

Reception Analysis of Halal Food among the Online Platform Audiences in Muslim Minority Countries

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Abstract

Halal Lifestyle is a fundamental aspect of the Muslim community's lifestyle, as consuming halal products is a religious obligation and necessity for Muslims. However, this is a significant challenge in Muslim minority countries due to limited access to halal cuisines in public places. This research aims to understand the process of audience acceptance in countries with minority Muslims regarding the need for consumption following halal principles. Researchers employ audience acceptance theory in analyzing research problems and an analysis technique coined by Stuart Hall. The data was obtained through the use of research instruments in the form of guided discussions, based on the constructivist paradigm through the employment of data reduction, data presentation, and validation process. The results of the guided discussions indicated that each participant interpreted media messages in three possible positions: dominant, negotiation, and opposition. These differences in interpretation were influenced by various individual backgrounds, including where they lived, their views, and their experiences. The findings indicate that, in terms of acceptance of halal food in Muslim-minority countries, the majority of participants consider information about halal food to be important in maintaining their religious beliefs, particularly through online platforms such as websites and Instagram.

Keywords: Audience reception; Halal food; Lifestyle; Muslim minority; Online Platform.

INTRODUCTION

The topic of halal and haram food occupies a pivotal position in Islamic teachings, encompassing a range of domains, including faith, health, and morals. Islam provides clear guidelines delineating which foods and beverages are halal and which are haram, delineating which are permitted and prohibited for consumption by Muslims. The food issue serves as a salient example. In essence, Islam permits all types of food and beverages that are nutritious (*ath-thayyibat*) and prohibits all forms of food and beverages that are unpleasant or unfit for consumption (*al-khabaits*) (Ernawati et al., 2020; Pristianita & Marta, 2021; Rahmatunnair & A, 2023).

It is of paramount importance for all Muslims to be aware of the Islamic principles governing the consumption of halal food. This awareness encompasses an understanding of the

slaughtering process, food packaging, food hygiene according to Islamic law, and the ingredients used in food. This knowledge is a crucial factor in determining whether a food item is halal or not. In countries with Muslim minorities, there is still inadequate understanding and guidance on food that adheres to Islamic rules. This is due to a lack of knowledge about halal food and the small population of Muslims. However, in recent years, Muslim minorities have increasingly become the target of information about halal food, and special Muslim shops have also emerged. The increasing awareness of halal food in Muslim minority countries is due to the emergence of programs containing information about halal lifestyles, including halal food (Sarasati, 2018). This is balanced by the increasing number of Muslims who come and live in these minority countries (Ernawati et al., 2020; Pristianita & Marta, 2021; Qudratullah, 2023).

Researchers have observed an increase in the Muslim population in these minority countries. This is also evidenced by the diverse study participants from countries such as France and Austria in Europe and South Korea in Asia. In conclusion, the researchers sought to ascertain the extent to which the development of halal food continues to grow in these minority countries and the extent to which the attitudes of Muslims influence their choice of halal food in those countries. It is acknowledged that not all Muslims engage critically about the halal food they consume. However, this depends on how the audience is received based on audience acceptance theory, which is a theory that attempts to understand the ideas that people apply to audience reception (Anggraeni, 2019; Mopashari, 2011; Nurhakki et al., 2023).

Audience reception theory originates from the basis of social sciences and humanities. It can be interpreted that this theory combines humanities theory and methods from social sciences. Initially, this theory was intended to demonstrate that audiences were active when interacting with the media, contributing to the dissemination of the messages they had received. However, this is at odds with the prevailing notion that media consumption is solely passive or that audiences merely accept media messages (Kurniawati & Marta, 2021; Littlejohn, Stephen W&Karen, 2011).

In audience reception theory, the focus is on audiences who comprehend the meaning conveyed by the media. This theory states that media messages are distributed to the audience in a way that ensures the audience has no difficulty understanding the message conveyed and becomes an active audience in the process of receiving the content of the media message and representing the content of the media message. Nasrullah posits that social media can be defined as an online environment where users represent themselves to communicate or collaborate and connect virtually with other users (Lumampauw et al., 2020). Social media, or digital media — as it is often referred to — is a space where social realities unfold and users interact in space and time. The values that govern society or communities can manifest on the internet in various forms. Social media campaigns about halal food can also be carried out. The first goal of these

campaigns is to bring about changes in the level of understanding or cognitive aspect. In this phase, the campaign aims to raise awareness and trust regarding a particular issue. The second phase of these campaigns is aimed at changes in behavior or attitude. The target of this phase is to generate tolerance, liking, attention, or public support for the issues being discussed in the campaign. The third phase of the campaign is directed at changing public attitudes in a real and measurable way. This phase requires certain actions to be carried out by the campaign target (Andina Mustika Ayu & Karlinda Dewi Anggraini, 2023).

Fiske notes that reception analysis is employed to support research on audiences that situate the audience outside the immediate context of the media, yet this same audience can be invoked as a cultural factor that can interpret different media channels. The meaning conveyed by the media can be open or unclear, and it can be interpreted in opposition to the original meaning. By actively observing the media, the audience interprets the text by providing a clear meaning or understanding based on personal experience. Many individual identities are not constructed consciously, such as religion, gender, age, ethnicity, beliefs, and even social environment (Dwiputra, 2021).

According to Widya and Ika, reception analysis is a new perspective in creating an audience discourse and social dimension in the form of studying it in depth with the actual process, which takes the form of studying a media assimilated through discourse practices and audience culture. Reception focuses on individual attention in the mass communication process (decoding), namely the process of meaning and in-depth understanding of objects and how individuals represent them (Dwijayanti et al., 2022). The audience is also a participant in the communication process. However, understanding the audience is crucial to comprehend their role in shaping the outcome of a message. This is because the success or failure of the communication process is significantly influenced by the audience (Dwiputra, 2021; Tri Nugroho Adi, 2012; Widya Pujarama & Ika Rizki Yustisia, 2020).

The definition of halal food and drink encompasses halal ingredients, halal processing methods, halal access, and the absence of alcohol. With regard to this research, halal food in Muslim minority countries is intended for all Muslims to be mindful of the food they consume (Nashirun, 2020; Yasar, 2021).

RESEARCH METHODS

This research employs reception analysis to address research problems. Reception, as defined by Ditty Ayu and Solten Rajagukguk (2022), is a response to a work or idea that is

received by an audience. The audience in this research consisted of individuals who had resided in three Muslim-majority countries as informants in this study which was conducted in various locations. These countries were South Korea, France, and Austria. This research was conducted over a three-month period, from May to July 2023.

Focus group discussions (FGDs) are a data collection technique, according to Komariah and Satori (Farquhar et al., 2020; Silverman, 2017), which involves group discussions with informants on specific issues. These discussions also invite informants to discuss several concepts related to information to answer research questions. Informant criteria in this research include: (1) Women who have resided in Muslim-majority countries; (2) 20-30 Years Old; (3) diverse backgrounds between other informants; and (4) Muslim. The informant profiles in this research are as follows:

1. SI, a writer and housewife domiciled in Bandung, West Java. He lived in Paris, France for 4 years;
2. CA, a student domiciled in East Jakarta. He lived in Bordeaux, France for 4 months;
3. AD, a mompreneur, domiciled in Jayapura, Papua. Lived in Busan, South Korea for 3 years;
4. FW, a private employee, domiciled in South Jakarta and lived in Busan, South Korea for 3 years;
5. KB, a private employee, domiciled in Tangerang, lived in Seoul, South Korea, for 1 month;
6. FY, a dentist, domiciled in South Jakarta, and lived in Seoul, South Korea, for 1 month;
7. JN, a private tutor, domiciled in Padang, West Sumatera, and lived in Viena, Austria, for 1 month.

In this research, focus group discussion (FGD) was employed as a data collection instrument prior to the research, with the objective of procuring preliminary data and descriptions regarding halal food in Muslim minority countries with seven informants.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

In the reception analysis technique, the researcher conducted a focused group discussion (FGD) with the informants and identified transcripts of the FGD results. Next, the informants' meanings or receptions were grouped into several positions, namely the dominant, negotiation, and opposition positions.

According to Hall (Joosse et al., 2020) in a dominant position, the audience is in a position that understands the content of the message as it is. The negotiation position is to capture the dominant code, yet simultaneously, the audience also rejects the reception of a

message. An oppositional position is an attitude demonstrated by the audience that they are opposed to the content of the message, yet the audience comprehends the underlying meaning of the message.

Table 1 Categorization Process of Various Informant Receptions

Main Question	Inf. 1 (SI)	Inf. 2 (CA)	Inf. 3 (AD)	Inf. 4 (FW)	Inf. 5 (KB)	Inf. 6 (FY)	Inf. 7 (JN)
	D = Dominant; N = Negotiation; O = Opposition						
The informant's experience when living in a Muslim minority country	D	N	D	N	N	N	D
Accessing information about halal food in Muslim minority countries	D	N	D	D	N	D	D
The influence of halal food information in the halal awareness movement while living in a Muslim minority country	D	N	D	D	D	D	D
Ease of finding halal food in Muslim minority countries	D	D	N	D	D	D	N
Optional if the informant unable to access halal food in the Muslim minority country	D	D	D	D	D	D	D
The treatment received by the informant while living in a Muslim minority country	D	D	D	N	N	N	O

The research indicates that there are 29 dominant meanings, 13 negotiation meanings, and 1 opposition meaning. Messages conveyed by the media can be interpreted in three ways: dominant, bargaining, and opposition. This difference is often attributed to the varying backgrounds of individuals, including education, place of residence, and culture. In the dominant position, informants who perceive the message positively provide 29 answers. The response with the most dominant meaning, as determined by the informant, was in response to the question regarding options if halal food is unavailable in the minority country where the informant resides. A number of informants consistently provided meaningful responses to questions during interviews and focus group discussions (FGDs). These informants included SI, AD, FW, and FY. They indicated that obtaining information about halal food in minority countries was relatively straightforward, which allowed them to adhere to the Shari'a regarding halal food when residing in such countries. Furthermore, the informants expressed a desire to

disseminate information regarding halal food to local communities (Lumampauw et al., 2021; Song et al., 2017).

A negotiation position occurs when the informant interprets both positive and negative meanings at the same time regarding the content of the message conveyed by the media. Social media has become a necessity for society in getting information from anywhere. Until now, remote areas have been able to connect to the internet because of the very rapid development of communication technology (Aisah & Nursatyo, 2024). In this position, the informants respond to questions based on their personal perspectives, perceived benefits, and experience. The research findings revealed 13 negotiation positions based on the responses of informants who had either positive or negative perceptions of halal food in Muslim minority countries. Informants tended to provide negotiated meanings to questions about their experiences living in such countries, the availability of information about food, and the treatment they received (Aisah & Nursatyo, 2024).

The opposition position is defined as a perspective that perceives the message conveyed by the media in a negative light. In this position, the informant tends to maintain views and thoughts that reject the message conveyed. The results of the FGD contained one answer from the informants interpreting treatment in minority countries. The informant who gave the meaning of opposition was JN, who gave one meaning of opposition when asked about the treatment he received while living in a minority country. JN, who has resided in Austria, stated that the treatment he received during his residence in the country was perceived as negative due to the local Austrian community's historical experience with immigrants. Consequently, JN perceived that he had been subjected to negative treatment and a negative perspective regarding his experiences in that country (Marta, 2017; Marta & Rieuwpassa, 2018).

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The results of research analysis on halal food in Muslim minority countries indicate that the public's perception of halal food in these countries is a significant factor. This can be observed in the acceptance and adaptation of media messages that include conditions, benefits, perspectives, and experiences as perceived by the informant.

It is hoped that future researchers will be able to examine information about halal food or something similar in more depth by presenting informants who have lived nearby or live in minority countries. This will enable the latest information to be gathered that can expand knowledge of communication, especially reception science.

For the Instagram accounts @rumaisa.sabiila and @rumaisakorsel, it is hoped that they can share more information about food for Indonesian Muslims living in Europe and South

Korea. It is hoped that the KMF Halal website will be translated into English, thus making it more accessible to Muslims who do not speak Korean.

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