

# **FATWA IN THE DIGITAL ERA: COMMUNICATION STRATEGY OF THE MUI IN DISSEMINATING THE UANG PANAI' FATWA IN SOUTH SULAWESI**

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## ***Abstract***

*The understanding that emerges from some Bugis–Makassar people about the meaning of dowry and Uang Panai' is still much wrong. It creates much inequality; Uang Panai' is a condition that exceeds the dowry position. Therefore, the Indonesian Ulama Council (MUI) of South Sulawesi issued a Uang Panai' fatwa to explain the position of Uang Panai' in Islam. This study discusses how the MUI of South Sulawesi uses a communication strategy to disseminate Uang Panai' fatwa in the digital era. This research is field research with a qualitative descriptive phenomenological approach. The subject of this research was the management of MUI of South Sulawesi. Data collection techniques were done through observation, in-depth interviews, and documentation. The main question of this research is how the communication strategy used by the MUI of South Sulawesi in disseminating the Uang Panai' fatwa and why the MUI of South Sulawesi uses digital media to disseminate it. The results of this study indicate that the MUI of South Sulawesi can accommodate two communication strategies in disseminating the Uang Panai' fatwa in the digital era.*

***Keywords:*** communication strategy, MUI of South Sulawesi, Uang Panai' fatwa, new media

## **INTRODUCTION**

**T**his research examines the Indonesian Ulama Council (MUI)'s communication strategy regarding the fatwa of Uang Panai' in the digital era in South Sulawesi. Specifically, this study seeks

to explain how the MUI's strategy communicates the fatwa of Uang Panai' in the South Sulawesi community through digital media so that the fatwa is expected to become a reference and can minimize the deviations due to the high amount of Uang Panai' in the people of South Sulawesi.

Many unique wedding practices in Muslim countries with traditional rituals are captivating, and their traditions involve attractive colors. For example, in Moroccan weddings, Muslim weddings often involve a tradition called *Henna Night*. On the night before the wedding, the bride's family gathers to paint the bride's hands and feet with *henna*. The event was filled with music, dancing, and singing (Hajjii, 2008). Also, in Turkey, the Muslim wedding tradition involves the *Nikah* event, which is the official wedding procession in the presence of the Imam. After that, there is a reception, usually in a lively atmosphere with traditional dancing and music. One unique tradition is *Kina Gecesi*, where the bride wears a red dress and breaks ceramic plates to bring good luck (Frankel, 2017).

Also, in Saudi Arabia, Muslim weddings are often more straightforward, focusing on religious values. Traditions such as *Waleemah* or wedding receptions are held to celebrate the wedding and eat together. In some areas, traditional weddings involve dances such as *Ardah*, a traditional Arabic dance (Princess, 2022). In Malaysia, Muslim wedding customs usually include an *akad nikah* ceremony, a formal agreement between the groom and the bride. Afterwards, a wedding reception involves eating together, dancing, and traditional singing. There are also unique traditions, such as *Berenai*, where the hands and feet of the bride are painted with *henna* (Muhammad, 2013).

Meanwhile, the practice of marriage in Indonesia is also very diverse, including in South Sulawesi. One of the unique ceremonies is giving *Uang Panai*, a wedding tradition in South Sulawesi, Indonesia. This tradition involves giving money or valuable assets from the male family to the female family as compensation or dowry for the marriage. *Uang Panai* can also be called dowry, return of favor, or offer. In South Sulawesi, the wedding process is an essential and complex event, and *Uang Panai* is integral. The amount of *Uang Panai* is usually determined through negotiations between the male and female families.

According to Suaedi, *Uang Panai* is a cost for organizing a wedding party and a condition for the validity of traditional marriage (Harmita Sari, 2019). He further stated that *Uang Panai* is an actual form of respect for women's dignity and shows that women are valued as essential

individuals in society (Harmita Sari, 2019). According to Damis, *Uang Panai* must be given before the wedding procession, and the dowry is given at the wedding time (S.M.S Jannah, 2021). *Uang Panai*, initially a form of appreciation for women from the Bugis-Makassar tribe, has shifted to become an arena for prestige, showing off, and arrogance in society. *Uang Panai* is also considered a commodity tool for girls who will be proposed to get the highest amount of *Uang Panai*.

The MUI of South Sulawesi responded to the many irregularities due to *Uang Panai* by issuing a *fatwa* as an appeal for some of the realities in society (Fatwa, 2022). In addition, the MUI of South Sulawesi claims that the reason for the issuance of this *fatwa* was that there were several reports from the public regarding the unrest with *Uang Panai*, thus prompting the MUI of South Sulawesi to issue the *fatwa* immediately. According to Syarifuddin, until now, a large part of the Bugis-Makassar people have misunderstood the difference between *Uang Panai* and *Mahar* (dowry). Some equate and differentiate the two. In Bugis marriage customs, there are two terms: *sompa* (dowry) and *Uang Panai*/*doe balanja* (Bugis-Makassar). According to Islamic teachings, *Mahar* refers to the man's gift of money or assets to the woman as a condition for a valid marriage (Syarifuddin & Damayanti, 2015).

The MUI *Fatwa* Commission of South Sulawesi issued and announced the *fatwa* through a press conference at its office on Makassar Great Mosque Street, which was broadcast live via social media, YouTube, Facebook, and Instagram with the official South Sulawesi MUI Live Streaming Channel at 16.30 WITA. *Fatwas* are the result of *ijtihad* from *mujtahids*. MUI *fatwas* also have a significant contribution to establishing religious legal norms and guiding Muslims in carrying out Islamic law in their daily activities. Although the *fatwa* does not have coercive legal force, the *fatwa* is respected and implemented effectively. Mumung Mulyati believes that the existence of the MUI is considered very important because it has a role in issuing a *fatwa* (*iftar*) (Mulyati, 2019).

Furthermore, he explained that the *fatwa* has a critical position for Muslims because it is considered a reference made and issued by people who have authority in the religious field. The *fatwa* refers to Muslims who make

decisions in various aspects of life. Although often criticized and controversial, the role and influence of the MUI *fatwa* are still vital in maintaining the benefit of the Indonesian people (Hamzah, 2017). Ichwan mentioned that one of the MUI's roles during the New Order era was to become translators of government development programs to the public in a religious language (Noor, 2019). However, in its development, the MUI transformed what was originally a *khadim al-Hukumah* (government servant) into a *khadim al-ummah* (servant of the people).

Likewise, in the transformation of disseminating MUI *fatwas* to the Muslim community, the influence of digital technology on people's communication patterns can be seen in its ability to create new mediums that allow interaction and quick access to information. This provides more expansive space and movement for *fatwas* to be disseminated. If, in the past, the MUI distributed *fatwas* in conventional ways, then in the current era, it is possible to utilize new media, in this case, digital media, to convey various information quickly because social media has shifted the pattern of interaction and consumption of public information as a new lifestyle to completely digital (Faidlatul et al., 2021). For example, the MUI *fatwa* is concerned with using social media assisted by the government; in this case, the Ministry of Communication and Information socialized the *fatwa*, so people must be careful when using social media (Firda, 2018).

The ability to interact on social media is supported by the internet's openness for anyone. According to a survey conducted by APJII (Association of Indonesian Internet Service Providers) and We Are Social in January 2019, the number of active Internet users in Indonesia has reached 150 million people, which is equivalent to 56% of Indonesia's total population (Junaedi et al., 2019). The data confirms that human tendencies in this era have entered a new space and are more interested in surfing the virtual world (cyberspace) as a new vehicle for expressing various activities and seeking updated information (Kosanke, 2019).

MUI of South Sulawesi utilizes digital media as a communication medium to disseminate its *fatwas* and respond to issues that are developing in society, with an approach to Islamic studies and traditions

inherent in the Bugis-Makassar tribe. For this reason, the MUI *fatwa* in South Sulawesi regarding *Uang Panai*' is essential for the public to know, so effective communication is needed to disseminate the *fatwa*, as it is known that the purpose of communication is to convey the message as a whole to the recipient of the message (receiver). However, in practice, the message is only sometimes binding or cannot be well received by the recipient. This is influenced by various factors that determine whether the recipient can receive the message, both from the way the message is delivered and the recipient.

Although the MUI of South Sulawesi is considered to have authority in the religious field and can convey messages through its *fatwa*, several basic assumptions are put forward by the authors that the *fatwa* submitted by MUI regarding *Uang Panai*' through social media does not directly have a significant effect on society. Even though the *fatwa* is delivered by those who are considered scholars who have knowledge and expertise in making *fatwas*, other factors such as culture, traditions, and social practices that have been formed in South Sulawesi society may have a strong influence and are difficult to change quickly through the *fatwa*.

The community maintains practices passed down for generations, including the tradition of *Uang Panai*' in marriage. In addition, digital media can also be a place where various views and opinions are debated, and not all individuals will accept or follow the *fatwa* conveyed by the MUI through this platform. Knowledge, beliefs, local culture, and family influences also shape people's perceptions and actions regarding *Uang Panai*'.

In this context, although the MUI *fatwa* in South Sulawesi has authority in the religious field, the effectiveness of this *fatwa* in changing people's social practices related to *Uang Panai*' through digital media cannot be guaranteed directly or instantaneously. This fundamental assumption is supported by the fact that the MUI *fatwa* is non-binding and does not have to be followed by the public. Second, the recipient of the message (receiver) has the authority to interpret the messages conveyed through digital media. Third, the presence of digital media still needs to eliminate the conventional ways of the MUI in disseminating their *fatwas* to the public.

In addition, the selection of the MUI as the subject of this study was due to interest in the *fatwa* issued regarding *Uang Panai*, as described above that the phenomenon of deviation from the high amount of *Uang Panai* has a pretty bad impact on society. An understanding is needed so that the values of marriage rituals do not violate Islamic law. At present, research discussing the communication strategy of the MUI of South Sulawesi, especially regarding its *Uang Panai* *fatwa*, has not received the attention of previous researchers because it was a new *fatwa* that was enacted on July 1, 2022, in Makassar.

## Literature Review

Several studies are relevant to this research, namely, research conducted by Soraya Ratna Pratiwi and her colleagues, who examined communication strategies in building awareness regarding *halal* tourism in Bandung (Pratiwi, 2018). Rusli and Nurdin also studied millennial clerics, in this case, the MUI, on the influence of social media in making *fatwas* (Rusli & Nurdin, 2022). Another study was conducted by Erni Suyani (Suyani, 2020). In addition, research was conducted by Gayatri Atmadi et al. on the communication media selection strategy used by LPPOM MUI in disseminating and promoting *halal* products in Indonesia (Atmadi & Widati, 2013). The research was also conducted by Shofiatal Jannah et al. on the obligation to provide money for traditional Bugis-Makassar marriages outside the dowry (S. Jannah, 2021).

This study aims to discuss how the MUI of South Sulawesi applies a communication strategy to disseminate the *Uang Panai* *fatwa* in the digital era. The research focuses on an in-depth analysis of the planning, tactics, and approaches used by the MUI in disseminating the *fatwa* both conventionally and digitally so that it can become a reference and can minimize many deviations due to the high amount of *Uang Panai* targeted by the bride's family to prospective groom. Then, this research also discusses the extent of the influence of digital media in disseminating the *Uang Panai* *fatwa* to the broader community.

## Conceptual Framework

In this article, the author analyzes the MUI communication process using Everett Rogers's

diffusion of innovation theory. It discusses the way new ideas or ideas can spread in society through communication. It involves innovation, communication channels, periods, and social systems. Everett Rogers stated that diffusion is a process in which a social system conveys innovation through specific channels. Innovation is a new idea adopted by an individual or group. Diffusion of innovation aims to spread solutions through communication. Communication channels are essential in this process, while time frames influence individuals' decisions to accept or reject innovations. The social system, with its structures, norms, and roles of community leaders and change agents, influences the innovation diffusion process in a complex way.

## RESEARCH METHOD

This study used field research methods with descriptive-qualitative analysis involving researchers as the main instrument. Data collection techniques used the triangulation method, including observation, interviews, and documentation (Sugiono, 2019). Observations were made by visiting the MUI office based in Makassar City and browsing its website and digital media. Documentation was carried out during observation and the interview process until the research activities were completed. The author interviewed the Chairperson, the General Secretary, the Communication, Information, and Documentation Maintenance Commission Chairperson, and the *Fatwa* and Informant Commission of the MUI of South Sulawesi, who can provide information to triangulate data and find valid data.

## DISCUSSION

The MUI of South Sulawesi has disseminated several forms of the *Uang Panai* *fatwa*. This is considered adequate and efficient in the context of public information consumption. The forms of communication that can be used to communicate with the public have their patterns depending on the communicator's abilities: personal communication, group or institutional communication, mass communication, and media communication.

### A. Conventional Communication Strategy

The MUI of South Sulawesi disseminates the *Uang Panai*'s *fatwa* using conventional approaches to convey it clearly to the public.

Several forms of conventional dissemination of the MUI of South Sulawesi are as follows.

### 1. Using the pulpit of the sermon

MUI administrators are known as *Ulama*, Muslim scholars, and academics. All administrators have their respective sermon schedules at mosques in South Sulawesi. The MUI management utilizes this separate space to convey every *fatwa* or announcement issued as an appeal for the unrest occurring in the community, including the *Uang Panai*' *fatwa*.

Based on the results of an interview with Gurutta Muhammad Firdaus, he said that:

*"The management of the MUI of South Sulawesi is based on the lecturers' background. They have schedules in the mosques, including Friday sermons and other Islamic studies. This momentum usually becomes a space for conveying fatwas, or sometimes it can be interspersed with other fatwas that are not yet known by the public, and that is quite effective because the community can hear them directly"*

The results of these interviews show that, in disseminating *fatwas*, the MUI of South Sulawesi often conveys strategic *fatwas* to the public through the mosque's pulpit. With a background as a lecturer, the MUI of South Sulawesi has much space to disseminate the *fatwas* that have yet to reach the public, including the *Uang Panai*' *fatwa*.

### 2. Dissemination at the Majelis Taklim

Due to their background as a preacher, MUI officials also have many calls to fill in recitations at the *Majelis Taklim* in the South Sulawesi region and Makassar City in particular. Every MUI administrator uses this momentum to deliver their *fatwas*, including the *Uang Panai*' *fatwa*, among parents so they can understand the legality of *Uang Panai*' from the perspective of Islamic law.

Based on the results of an interview with Gurutta Yusri M. Arsyad, he said:

*"This MUI fatwa does not immediately spread widely to the public, so all MUI officials often also use pulpits and Islamic studies when filling out Majelis Taklim. Although sometimes it is not certain whether people immediately understand what it means, what is clear is that we always try to convey it to the wider community so that they understand. Because I often give lectures at weddings, I will convey it, especially when the momentum is right, so that people know about the law of Uang Panai' in Islam, that marriage should not be burdensome for the sake*

*of glorifying our teenage children to avoid adultery and other irregularities"*

The results of these interviews show that MUI focuses on its management to always convey the *fatwas* that have been issued to the public, especially the *Uang Panai*' *fatwa*. MUI officials also often give lectures at weddings. According to them, this is the right moment to convey the *fatwa Uang Panai*' to the public so that they can find out about the law and the consequences of the high amount of *Uang Panai*' for deviations that have occurred so far in society, especially teenagers in South Sulawesi.

### 3. Dissemination at Coffee Shops

Dissemination at Coffee Shops (*WarKop*) has been carried out by the MUI of South Sulawesi. This is because the MUI of South Sulawesi wants to show that its officials are not elitist. They are also the same as ordinary people who can hold events in coffee shops, in this case, dissemination regarding social and cultural phenomena *fatwa*.

Based on the results of an interview with Gurutta Muhammad Firdaus, he said:

*"Once, MUI management took the initiative to organize dissemination activities at coffee shops and thank God many of them came. We also do this solely to avoid the public's opinion that ulama are elitist, but in fact, they are the same as ordinary people who have the duty and responsibility to convey amar ma'ruf nahi mungkar. And from the results of this dissemination, MUI officials learned a lot that this kind of dissemination approach is also considered effective so that people can ask questions directly about information that is not yet clear"*

### 4. Consolidation of Fatwas to the Regions

The MUI of South Sulawesi, based in Makassar City, is the main base for studying the phenomenon of religious issues in South Sulawesi. This is why it always consolidates *fatwas* to the regions for MUI officials in districts and cities in South Sulawesi. This is done so that the *fatwas* or edicts that have been issued can be disseminated to the public, as well as respond to developments in social and cultural change in each region.

This was conveyed by Gurutta Najmuddin HS, he said:

*"The MUI of South Sulawesi also often holds gatherings and consolidates fatwas throughout South Sulawesi to discuss and respond to*

*religious issues that are developing in society, because basically if there are issues that are important for the public to know, especially those concerning religious issues, it is the ulama who play an important role in answer these things"*

This was also explained by Gurutta Muammar Bakri, who said:

*"The MUI of South Sulawesi always makes friendly visits and consolidates visits to areas in South Sulawesi. This is done to discuss and identify issues of worship and muamalah, because we must carry out this consolidation so that the fatwas that have been issued can be disseminated by MUI administrators. The regions also need to know that this gathering and consolidation of the MUI fatwa can encourage MUI performance in the regions to be swift in responding to problems that are currently happening in society"*

Based on the results of these interviews, it can be understood that one of the conventional methods used by the MUI in disseminating their *fatwas* is by holding friendly visits and consolidating *fatwas* to the regional clerics. Therefore, this method can support the dissemination of MUI *fatwas* so that they are massively known by the public.

## **B. MUI Communication Strategy Through Social and Mass Media in South Sulawesi**

The disruption era has changed the perspective of humans in their activities from conventional and manual towards the use of digital technology and information. To maximize the dissemination of *fatwas* issued by the MUI of South Sulawesi, it is necessary to transform communication with a more effective and efficient approach through social and mass media. The presence of social media is now a new space for conveying a message to the public. This is done by individuals and groups or institutions whose role is to convey information to the public in general. Technological developments make it easy for the MUI to disseminate its *fatwas* to the public. One of the *fatwas* that have been issued is regarding *Uang Panai*'.

The MUI of South Sulawesi currently has 4 social media that are actively used to disseminate information with their social media characteristics, namely TikTok, Instagram, YouTube, and Facebook. Based on the results of an interview with Gurutta Muhammad Firdaus, he said that:

*"Currently, the MUI of South Sulawesi has 4 social media used to convey information to the public. There are YouTube, Facebook, Instagram and TikTok"*

The MUI has undertaken several communication strategies in disseminating the *fatwa*, hoping that it will become a reference and fit the desired goals. The strategy's description will focus on four critical stages: research, action, communication, and evaluation.

### **A. Research**

It includes several steps that need to be initiated with a search.

#### **1. Background**

Before issuing a *fatwa*, the MUI of South Sulawesi conducts a Focus Group Discussion (FGD). This stage is crucial to determining whether a matter happening in society needs a *fatwa*. In general, the *fatwa* issued by the MUI is a response to the various concerns that have occurred in the community, with reports either directly or through question-and-answer media provided by the MUI through its website.

Based on the results of an interview with Gurutta Muhammad Firdaus, he said that:

*"MUI issues the fatwa through two methods, first through the ijthad of the clergy and second through public reports. If there is a case, the MUI is very responsive to quickly examine a phenomenon that is developing in society. For example, the MUI issues a fatwa against giving money to children on the streets, the rampant acts of corruption, and Uang Panai'. It unsettles the community, so the MUI needs to issue a fatwa to explain the phenomena that occur in society"*

The results of the interview show that before issuing a *fatwa*, the MUI conducted an in-depth study by conducting a Focus Group Discussion (FGD). It also includes MUI question-and-answer media as well as direct reports to MUI management to immediately issue a *fatwa*. This can be seen in several MUI *fatwas* which are quite strategic so that people feel the need to understand a law.

#### **2. Formulating Opportunities and Challenges**

This stage determines the main problems to be faced and how the MUI of South Sulawesi can disseminate the *Uang Panai*' *fatwa* to the heterogeneous population of South Sulawesi.

Based on the results of an interview with Gurutta Muhammad Firdaus, he said that:

*"After studying the phenomena that occur in the community, we at the MUI information and communication commission formulate efforts to maximize the fatwa's reach to the public. Apart from using social media, we also invite the press to help report the fatwa and the press actually participates a lot to publish MUI fatwas because they are considered to be really close things and happen in society"*

The results of the interview show that the MUI, in this case the Information, Communication, and Documentation Maintenance Commission, formulates the right approach and strategy to then disseminate the issued *fatwas*. MUI not only uses social media but also invites the press to attend and spread the *Uang Panai'* fatwa to the public because the *fatwas* issued by the MUI have been very strategic in providing clear information to the people of South Sulawesi.

#### B. Action Planning

This stage formulates a communication strategy that can be used to convey to the public with various provisions and laws of *Uang Panai'* from an Islamic point of view. In this case, the MUI determines the communication approach so that information about the *Uang Panai'* fatwa can reach the public. After the fatwa is determined, the next step is to give each administrator the task of informing this fatwa both offline and online. This action plan includes 2 stages of strategy, both long-term and short-term. Long-term includes efforts to develop the use of various types of communication media, both print and electronic, which will be disseminated to the public.

Based on the results of an interview with Gurutta Muhammad Firdaus, he said that:

*"Apart from disseminating fatwas by using MUI's social media, the MUI administrators are also all speakers, so every time a fatwa is issued, the administrators will convey this directly, both during the Friday sermon, at the Majelis Taklim assembly, as well as during fatwa consolidation visits to each region, so that the fatwa can be heard directly by the community and MUI management in the regions. Thus, the fatwa issued by the MUI has a very high chance of reaching the wider community, and only the form of its application is indeed returned to each individual."*

The results of the interviews show that not only social media, online, and the masses are used to disseminate *fatwas* but also directly on various occasions because all MUI officials are lecturers who always give sermons, lectures, national seminars, and visit to consolidate *fatwas* to various regions in Indonesia, including South Sulawesi. This shows that there will be massive information reaching the community in the hope that it will become a reference and be implemented slowly, even though the MUI of South Sulawesi has never forced any of its *fatwas* to be implemented directly by the community. It is because of the *fatwa* nature, which is merely a *tausiyah* that needs to be conveyed to give Muslims an understanding of the position of *Uang Panai'* in Islam. It should not be an obligation that creates many deviations in people's lives.

#### C. Communication Media

Several communication media owned by the MUI of South Sulawesi are used to disseminate their *fatwa* both through social media and mass media, especially regarding *Uang Panai'*, including:

##### 1) MUI Communication Media

MUI of South Sulawesi currently has four social media accounts: YouTube, Facebook, TikTok, and Instagram. These social media are used as Islamic information media to provide the public with a good understanding. The public can access this information anytime and anywhere through various information media offered by the MUI.

Based on the results of an interview with Gurutta KH Muammar Bakri, he said:

*"Social media has been very influential in disseminating the MUI's fatwa. Thus, we are maximizing all the media, we have to disseminate widely, in line with the internet's borderless nature, and we are sure that this information will reach the public."*

The interview results show that the MUI of South Sulawesi believes that social media significantly influences the dissemination of its *fatwas*. This effectiveness is believed to be due to the nature of the internet, which is without distance and time limits. Therefore, with the help of social media and other outside media, which also provided information on the *Uang Panai'* fatwa, the fatwa reached the public.

Based on the results of an interview with Gurutta Muhammad Firdaus, he added:

*"Technological progress was welcomed by the MUI of South Sulawesi. It can be seen using various MUI social media, making it easier for us to convey information widely."*

The social media used by the MUI of South Sulawesi in disseminating the *Uang Panai'* fatwa are as follows:

#### 1. TikTok

Data obtained from Statista shows that until 2021, TikTok was the public's most popular and widely used social media. On a global scale, TikTok's number of active users has reached nearly 83 million, and Indonesia is one of the largest contributors (Rahardaya & Irwansyah, 2021).

This is the main reason why the MUI of South Sulawesi also utilizes TikTok as an Islamic information medium that can be easily referred to. Several other accounts also share the same news about *Uang Panai'*, including @tribunmanado, @pemuda\_gowa, and many more. Many social media accounts that also raise the issue of *Uang Panai'* can enhance the public's awareness of this fatwa.

**Figure 1.** Information Regarding the *Uang Panai'* Fatwa

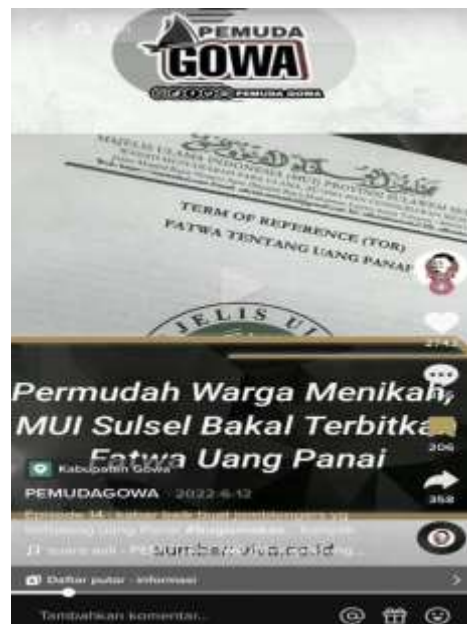


Source: Account of the Manado Tribune which raises information regarding the *Uang Panai'* Fatwa

Until now, as of March 1, 2023, this information has been watched by 132.6k

TikTok users, 1156 likes, 14 comments, 52 saves, and shared the video 156 times. That means that the role of TikTok is quite effective in disseminating *fatwas* or issues that are popularly discussed by the public.

**Figure 2.** Accounts of the Gowa Youth Who Contributed to the News of *Uang Panai'*



Source: Accounts of the Gowa Youth

This news has been watched 65.9k times by TikTok users, received 2743 likes, 355 comments, saved 206 times, and shared this information 358 times. This shows that the penetration rate offered by TikTok is large enough to be used for information literacy.

#### 2. Instagram

Based on a report published by Kumbol.com and strengthened by social media marketing analysis company NapoleonCat, Instagram has become one of the most popular types of social media. It is widely used by the people of Indonesia. As of November 2019, the number of active Instagram users in Indonesia is estimated at more than 61,610,000 people (Rahmah, 2021). With such a large number of users, Instagram provides an excellent opportunity for the MUI to disseminate the *fatwa* regarding *Uang Panai'* to the public in South Sulawesi. Through the official South Sulawesi MUI Instagram account, they can convey religious messages effectively and efficiently to a wide audience.

This Instagram account provides updated, responsive, and useful information for people



looking to understand Islam. The MUI presents a variety of relevant content, including information on *fatwas*, announcements, Islamic studies, and pamphlets sayings at certain moments.

In the context of disseminating the *Uang Panai' fatwa*, the MUI can utilize Instagram's visual power to convey clear and interesting messages. They can use pictures, short videos, and short but informative texts to explain the concepts, laws, and implications of the *fatwa*. In this way, people can easily understand and gain a correct understanding of *Uang Panai'* from an Islamic perspective.

Currently, the Instagram of South Sulawesi MUI has 419 followers, 296 posts, and 9 following. Several other Instagram accounts also raise news about the *Uang Panai' fatwa*, including @pinrangupdate. It is a news account about Pinrang Regency with 6,639k followers. This indicates that millennials can more widely know about the *fatwa* of *Uang Panai'*.

### 3. YouTube

According to a survey released by We Are Social in March 2019, YouTube has become one of Indonesia's most popular and widely used social media platforms. In the survey, it was revealed that out of a total of 150 million active social media users in Indonesia, around 88% of them access YouTube every day. In fact, the number of viewers on YouTube has approached or even rivalled the number of television viewers (Junaedi, Fajar & Sukmono, 2019)

The existence of YouTube as a communication medium used by the MUI to disseminate *fatwas* is an appropriate and strategic step. Apart from being easily accessible to the public, YouTube also provides a platform that can reach a wide audience. Thus, the MUI of South Sulawesi can communicate religious messages effectively to the public more interactively and entertainingly.

Through their YouTube account, they can present a variety of content on Islamic studies and discussions and convey *fatwas* regarding *Uang Panai* in a clear and detailed manner. In the context of *fatwa* dissemination, YouTube allows the MUI to use a video format that can provide a better understanding using images, graphics, visualizations, and direct explanations by competent sources.

With the high number of active YouTube users in Indonesia, the MUI has a great opportunity to reach a wider target audience and expand the reach of dissemination of *Uang Panai' fatwa* in South Sulawesi. The MUI wisely utilizes YouTube's potential and popularity to increase public understanding of the *Uang Panai' fatwa* and expand the impact of its dissemination. By continuing to develop useful and interesting content, the MUI of South Sulawesi can contribute to disseminating quality Islamic information through the YouTube platform to the people of South Sulawesi and even outside the region.

The South Sulawesi MUI YouTube account is active, with a subscriber count of 1.26k. This is an opportunity for the *fatwa* regarding *Uang Panai'* to be widely known by the public.

### 4. Facebook

Facebook also plays an important role as a forum for disseminating information about the MUI *fatwa* regarding *Uang Panai'*. Besides being used for live streaming, Facebook is also used to inform the *Uang Panai' fatwa*. The official Facebook account of South Sulawesi MUI has 1,669 followers and 1,211 likes. Many Facebook members come from parents. This can be seen in the documentation of activities up to the community's response to a *fatwa* or announcement issued by the MUI. This indicates that what has been done so far by the MUI is very responsive and useful in choosing communication media for public servants and Muslims.

Based on the results of an interview with Gurutta KH Najmuddin, he said that:

*"We at MUI are open to people who want to express their concerns. Apart from being able to visit the MUI office in person, we provide easy and quick access through a website managed by the South Sulawesi MUI media team so that people who are constrained to come to the office can ask questions through the open chat feature. Available 24 hours for the public, when questions come in, we will answer them from the management. For example, there were several reports from the public about the rampant cases of defecation, so we swiftly issued an announcement, which was forwarded directly to the Makassar Polresta for follow-up. Apart from that, there were also many reports regarding*

*children on the street who often asked for money, which we then reviewed again, and one of the concerns that the most frequent entry to MUI was regarding the COVID-19 vaccine, which was busy being discussed”.*

The results of the interview above show that openness and providing access to ask questions to the MUI are quite facilitated. The public can quickly ask questions, report, or provide responses to what MUI has done so far.

Hence, thanks to advances in technology, information, and communication as well as the development of the internet, this has encouraged the MUI to continue to make efforts to take an approach that is appropriate to the context of the consumption of public information on social media. This communication and information dissemination strategy continues to be developed so that information related to the MUI *fatwa* in South Sulawesi can be conveyed easily by the public. With the use of various social media as a basis for information to the public, it will be faster, actual, and accurate. In addition, dissemination of information regarding *Uang Panai’ fatwa* was also assisted by various media press who were also present when the MUI held a press conference.

#### *D. Evaluation*

This is the last stage of the description of the communication strategy. After carrying out the dissemination stage with various approaches and selection of communication media, the MUI evaluates it to determine the extent to which the media approach used can achieve the expected goals, whether the efforts made are in accordance with the initial plan, or do we need to make improvements to maximize the dissemination process with better approaches and media. These various communication media continue to be developed to this day to increase awareness and make it easier for the public to access *fatwas* that the MUI has issued in South Sulawesi.

#### **C. Fatwa and New Media**

The internet can change Muslims in Indonesia to look for religious references through available digital platforms. This encourages Islamic organizations in Indonesia to participate in transmitting religion through cyberspace so that this information can be accessed easily by the public. This happened

because of the transformation of religion to the internet. Rogers, as quoted by Astrid, stated that the transformation of mass media towards the era of information society means that members of a social system can make changes within a certain period through certain communication channels (Faidlatul Habibah & Irwansyah, 2021).

According to Hosen, since the beginning, large mass organizations such as Muhammadiyah, NU, and MUI have been at the forefront of responding to challenges and problems faced by Muslims by issuing *fatwas* and disseminating them to the public. However, the dissemination process still uses conventional methods, such as distributing them on paper. This means every issued *fatwa* faces many obstacles. In the case of NU, the books that have been compiled are not distributed massively, even in large libraries. Likewise, in the case of Muhammadiyah, even though lecturers, preachers, and teachers can refer to the distribution of its books in various educational and religious institutions, these books still use language that is difficult to understand and is considered outdated (Nadirsyah, 2008).

It is similar to the case that occurred at the MUI. Although it has published a compilation of its *fatwa*, the distribution is very limited. Thus, it is difficult for the public to access the *fatwa*. For example, when holding a seminar in Yogyakarta. Many people do not know about the *fatwa* of abortion, which means that the distribution has not touched the public and needs to conduct even more massive dissemination to inform the *fatwas* that the MUI has issued.

The presence of the internet in this era provides an alternative for Islamic organizations to participate in disseminating *fatwas* that have been issued to be disseminated to the public, which means that religious ties and cyberspace allow each *fatwa* to fill internet spaces. There are many studies regarding the presence of religion on the internet. One of which is the work written by Bunt. In his book "Virtually Islamic", Bunt discusses how Islam and all its elements can be integrated into a communication system based on computer media. Bunt stated that Islam could unite with this communication system without losing its Islamic identity (Gary R. Bunt, 2000). In his book "Muslims", he explains that computer-mediated communication can provide a spirit

of transformation to Islamic teachings and help Muslims understand the context of Islamic religious teachings (Gary R. Bunt, 2009).

Therefore, the relationship between fatwa and new media cannot be avoided. This connection has relocated religious texts that were originally in paper form and were outdated and difficult to access, for example, in the early days of *fatwa* distribution by the NU, Muhammadiyah, and MUI organizations. Now, they have been transformed into completely digital sheets.

## CLOSING

The MUI of South Sulawesi used two strategies to disseminate the *Uang Panai' fatwa*: through Friday sermons, *Majelis Taklim*, coffee shops, visits to regions, and *fatwa* consolidation, as well as through digital media such as social media, mass media, online platforms, podcasts, MUI TV, and various local and national online media. The MUI of South Sulawesi needs to continue to carry out innovative outreach through various and consistent communication channels, including involving the Office of Religion/Ministry of Religion in each district, printing a compilation of South Sulawesi MUI *fatwas* in books to be distributed in regional libraries and campuses, as well as involving universities to reach the younger generation. Suggestions for further research are to explore the South Sulawesi community's understanding and acceptance of the *Uang Panai' fatwa* in more depth using a qualitative approach such as interviews, observations, or case studies.

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