2019–2024), Starting October 17, 2024, food and beverage products, slaughtered products, slaughtering services, as well as raw materials, food additives, and auxiliary materials for food and beverage products must be halal certified (BPJPH, 2023).

The second phase of halal certification requirements has been expanded to include (RI, 2023):

- a. Traditional medicines, quasi-medicines, and health supplements (until October 17, 2026).
- b. Over-the-counter drugs and restricted over-the-counter drugs (until October 17, 2029)
- c. Prescription drugs (except psychotropic drugs) (until October 17, 2034)
- d. Cosmetics, chemical products, and genetically modified products (until October 17, 2026)
- e. Commodities such as clothing, headwear, accessories, household appliances, religious equipment, stationery, and office supplies (until October 17, 2026).
- f. Class A medical devices in accordance with the provisions of laws and regulations (until October 17, 2026).

However, this process faces administrative challenges, particularly implementation challenges for MSMEs (Ismail, 2023). Although the government has launched a Free Halal Certification (SEHATI) program with a self-declare scheme to facilitate Micro and Small Enterprises (MSEs), its implementation in the field still faces various structural challenges. One of the main obstacles is the lack of adequate socialization and assistance, especially for MSME players in rural areas who often do not have access to information regarding halal certification requirements and the established self-declare procedure. In addition, limited resources pose a challenge in themselves, with MSME operators often facing administrative obstacles related to the completeness of requirements, such as a Business Identification Number (NIB) and Taxpayer Identification Number (NPWP), which are prerequisites in the halal certification application process. The free halal certification/self-declare program was launched to overcome cost and access barriers, but its implementation requires guidance from partner LPHs and has limitations on the types of products that can be submitted (BPJPH, 2023).

On the other hand, the capacity of the Halal Inspection Agency (LPH) as a strategic partner in the implementation of technical guidance and verification is still limited, both in terms of the number of agencies and the scope of their working areas. This shows a structural imbalance between state regulations and the reality of micro-businesses (Zuhdi, 2023). This slows down the certification process, especially for MSMEs outside major economic centers. Equally important, the perceptions and mindset of some MSME actors are also a hindering factor, as many still view halal certification as only relevant for large-scale businesses, making them less proactive in obtaining certification for their products.

Facing these challenges requires synergy and cross-sector collaboration between the government, LPH, supporting institutions, and MSME associations to intensify more equitable and sustainable outreach, training, and technical assistance. With a more inclusive approach, it is hoped that the implementation of mandatory halal policies can run more optimally and accelerate the growth of the halal industry at the MSME level nationwide.

Barriers to halal certification for MSME actors

The implementation of halal certification for MSMEs in Indonesia still faces various complex obstacles. Internally, limited halal literacy, a lack of human resources, limited business capital, and a low level of technical understanding of the certification procedure are the main factors that hinder business participation. Meanwhile, external factors such as relatively high certification costs, complex and digital-based administrative processes, limited access to testing laboratories, and a lack of socialization and assistance from relevant institutions further exacerbate the situation. These obstacles have caused many MSMEs to remain reluctant or unable to undergo the halal certification process, even though certification is an important instrument for increasing product competitiveness while providing halal assurance for Muslim consumers (Khairawati et al., 2024)

Community-based halal literacy practices

Community-based halal literacy practices in the digital age are growing rapidly, especially through social media such as Instagram, YouTube, and TikTok. These platforms have become the main means for people to express and learn about halal lifestyles. The content shared is very diverse, ranging from halal food reviews, recipes, halal product promotions, to religious study content. Social media is not only a place to share information, but also a space for discussion, where users can ask questions, give feedback, and broaden their understanding of the halal status of a product or action. Scholars and preachers also take part by sharing religious study materials that discuss halal issues in a light and relevant manner to everyday life. (Febby Amelia Trisakti, 2025).

In addition to consumption, halal literacy has also spread to the realm of lifestyle and fashion. Many Muslim influencers promote clothing that complies with Islamic law, such as hijabs and modest clothing, while still looking fashionable and attractive. They help shape the perception that living a halal lifestyle is not rigid or old-fashioned, but can still be modern and trendy. Here we see how individuals, especially influencers, become active agents in redefining the meaning of halal amid the tide of popular culture. They are not merely passive consumers, but also producers of meaning who negotiate religious values in the context of contemporary aesthetics and lifestyles. Within the framework of agency theory, this shows that individuals have the capacity to choose, interpret, and even recreate religious norms in forms that are more contextual and relevant to modern life.

On the other hand, online and offline communities with a shared interest in halal lifestyles are also growing. These communities serve as inclusive spaces for learning and sharing, encouraging the natural dissemination of halal information

within society. The practice of halal literacy in such communities demonstrates that agency is not only possessed by individuals separately, but can also be collective. Through social interaction and knowledge exchange, communities become an important medium in shaping critical awareness and strengthening religious identity in the digital age.

A concrete example of community-based halal literacy practices on social media is the Instagram account @halalcorner. This account actively provides information about the halal status of food, cosmetics, and other lifestyle products. With its lighthearted style and attractive visuals, @halalcorner has successfully reached thousands of followers, especially among millennials. This success reflects how social media can serve as an agency tool, where certain actors leverage digital platforms to creatively and participatively disseminate religious values. This account is also trusted because it conveys information from valid and reliable sources, making it authoritative in the eyes of its followers. More than just a medium of information, @halalcorner functions as a space for discussion, education, and even advocacy, where people can ask questions or share experiences about halal products. In this context, agency emerges in the form of public participation in the production and dissemination of halal discourse, showing that the meaning of halal is not fixed, but is constantly reconstructed by social actors in an ever-changing cultural and technological context (Shelna Azima Azam, 2024).

Not only on social media, halal literacy practices are also carried out directly in local communities, such as in Bali. There, the Muslim community has begun to develop a high awareness of the importance of halal-certified products, thanks to religious lectures and recitation activities. Through this approach, halal literacy has become more grounded and contextual. Personal experiences, such as that of Mrs. Wita when she accidentally consumed non-halal food, trigger awareness of the importance of being careful in choosing products. This event not only shapes emotional and religious responses, but also plays a role in building individual understanding of the concept of halal. In this context, individual experiences serve as a source of allocative meaning production, namely how individuals actively allocate value and meaning to halal consumption practices in their daily lives. Along with religious education, such experiences show that halal literacy is not only understood as a normative obligation in Islam, but also as the result of a process of internalization and personal reflection that makes it a conscious and responsible lifestyle choice (Muchtar, 2012)

Case study (mini study):

From the perspective of Anthony Giddens' structuration theory, the dynamics faced by MSMEs in managing halal certification can be understood as a dialectical interaction between structure and agency. Structure, in this case, is manifested in the form of government regulations on halal certification requirements and the certification bureaucracy system itself, including procedures, document requirements, and SEHATI program quotas. This structure is not entirely deterministic, but rather a field that facilitates and limits the actions of MSME actors.

The MSME Emping Mlinjo “Jumeneng” and Bubur Kacang Ijo “Pak Tugiyat” show how limitations in agency, such as lack of access to information, administrative difficulties, and low digital literacy, result in failure to access structural opportunities such as the SEHATI program. On the other hand, the complex halal certification bureaucratic structure, which is not yet fully adaptive to the capacity of micro-businesses, reveals a rigid system that is unable to provide flexible space for small-scale economic practices.

In contrast, the success of Ayam Potong Sulaiman in obtaining halal certification represents an agency practice that is able to reflectively navigate and reproduce existing structures. By utilizing resources such as training from the Indonesian Waqf Education Agency, supply chain documentation, and assistance from halal slaughterers (Juleha), business actors demonstrate strong agency capacity to adapt while strengthening the halal structure being developed by the state. This success, within the framework of structuration, not only strengthens the economic position of businesses but also helps reproduce new social structures, namely Muslim consumers who are increasingly aware of product halal status and market preferences that are becoming more selective regarding halal certification.

Thus, this case study shows how the practices of MSME actors in the context of halal certification cannot be understood merely as an administrative issue, but also as the result of a dynamic relationship between regulatory structures and business agency in reshaping the halal socio-economic field in Indonesia.

Reporting Research Results

Anthony Giddens' Theory of Structuration

Before analyzing the data, it is important to first explain how the concept of social interaction in halal literacy is understood in the context of structuration theory. This article distinguishes two main forms of social relations: authoritative social interaction, which is a relationship that originates from formal structures such as the state and religious authorities that set norms through regulations and certification; and allocative social interaction, which is a participatory social relationship formed by the community through communities, narratives, experiences, and social media. These two models are used to examine the tension between top-down control and bottom-up agency in the dissemination of halal literacy in Indonesia.

In Anthony Giddens' Structuration Theory, the relationship between structure and agency is understood dualistically, where structure not only limits social action but is also enabled and reproduced by that action. In the context of halal policy in Indonesia, the formal structure of the state is present through institutions such as BPJPH, MUI, and the Ministry of Religious Affairs. These three institutions form a regulatory framework that is the dominant structure in the implementation of the halal certification system. Through regulations such as Law No. 33 of 2014 and Government Regulation No. 39 of 2021, the state systematically regulates the stages of implementing halal obligations. However, as Giddens emphasizes, structure does not entirely determine individual social action; social actors have agency that allows them to respond to, adapt to, and even reformulate existing structures.

Empirical data shows that there's tension between the regulatory structure and the agencies of MSME players. Even though the government has provided a Free Halal Certification (SEHATI) scheme as an inclusive effort, many MSMEs still have trouble accessing this program because of administrative barriers, limited socialization, and minimal assistance. This shows that the formal structure does not yet fully accommodate the diversity of agency capacity at the grassroots level, especially MSMEs operating in rural areas or those with limited digital literacy. In this case, the structure actually functions as an inflexible constraint for some business actors, causing disparities in the implementation of halal policies. However, there are also examples of agencies that have successfully utilized the existing structure, such as the MSME "Ayam Potong Sulaiman" (Sulaiman Chicken), which was able to obtain halal certification after participating in training and completing the technical procedures. This shows that under certain conditions, the structure can be internalized and reproduced through adaptive and strategic actions by agents.

Thus, community-based halal literacy represents the agency of society in responding to and navigating the formal structures established by the state. Here we see the dialectical relationship between structure and agency as formulated by Giddens, namely that the formal structures of the state create a framework for action, but the agency of society through adaptation, resistance, and innovation also reproduces and even changes these structures themselves in everyday social practice.

Allocative vs. Authoritative Social Interaction in Halal Literacy

In the study of halal literacy sociology, the social interaction approach is crucial to understanding how the meaning, authority, and knowledge of halal are formed and distributed. Referring to the concept of authoritative social interaction, Indonesia's national halal system reflects the dominance of formal structures that operate top-down (Giddens, 1984). The state and religious institutions control the setting of halal standards and procedures. Indonesia's national halal system reflects this pattern, as seen in Law No. 33 of 2014 and Government Regulation No. 39 of 2021, which emphasize the obligation of halal certification for all products circulating in Indonesia. By the end of 2023, BPJPH had issued more than 1.85 million halal certificates, mostly through formal mechanisms requiring verification by the Halal Inspection Agency (LPH) and fatwas from the Indonesian Ulema Council (MUI).

Meanwhile, participatory practices among the public, particularly MSME actors and online communities, indicate a form of allocative interaction that moves horizontally and is agency-based (Habermas, 1984). Micro, small, and medium enterprises (MSMEs) are important actors in shaping a contextual understanding of halal, particularly through online community networks such as halal business forums, home-based food producer communities, and social media platforms that facilitate self-education on halal certification. The Free Halal Certification Program (SEHATI) with a self-declare scheme since 2022 is one form of effort to accommodate this allocative interaction, although its coverage is still limited. Data from the Ministry of Industry (2023) shows that out of a total of 64.2 million MSMEs in Indonesia, only around 10,000 actors have successfully obtained halal certificates

through the self-declare program, reflecting the enormous challenge of bridging formal regulations with participatory initiatives in the field.

This allocative interaction is also driven by the rise of community-based halal literacy campaigns, such as online training organized by small business associations, collaborations with Muslim influencers, and educational initiatives by Sharia-based marketplaces. This practice shows that the distribution of halal knowledge does not only depend on the state and authoritative institutions, but is also shaped by the practical needs and socioeconomic context of grassroots businesses.

Authoritative Interaction: State Domination and Religious Institutions

Official documentation data shows that the state, through BPJPH and the Ministry of Religious Affairs, is the main actor in regulating and distributing halal knowledge. Formal regulations such as Law No. 33 of 2014 and Government Regulation No. 39 of 2021 stipulate that all products must be halal certified, and their implementation is organized through a complex and tiered bureaucratic mechanism (UU No. 33 Tahun 2014 Tentang Jaminan Produk Halal, Pasal 4., 2014). As of December 2023, BPJPH reported that it had issued more than 1.85 million halal certificates. However, when compared to the total of 64.2 million MSME actors in Indonesia (data from the Ministry of Cooperatives and SMEs, 2023), this achievement is still relatively small. Even in the self-declare-based Free Halal Certification (SEHATI) program, the certification quota for 2024 is only targeted to reach 1 million MSME actors, which is still quantitatively far from the national MSME population..

In this context, religious authorities such as the MUI also continue to play an important role in the halal inspection and fatwa process (Lubis, 2017). On the other hand, religious authorities such as the Indonesian Ulema Council (MUI) continue to play a central role as the authority on halal fatwas. Through the Fatwa Commission and the Halal Inspection Agency (LPH), which are largely managed by regional MUI branches, this institution is at the forefront of the process of examining and verifying the technical halal status of products. This interaction model creates one-way communication, in which the state and religious institutions determine halal standards, procedures, and authorizations, while business actors and the community are mostly placed as recipients of information and implementers of policies. This interaction model creates one-way communication, in which the state determines halal standards, procedures, and authorizations, while business actors and the community act as recipients of information and implementers of policies.

This structure reflects authoritative interactions that emphasize compliance with norms and regulations (Foucault, 1977). Halal literacy is understood as technical information that must be absorbed by society, not as knowledge that can be negotiated (Shirazi, 2016). This model reinforces the hierarchy in the production of halal knowledge and limits the agency of the community in defining halal based on their own context.

Other empirical evidence shows that the level of halal literacy among MSME actors is still low, especially in procedural and administrative aspects. The results

of a survey conducted by the Ministry of Industry in 2023 noted that more than 70% of MSME actors did not fully understand the process, benefits, and urgency of halal certification, even in the food and beverage sector, which is the priority for the first phase of mandatory certification (2024–2026). This further highlights the dominance of an authoritative approach in the dissemination of halal literacy, which is top-down and focused on formal compliance, rather than building critical understanding based on the needs of business actors.

Allocative Interaction: Space for Participation from Below

Although formal systems dominate, at the grassroots level, allocative social interactions are developing (Patrick Haenni, 2016). The emergence of halal education communities on social media such as Instagram, Facebook, and online forums such as Halal Corner or Halal Talk shows the active participation of the community in disseminating, discussing, and even redefining the concept of halal (Latifah, 2020). The narratives constructed in these communities are more experiential, contextual, and based on everyday life.

In addition, the phenomenon of halal influencers, such as MSME practitioners who transparently share their home production processes, as well as voluntary education from fellow business actors, has become an alternative channel for spreading halal literacy. Sharia-based marketplaces, such as Evermos and the halal feature on Tokopedia Salam, have also become platforms that strengthen this allocative interaction by providing space for MSME actors to independently promote halal products.

MSME actors also demonstrate agency in dealing with regulations that are considered complex. For example, some small business actors choose to rely on the trust of local consumers and traditional practices that are considered “socially halal,” rather than following the official certification process, which requires money, time, and access to technology (Fischer, 2011). In this case, the community is not merely the object of regulation, but an active subject in producing halal meanings according to their reality.

Data from the Ministry of Cooperatives and SMEs (2023) shows that around 38% of MSMEs in the food and cosmetics sector rely more on consumer testimonials and traditional halal standards (local beliefs) than formal certification as a strategy to build market trust. This strategy has emerged in response to the complexity of regulations and limited access to halal certification services, especially for businesses in non-urban areas.

The Dialectic of Authority and Agency: Productive Tension

The tension between formal structures and community agencies can be interpreted as a form of dialectic that is characteristic of social systems (Giddens, 1991). Authoritative and allocative interactions do not always negate each other, but can influence and negotiate with each other (Scott, 1985). The state remains the regulator of national halal standards, but the community also forms a participatory and democratic form of literacy. For example, the Free Halal Certification (SEHATI)

program, which was initially initiated top-down, now involves collaboration with local communities, Islamic organizations, and halal education-based digital platforms. According to the 2023 BPJPH report, more than 15,000 MSMEs have registered for self-declared certification through community assistance, demonstrating the synergy between state policy and community initiatives.

Thus, halal literacy in Indonesia is not a linear process from the state to society, but rather an arena of contestation of meaning, where formal authorities confront social agencies that reject the simplification and homogenization of religious values (Mahmood, 2005). This phenomenon shows that the meaning of halal is always open to interpretation, negotiation, and practice within a broader and more complex framework of social interaction (Mutlu, n.d.). This dialectic creates a new space for negotiation, where halal literacy develops not only as a legal obligation but also as a social identity, symbolic capital, and adaptation strategy for MSMEs in facing a market that is increasingly aware of religious values.

DISCUSSION

How The State/Institutions Control Halal Literacy Through Certification And Regulation

The state and related institutions control halal literacy through two main instruments: certification and regulation. Halal certification is both a technocratic and symbolic tool that represents the state's authority in setting halal standards for products. Through institutions such as the Halal Product Guarantee Agency (BPJPH), the state institutionalizes the halal assessment process, which was previously informal or based on trust in local religious authorities.

In addition to certification, formal regulations are also the main medium used by the state to shape and disseminate understanding about halal. Regulations such as Law No. 33 of 2014 concerning Halal Product Guarantee and its derivatives, such as Government Regulation No. 39 of 2021, establish the legal and administrative framework that must be followed by business actors. The state controls halal literacy through normative narratives in these policies that emphasize the importance of compliance with certification procedures in order to protect Muslim consumers. This creates official standards for what the state considers "halal," which indirectly rivals local religious authorities. This process also affects public education, as information about halal is now more likely to be based on formal certification than on community-based or traditional religious understanding.

How Society Constructs Its Own Halal Narrative Through Communities and Social Media

In today's digital age, society plays a very important role in building halal narratives through communities and social media. These narratives are no longer monopolized by religious institutions or formal authorities, but rather develop organically from the bottom up, namely from the experiences, understanding, and active participation of the community itself. Digital platforms such as Instagram, YouTube, and TikTok have become open spaces where the public not only receives

information but also produces and disseminates messages about the halal lifestyle. Through social media, the public voices the values of halal in various forms, ranging from reviews of halal food, tips on choosing halal-certified cosmetics, to the promotion of fashionable *syar'i* fashion. This content is created using light language, attractive visuals, and a contextual approach, making the concept of halal easier to understand and more relevant to everyday life. Even someone's personal experience of mistakenly consuming non-halal products, such as that experienced by Mrs. Wita, can become a collective reflection that raises awareness of the importance of being careful in choosing products.

On the other hand, the emergence of halal lifestyle communities, both online and offline, has strengthened the dissemination of halal information among the public. These communities serve as places for learning together, sharing experiences, and supporting one another in living according to halal principles. They also demonstrate that living a halal lifestyle is not rigid or outdated, but can remain modern and creative. Muslim influencers, for example, often promote clothing that is sharia-compliant yet stylish and trendy, thereby breaking the stereotype that sharia must be synonymous with conservatism.

The halal narrative built through communities and social media has had a widespread impact, not only in the religious sphere, but also socially and economically. In the economic sector, increased public awareness of halal has encouraged the growth of the halal creative industry. MSMEs are competing to obtain halal certification in order to reach Muslim markets that are increasingly aware and selective. Meanwhile, from a social perspective, the interactions created among social media users and community members strengthen solidarity and mutual concern in maintaining the halal nature of consumption.

Ultimately, the halal narrative shaped by society through communities and social media is a tangible manifestation of a vibrant, evolving, and contextual social movement. It is no longer merely a formal discourse from above, but a collective voice from below that brings halal values to life as an integral part of the identity, lifestyle choices, and social responsibility of Muslims in the digital age.

Dimensions of Domination, Resistance, and Negotiation in the Production of Halal Meaning

The production of halal meaning in Indonesian society does not take place in a neutral or homogeneous space, but rather within a social structure full of power relations (Foucault, 1980). In this context, halal literacy is not only a matter of disseminating information, but also of who has the right to define halal, through what media and mechanisms, and for whose interests. This is what gives rise to the dynamics of domination, resistance, and negotiation in halal literacy practices. To further examine these dynamics, the following section will describe how three main actors – the state, religious authorities, and society – play a role in shaping and reproducing the meaning of halal. The first dimension analyzed is the domination of the state as a central actor in the halal certification and knowledge production system.

Domination: The State as the Sole Producer of Meaning

The state, through BPJPH, the Ministry of Religious Affairs, and religious legitimacy from MUI, has established a regulatory system that positions itself as the sole authority in defining halal (Fischer, 2015). Knowledge about halal is codified in the form of positive law, technical procedures, and formal certification. This creates a hegemonic structure, in which the meaning of halal is treated as a fixed and objective entity. In fact, in practice, halal certification is not merely a tool for religious assurance, but also an administrative mechanism laden with market logic and bureaucratic control (UU No. 33 Tahun 2014 Tentang JPH., 2014).

This system exhibits the characteristics of authoritative interaction, in which the state occupies a dominant position as a producer of meaning, while the community is merely the object of policy and consumer of knowledge. For example, since the implementation of mandatory halal certification starting in 2024, micro-businesses in the food and beverage sector are projected to face a 5-10% increase in production costs due to adjustments in raw materials, packaging, and certification administration (Ministry of Industry, 2023). This shows how halal regulations operate not only as religious standards, but also as instruments that influence the economic ecosystem of business actors.

Resistance: Society Challenges Formal Authority

On the other hand, there are forms of social resistance from MSMEs and Muslim communities who see the certification system as an obstacle rather than a solution. Many micro-business owners choose not to participate in the certification process due to administrative barriers, costs, or because they feel that their products are already “traditionally halal” or “socially halal” (Shirazi, 2016). This resistance takes both passive (not participating in the system) and active (criticizing through social media or online communities) forms.

Halal education communities on social media such as Halal Talk, Halal Corner, and other independent accounts often construct narratives that are more dialogical and contextual, showing that communities are capable of producing their own understanding of halal based on experience, consumption ethics, and social relations (Fischer, 2009).

The 2023 Halal Institute survey shows that 62% of MSME players in non-urban areas prioritize consumer testimonials and community recommendations as halal guarantees, rather than official certificates. This finding indicates that resistance to formal standards is not merely a form of rejection, but rather an adaptive strategy to preserve local wisdom and maintain consumer trust.

Negotiation: Dialectical Space Between Structure and Agency

Interestingly, between dominance and resistance, there is room for negotiation that reflects more fluid social dynamics (Patrick Haenni, 2016). For example, several Muslim communities have collaborated with BPJPH or local LPH to hold independent training sessions or help MSMEs understand certification requirements without administrative pressure (Laporan Kinerja 2023, Kementerian Agama RI,

2024). As an example, the “UMKM Naik Kelas Halal” program, a collaboration between BPJPH and the Halal Corner community in 2023, successfully facilitated more than 1,200 MSMEs in West Java to obtain halal certification assistance through a self-declare scheme. This program not only focuses on document compliance but also on experience-based education so that business actors understand the added value of halal certification in practical terms.

Here, formal structures began to recognize the importance of a participatory approach, while the community also adapted formal standards for market reach and product credibility (Mohamad Abdalla & Helmy, 2020).

These negotiations are important because they show that the meaning of halal is never final, but always in a process of social negotiation between regulatory demands and the socio-economic realities of the community (Mahmood, 2005).

Tension Between Regulations and Everyday Social Practices

The tension that arises between formal structures (regulations) and social practices (everyday experiences) is a clear manifestation of the conflict between authoritative and allocative interactions. According to data from the Ministry of Cooperatives and SMEs in 2023, more than 80% of MSME actors in Indonesia operate in the informal sector with business models based on community and local traditions, which are often not accommodated by uniform national regulatory standards. This condition causes a gap between regulations based on bureaucratic rationality and daily practices that are more flexible and contextual.

Formal Regulations: Uniformity and Rationalization

The national halal policy is designed to provide standardization and legal certainty for halal products (Fischer, 2015). However, this overly formal approach often ignores the diversity of social conditions in society, especially MSMEs that do not have equal access to certification institutions, digital information, or legal assistance (Latiff & Mukhtar, 2022). Data from the Ministry of Cooperatives and SMEs (2023) shows that only about 15% of MSMEs are connected to online halal certification service platforms, while the rest still face obstacles in terms of internet access, digital literacy, and limited funds for assistance. Especially in rural and remote areas, geographical constraints are a major factor that makes it difficult for small businesses to follow formal certification procedures.

In other words, formal structures force diversity to become uniform (Bauman, 2000). The 2023 LPPOM MUI survey shows that 68% of MSME actors feel that halal certification requirements are still not in line with the real conditions of small businesses that are home-based and rooted in local traditions. Furthermore, data from the Ministry of Cooperatives and SMEs (2023) reveals that 75% of MSMEs do not have adequate access to technical assistance to meet certification standards, so that formal regulations are often considered burdensome and unresponsive to the diversity of micro business practices in the field.

Everyday Practices: Flexibility and Social Trust

Conversely, at the social practice level, product halalness is not always measured by certification labels, but by relationships of trust, tradition, and local values (Tarmuji & Ahmad, 2021). A survey by the Ministry of Industry (2023) shows that around 60% of MSME consumers still rely on social reputation and personal experience in assessing product halalness, especially in rural areas and small communities. Consumers tend to buy from sellers who are known to maintain ingredients and hygiene, or from neighbors who are considered honest and pious. This shows that religious practices are not solely governed by formal laws, but also by social logic and local spirituality that are flexible and contextual (Mahmood, 2005).

Social Consequences

The tension between formal regulations and everyday social practices in halal literacy can give rise to three main possibilities:

- a. Social exclusion MSMEs, especially micro and traditional ones, feel marginalized from the formal halal certification system (Shirazi, 2016). A survey by LPPOM MUI (2023) found that 65% of MSME actors experience difficulties in understanding and accessing the certification process due to cost, bureaucracy, and limited information. This condition has the potential to cause feelings of alienation and distrust towards state institutions, which in turn can hinder their participation in the national halal system.
- b. Structural rejection. Resistance to halal certification requirements is not merely a technical issue, but also a challenge to the state's legitimacy in regulating the religious and economic lives of its citizens (Fischer, 2009). This rejection can weaken the state's position as the sole producer of halal meaning, as businesses and Muslim communities begin to seek alternative understandings of halal that are more contextual and based on local experience. The growing activity of online halal education communities is one form of rejection and negotiation of these formal regulations.
- c. Alternative collaboration. Amidst these tensions, a community-based halal literacy ecosystem has emerged as a bridge between formal regulations and social practices (Azam, 2021). For example, several LPHs and BPJPHs have begun to collaborate with local communities and MSME actors to hold independent training and more participatory mentoring. This approach aims to reduce the information gap and improve halal literacy in an inclusive manner, while facilitating a more adaptive understanding of the needs and context of the community.

Critical Analysis of Social Relations in Halal Literacy

Power Relations and the Production of Halal Knowledge

Halal literacy in Indonesia has developed not only as an instrument of education or religious commandment, but also as a form of knowledge production laden with power relations (Fischer, 2011). In this context, the meaning of "halal"

is not neutral or universal, but rather is produced through mechanisms of symbolic domination, formal bureaucracy, and market logic that are interrelated (Shirazi, 2016).

The State as the Center of Halal Knowledge Production

The state, through BPJPH and the Ministry of Religious Affairs, has taken over the strategic position as the main producer of halal knowledge (UU No. 33 Tahun 2014 Tentang Jaminan Produk Halal, 2014). Through a formal regulatory and certification system, the state not only regulates who can declare a product halal, but also monopolizes the discourse on what is considered valid halal (Patrick Haenni, 2016). This creates what Michel Foucault calls a “regime of truth,” a set of truths legitimized by institutional authority and considered the only valid version (Foucault, 1980).

Thus, halal is reduced to an administrative and legalistic entity that can be measured, proven, and certified (Mahmood, 2005). The production of halal knowledge undergoes a process of standardization and rationalization, which often marginalizes the cultural and spiritual meanings that live in everyday community practices (Hadi, 2019).

Religious Authority: Institutionalized Symbolic Legitimacy

The MUI, as a non-state actor, also plays an important role in the structure of halal knowledge production (Fischer, 2011). Although it is no longer the sole authority for certification since the establishment of the BPJPH, the MUI still has power in determining halal fatwas (BPJPH, 2023). In this position, the MUI acts as a provider of religious legitimacy, where religious interpretation becomes a source of symbolic power reinforced by state institutions (Latifah, 2020).

However, this authority is not neutral (Scott, 1985). It is also subject to institutional logic and the politics of representation (Patrick Haenni, 2016). Halal has become an authoritative commodity both as a religious symbol and as an economic instrument (Shirazi, 2016).

Society and Community: Alternative Spaces for Meaning Production

Outside of state structures and formal institutions, Muslim communities have developed more flexible, narrative, and participatory forms of halal knowledge production (Sandıkçı et al., 2010). Online communities, discussion groups, educational social media accounts, and MSME actors construct halal narratives based on life experiences, personal piety values, and local social logic (Hadi, 2019).

This is where the concept of “subaltern knowledge” emerges, namely knowledge that exists and develops outside of official structures, but is often considered illegitimate or unscientific (Spivak, 1988). This community becomes a counter-hegemonic space against the state’s halal narrative, which is often considered too bureaucratic, technocratic, and exclusive (Fischer, 2008).

The Dialectic of Knowledge: The Struggle for Halal Meaning as a Social Arena

By analyzing power relations in the production of halal knowledge, it becomes clear that halal is not a stable concept, but rather an arena of contested meanings

(Patrick Haenni, 2016). The state attempts to standardize halal, religious authorities provide legitimacy, the market exploits its symbols, while society attempts to reinterpret its meaning according to daily contexts and interests (Shirazi, 2016).

This tension is not always destructive (Giddens, 1991). Rather, it opens up the possibility of a more democratic social negotiation space where halal can be interpreted not only legally and ritually, but also ethically, ecologically, and socially (Mutlu, n.d.). Thus, halal literacy in the digital age is a fluid, reflective, and ever-changing field, in line with shifts in actors, technology, and ideology (Fischer, 2011).

A Critical Study of Halal Commodification vs. Authentic Piety

In the context of Anthony Giddens' structuration, the debate between halal commodification and authentic piety reflects the tension between allocative (economy-based) and authoritative (symbolic power-based) structures. Halal commodification through labeling and marketing strategies shows how religious values are transformed into market commodities. In contrast, authentic piety refers to the meaning of halal that comes from religious authority or individual spiritual reflection.

However, this authenticity is not determined solely by religious institutions, but also by individuals in the context of their faith experience. Commodification and authentic piety are not always opposed; in practice, the two often overlap. The halal label as a commodified product can actually strengthen consumers' spiritual awareness. Halal literacy, therefore, arises from the interplay between economic structures, religious authorities, and individual agency.

The Process of Democratizing Halal Meaning in the Digital Age

Anthony Giddens' structuration theory explains that the meaning of halal is formed in two interrelated ways. First, there are official rules and regulations from the government and halal institutions that formally regulate halal (authoritative structure). Second, there are communities that actively use social media and online communities to share and discuss halal more freely (allocative social interaction).

Therefore, the meaning of halal is not only determined by official rules, but also develops from discussions and experiences within society in the digital world. Society can help change or adjust the meaning of halal through their interactions, while official rules remain as guidelines. This process shows how the meaning of halal has become more open and democratized in the digital age.

CONCLUSION

This study shows that halal literacy in Indonesia is not solely shaped by the formal structure of the state through regulations and certification, but also by community agencies that produce and distribute the meaning of halal in a participatory manner through communities, social media, and everyday experiences. Authoritative social interactions carried out by state institutions and religious authorities are confronted with more contextual, flexible, and needs-based allocative interactions within society. The tension between these two models of

interaction is not always antagonistic, but rather gives rise to a space for negotiation that reveals the dialectical dynamics between domination and resistance in the production of halal knowledge. Thus, this study contributes to expanding the scope of halal literacy studies from what was originally technocratic to the relational and political realm, and opens up new space for a participatory approach in national halal policy.

Therefore, halal literacy cannot be reduced to merely the result of regulatory policy, but must be understood as a product of dynamic social interaction, in which the meaning of halal is constantly renegotiated between state authorities and Muslim communities. This finding confirms that the production of halal meaning takes place in the context of power relations, but remains open to the democratization of knowledge through individual and collective agency. This study also shows the importance of integrating structural and participatory approaches in the formulation of halal policies to be more responsive to the diversity of social practices at the grassroots level.

However, this study has limitations in terms of geographical coverage and depth of field data. The case studies are still focused on the Yogyakarta region and do not yet reflect the diversity of local contexts in Indonesia as a whole, including the dynamics in the eastern regions or outside Java. In addition, limited direct access to MSME actors and certain communities means that some of the data relies on secondary documentation and online observation.

For further research, it is recommended to explore more broadly the role of gender, generation, and social class in the production of halal literacy, as well as how these identities influence agency strategies and interpretations of halal. In addition, a digital ethnographic or netnographic approach also has the potential to be developed further to understand halal literacy practices in virtual spaces as an arena for the contestation of values, markets, and piety that continues to evolve.

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