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## Indonesian Infotainment in the Perspective of Islamic Law

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### Abstract

This study aims to provide an overview of the nature of infotainment, the view of Islamic law on media and information products, and the view of Islamic law on infotainment. This research is a qualitative, descriptive study with library research techniques using philosophical, historical, and sociological approaches. The results show two main findings. First, infotainment is basically an information product containing entertainment elements, news, and information about celebrities. It is dominated by celebrity news that is not required by society and potentially provides negative impacts on people's social lives. Second, in the perspective of Islamic law, the media of information in all its forms is something of a neutral nature and hence the legal status depends on the usage purpose. By looking at the elements contained in an infotainment show (*gibah*, *namimah*, and *al-jahr bi al-fahisyah*) coupled with the violation of at least two main objectives of Islamic Sharia (*hifz al-a'rad* and *hifz al-'aql*), infotainment with its present reality is something that is forbidden. The implication of this conclusion is that all attempts to produce, distribute, and consume them are unlawful (*haram*).

**Keywords:** Infotainment, Islamic jurisprudence, Islamic law

### INTRODUCTION

Starting in the 2000s, Indonesian people through the growing private television broadcasts began to be provided a television show model focusing on reporting all the latest news from a group of people who were well-known from among celebrities.<sup>1</sup> The presence of the new TV broadcast channels certainly causes an increasing need for new broadcasting programs. Supported by the glamour of life shown by these television channels, people are interested in joining a profession called celebrity.

The growth in the number of celebrities later became one of the main factors for the birth of an information broadcast model that only reported the lives of these

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<sup>1</sup> Nur Fadilla. "Unsur Layak Berita pada Produk Jurnalistik Rubrik Infotainment di Media Online (Analisis Isi pada JPNN.com Edisi Desember 2015)." Ph.D Dissertation: University of Muhammadiyah Malang, 2017.

celebrities.<sup>2</sup> It includes how they dress, establish relationships, build a household, and so on. In essence, this show aims to *skin* one by one and piece by piece the entire life of the celebrities. Then, the show is presented to the public in an interesting way.<sup>3</sup> This broadcast model became known as infotainment.

Infotainment is referred to as a combination of the words "information" and "entertainment".<sup>4</sup> Infotainment television shows generally obtain good ratings and gain massive advertisement. This is a fact that cannot be avoided because television lives on advertisements. Prioritizing ratings for commercial purposes emphasizes that our television media is often tempted when dealing with external interests wanting to use television as a medium for the entertainment business. Economic reasons are often the main factor for maintaining the existence and the continuity of television.

Until present, infotainment products are still controversial. The Indonesian Journalists Association (PWI) believes that infotainment is a journalistic work. Infotainment "gossip" hunters can also become PWI members.<sup>5</sup> On the other hand, the Alliance of Independent Journalists (AJI) refused. According to AJI, infotainment is not a type of news because the process of creating infotainment is not carried out through correct journalistic rules. In many cases, infotainment products clearly do not heed the journalistic code of ethics. In addition to the method of obtaining "news" which often violates the principles of journalism, the substance of infotainment does not meet the criteria of news.

The basic rules of journalism are clear. It is that the news must be based on facts, must be oriented to the public interest, and must not penetrate the boundaries of one's privacy except for the public interest.<sup>6</sup> As far as observing infotainment shows, people often have difficulty digesting and distinguishing which narrative is based on facts, which is gossip, and which is slander. The line between gossip and fact becomes very thin. Furthermore, the facts and the opinion of the infotainment host or the presenter are mixed. The themes of infotainment shows mostly revolve on the issues of marriage, divorce, courtship, family conflicts, and fighting over the custody of the celebrities children. In the realm of journalism, infotainment shows often disturbs personal affairs

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<sup>2</sup> Hedi Pudjo Santosa, *Menelisik Lika-Liku Infotainment di Media Televisi* (Yogyakarta: Asa Media Prima, 2011), p. 9.

<sup>3</sup> Qudratullah. "Pemaknaan Khalayak Terhadap Konflik Selebriti Pada Tayangan Infotainment." *Al-Din: Jurnal Dakwah dan Sosial Keagamaan* 5, no. 1 (2020): 128-137.

<sup>4</sup> Asmaradhana. *Jurnalisme Infotainment Sebuah Ironi*, <http://deadline-asmaradhana.blogspot.com/2007/09/jurnalisme-infotainment-sebuah-ironi.html>. (Accessed on March 19, 2021)

<sup>5</sup> Umi Lailatul Baroroh. "Konstruksi Media Terhadap Identitas Budaya Suroboyoan dalam Program Nodoro Bei di Jawa Pos Media Televisi Surabaya", 2020. Bachelor's Thesis: Faculty of Da'wa and Communication Studies, Syarif Hidayatullah State Islamic University, Jakarta.

<sup>6</sup> Hidayat Surya Eternal. "Media sosial dan antitesis jurnalisme." *Jurnal Spektrum Komunikasi* 7, no. 1 (2019): 17-29.

and in turn penetrates their bedroom affairs which is considered as the crimes of journalism. The Press Council (Dewan Pers) and the Indonesian Broadcasting Commission (KPI) themselves agree that infotainment is not news. Infotainment products cannot be included as journalistic works. This policy should further clarify the position of infotainment.<sup>7</sup>

Over time, infotainment shows increasingly cause concern, even unrest in the community, especially the Muslim community. Therefore, the Indonesian Ulema Council (MUI) issued a haram fatwa for infotainment, both for broadcasting and watching it.<sup>8</sup> The fatwa was ratified in the MUI plenary session at the National Conference (Munas) in Jakarta in 2020 by the Chairperson of the MUI Fatwa Commission, Ma`ruf Amin.

According to the general provisions of the fatwa, broadcasting disgrace, gossip, and other personal matters to other people and or the public is unlawful (haram). In the formulation of the fatwa, it is also stated that efforts to make news that pry and expose disgrace and gossip is also unlawful (haram). Likewise, taking advantage of news containing disgrace and gossip is declared unlawful (haram) by the MUI. However, MUI allows exception of such broadcast if there is consideration justified by Sharia, such as infotainment used for the sake of law enforcement.

Within this fatwa, MUI recommends that it is necessary to formulate rules to prevent broadcast content that is contrary to religious norms, civility, decency, and noble human values. It is also recommended to the Indonesian Broadcasting Commission (KPI) to regulate infotainment shows in order to guarantee the public's right to obtain quality broadcasts and protect them from negativity. Film Censorship Council (Lembaga Sensor Film / LSF) are asked to guarantee proactive steps to censor infotainment shows to ensure the fulfillment of the public's rights to enjoy quality and good shows.<sup>9</sup>

Based on the background described above, this research intends to position this infotainment problem based on the perspective of Islamic law. Therefore, the main formulation of the problem in this research is “what is the view of Islamic law on infotainment?” To answer the research problem, this research was conducted with the aim of providing an overview of the nature of infotainment, the Islamic legal views on media and information products, and the view of Islamic law on infotainment. What is meant by Islamic Law Perspective in the title of this research is the view of Islamic law

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<sup>7</sup>Sholahudin. *Infotainment Bukan Karya Jurnalistik*, <http://media.kompasiana.com/new-media/2010/07/09/infotainment-bukan-karya-jurnalistik%E2%80%A6/>, (accessed on March 19, 2021)

<sup>8</sup>Alpah. “Infotainment dan Medsos.” *OSF Pre Prints*, <https://osf.io/s6xgn>.

<sup>9</sup>Situs Resmi Kantor Berita Antara, *Fatwa MUI: Infotainment Haram*, <http://www.antaranews.com/berita/1280232965/fatwa-mui-infotainment-haram> (accessed on March 19, 2021)

on infotainment based on detailed Sharia arguments through the Usul Fiqh approach. Several previous studies have examined issues related to infotainment, such as that conducted by Layyinat Sifa<sup>10</sup>, Siti Maryam<sup>11</sup>, Mashita Dewi<sup>12</sup>, and Muhammad Nor Gusti<sup>13</sup>. However, these studies have not examined infotainment based on the perspective or point of view of Islamic law.

## METHOD

Based on the research objectives, this research is descriptive-qualitative research. The research method used in this paper is library research using a philosophical, juridical-normative, and sociological approach. The philosophical approach is used primarily in formulating the views of Islamic law on the research question. In this case, at least the philosophical approach to Islamic law is carried out through Usul Fiqh and *Maqasid al-Shari'ah*.<sup>14</sup> The juridical-normative approach is used to understand the research problem by remaining or relying on the study of legal science based on applicable principles, norms, and regulations. In this case, it is Islamic law.<sup>15,16</sup> In addition, a sociological approach is needed to understand the extent of the social impact caused by this infotainment phenomenon.<sup>17</sup> Certainly, this is very important, because it can affect the legal conclusions that will be drawn from an Islamic point of view.

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<sup>10</sup>Layyinat Sifa. "Ghibah Dalam Entertainment Perspektif Hadis (Aplikasi Teori Double Movement Fazlur Rahman)." *Kontemplasi: Jurnal Ilmu-Ilmu Ushuluddin* 7, no. 2 (2019): 282-298.

<sup>11</sup>Siti Maryam. "Konstruksi Realitas dalam Infotainment Silet." *Jurnal Aspikom* 2, no. 6 (2017): 437-443.

<sup>12</sup>Mashita Dewi. "Siaran Televisi Dan Anak: Studi Tentang Perlindungan Hukum Terhadap Tayangan Infotainment." Dissertation: Universitas Muhammadiyah Surakarta, 2013.

<sup>13</sup>Muhammad Nor Gusti. "Infotainment Dalam Etika Jurnalisme: Studi Pada Tayangan "Insert" Siang Trans Tv Tanggal 2 Februari 2012 Hingga 2 Maret 2012." Dissertation: University of Muhammadiyah Malang, 2012.

<sup>14</sup>Syandri, Syandri, Ilham Kadir, and Azwar Iskandar. "Analisis Corak Pemikiran Fikih KH Lanre Said Al-Bugisi." *Tribakti: Jurnal Pemikiran Keislaman* 32, no. 1 (2021): 77-90.

<sup>15</sup>Putra, Aldi Jaya Mandala. "Tinjauan Yuridis Terhadap Pemeliharaan Anak Dibawah Umur (Hak Hadhanah) Akibat Suatu Perceraian Berdasarkan Kompilasi Hukum Islam." *Journal of Law (Jurnal Ilmu Hukum)* 1, no. 1 (2020).

<sup>16</sup>Husnaeni, Husnaeni. "Kajian Hukum Islam terhadap Kepemimpinan Gubernur Non Muslim di Negara Kesatuan Republik Indonesia." *Jurnal Al-Dustur: Journal of Politics and Islamic Law* 2, no. 2 (2019): 161-186.

<sup>17</sup>Syandri, Syandri, and Azwar Iskandar. "Pemikiran Dakwah KH Fathul Mu'in Dg. Maggading: Gerakan Muhammadiyah Cabang Makassar 1960-1970." *KOMUNIKA: Jurnal Dakwah dan Komunikasi* 14, no. 2 (2020): 223-240.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### What is Infotainment?

The term infotainment is a combination of the words "information" and "entertainment". The meaning of this term was later debated among experts. Some interpret that infotainment is "information from entertainment performers such as celebrities or workers in the entertainment world including artists". The activities that art workers do, especially in their creative process of creation and working, are considered worthy of being known by the public. However, by the media industry, infotainment is defined as "entertaining information (entertainment)". The 'entertaining' element was then simplified by moving soap operas, catwalks, and celebrity entertainment stages into 'news'. In many of its cases, something 'entertaining' is in the form of gossip.<sup>18</sup>

The term infotainment in Indonesia is synonymous with television shows that broadcast many aspects of the lives of artists or celebrities, ranging from births, birthdays, engagements, infidelity, to marriage and divorce. The image of gossip shows is already attached to infotainment shows. At first glance, there is no difference between gossip and infotainment. The difference is that infotainment is gossip created through search or investigation.

Associated with journalism, it seems infotainment is a new specification. It is born in Indonesia after the promotion of investigative reporting, namely journalism that adheres to the notion of in-depth investigation. Investigative news is a complete report of an event as a result of journalists' searches. It is usually related to corruption. Therefore, without adequate journalistic knowledge, investigation reporting can produce news of prejudice and news that may violate the principle of presumption of innocence. Such news is forbidden by the Journalistic Code of Ethics (KEJ) and the Journalist Code of Ethics (KEWI).

Meanwhile, infotainment is an analogue of entertainment, which has more weight in the direction of entertainment. It is usually in the form of tv shows or writings related to the personal lives of famous people. In Western countries, especially England, it is common practice for yellow newspapers in the form of tabloids. In Indonesia, the dominance is held by television.<sup>19</sup>

In practice, infotainment shows have even developed into a conspiracy arena between the producers and the management of certain celebrities. To make an album of

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<sup>18</sup>Febrie Hastiyanto, *Jurnalisme Infotainment Jurnalisme Klarifikasi*, <http://hastiyanto.wordpress.com/2010/06/24/jurnalisme-infotainment-jurnalisme-klarifikasi/> (accessed on March 19, 2021)

<sup>19</sup>Fikri, *Jurnalisme Infotainment Antara Etika dan Fakta*, <http://defickry.wordpress.com/2007/11/30/jurnalisme-infotainment-antara-etika-dan-fakta/> (accessed on March 19, 2021)

songs, soap operas, or films hugely sold or trending, it is not uncommon for a conspiracy to occur between the celebrities and the infotainment journalists. For example, they can make a certain broadcast by fabricating news about the celebrity's romantic relationship scandal. Engineering news is usually done to raise the prestige of new-coming celebrities. Celebrities really need news. The frequency of celebrities reported by the mass media affect their job offers or orders.<sup>20</sup>

In short, the nature of infotainment can be summed up in the following points:

1. Basically, infotainment is a collection of information related to the performers and products of the entertainment world. The main purpose of this kind of show, in addition to providing information on the development of the world of entertainment, is to be a means of entertainment itself. People watching it are expected to be entertained by all the information presented.
2. In order to produce an infotainment product, the journalists must investigate and search as deeply as possible on a news story. These investigations often even have to violate the boundaries of one's privacy. For the sake of information, infotainment workers often apply the principle of justifying all means.
3. What is reported in infotainment, of course, cannot be separated from two situations. First, that the news is true in accordance with the actual reality, and second, that the news is not quite clear, or the news is nothing more than the journalist's assumption.
4. Along the way, the management of the celebrities actually saw infotainment as one of the best promotional media for their clients. Even various conspiracies to boost the popularity of the celebrities are common among celebrity management and infotainment producers. Such boosting popularity often no longer considers the image and honor of the celebrity. The important goal is to be popular and famous.

### **Information Media in the View of Islamic Law**

The discussion about infotainment certainly cannot be separated from the discussion about information media. It is very important to know how Islam views and positions information media both in terms of the media and their means as well as the contents delivered.

Information media in all its forms and formats are weapons that have the same sharpness on both sides, that are the good side (maslahat) and the bad side (mafsadat). If it is used to convey goodness and useful knowledge, enlightening information, teach

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<sup>20</sup> Suara Hidayatullah, *Geliat Aksi Para Pemakan Bangkai*, <http://www.hidayatullah.com/berita/cover-story/134-cover-story/13712-geliat-aksi-para-pemakan-bangkai?format=pdf> (accessed on March 19, 2021)

righteous manners, and direct people to achieve happiness in the world and the hereafter, it is not only permissible, but perhaps it is appropriate to say that this kind of information media is at least partially obligatory (*fardu kifayah*).<sup>21</sup> On the other hand, if it is used to spread corruption, misguidance, moral depravity and other bad things, it cannot be doubted as unlawful (*haram*).<sup>22</sup>

In relation to the study of Islamic law, the most appropriate *fiqh* rule to explain the position of information media in Islamic law is the one which reads:

الوسائل لها حكم المقاصد

The means have the same law as its goal.<sup>23</sup>

The meaning of this rule is that every means, media or method used to achieve a goal should be judged differently depending on the goals to be achieved. If the goal to be achieved is something that is mandatory, *wasilah* to achieve it also becomes mandatory. If the goal is unlawful (*haram*), the *wasilah* also becomes *haram*.<sup>24</sup>

Of course, the *wasilah* referred to here is the *wasilah* which legally includes matters that are permissible, not *wasilah* which is basically *haram*. This is due to the fact that Islam does not justify the principle of justifying all means to achieve a goal, even though that goal is something permissible.<sup>25</sup>

Based on this, it can be concluded that the view of Islamic law on various existing information media is very dependent on the vision, mission, and the content conveyed. If the goal to be achieved is to bring humans closer to God and the content conveyed in order to achieve that goal does not contain elements that are forbidden, such information media becomes a media that must be held among the people. If, on the contrary, the purpose is correct but the content conveyed contains elements that are unlawful, or basically the purpose of the media is clearly unlawful; of course, the media is forbidden in the perspective of Islamic law.

### Infotainment in the View of Islamic Law

It is undeniable, based on the facts that have been described previously, that infotainment has become a phenomenon that is inherent in the life of modern

<sup>21</sup> 'Abdullah Nasih 'Ulwan, *Hukm al-Islam fi Wasa'il al-I'lam* (Cairo: Dar al-Salam, 1410 H), p. 4.

<sup>22</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>23</sup> Al-'Izz bin 'Abd al-Salam, *Qawa'id al-Ahkam fi Masalih al-Anam*, vol. 1 (Beirut: Dar al-Kutub al-'Ilmiyyah, n.d.), p. 46; 'Abd al-Rahman bin Nasir al-Sa'di, *al-Qawa'id al-Jami'ah* (Cairo: Maktabah Ibn Taimiyah, 1407 H), p. 10.

<sup>24</sup> Mustafa Makhdam Qari', *Qawa'id al-Wasa'il fi al-Shari'ah al-Islamiyah* (Riyad: Dar Isybiliyah, 1418 H), p.223.

<sup>25</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 225-226.

Indonesian society today. Infotainment has become a vicious cycle that connects the large interest of the audience on the one hand, and the obsession with materialism of the production house entrepreneurs and all the crew who stand behind them on the other hand. After all, Islam must provide views and answers to this phenomenon, by considering the benefits and the demerits according to the main pillars of its teachings.

To explain this, from the perspective of Islamic law, this infotainment issue can be studied through the following approaches:

### 1. Infotainment from the *Maqāṣid al-Syar'ah* Perspective

From the point of view of *Maqasid al-Shari'ah*, infotainment has at least violated two main objectives of Islamic Sharia, namely:

a. Infotainment violates *maqṣad hifz al-a'rad* (the purpose of maintaining honor)

The scholars who study the science of *maqāṣid al-Syar'ah* have agreed to include *hifz al-a'rad* (maintenance of honor) as one of the objectives of Sharia that must be maintained.<sup>26</sup> The term *hifz al-a'rad* is expressed in several different terms. Some scholars refer to it as *hifz al-furuḡ* or *al-abdha'* (protection of the genitals). The purpose of Sharia on this one is always associated with *hifz al-nasal* (protection of offspring).<sup>27</sup>

*Hifz al-a'rad* itself is textually stated in the farewell sermon of the Prophet Muhammad in the event of Hajj Wada':

إن دماءكم وأموالكم وأعراضكم عليكم حرام، كحرمة يومكم هذا، في شهركم هذا، في بلدكم هذا

Verily, your blood, wealth and honor are forbidden to you, just as your day (the days of Hajj) are forbidden, in your month (haram months) and in your country (haram area).<sup>28</sup>

From the researcher's temporary analysis, the term *al-a'rad* (honor) in the discussion of *al-Maqāṣid* scholars is identified specifically with genitalia which is directly related to the regeneration of human offspring. But is maintaining honor only limited to efforts to protect the genitals? The researcher is more inclined to see that the term honor is much broader than just genitals. Protecting the genitals - whose main purpose is to maintain the chastity and honor of offspring - is one of the forms of honor that must be maintained. In addition, honor in the form of self-esteem and self-image is also something that must be guarded, protected, and respected. Therefore, in Islam there

<sup>26</sup>Muhammad bin Ahmad al-Fatuhi, *Sharh al-Kawkab al-Munir*, ed. Muhammad al-Zuhaili et.al, vol. 2 (Mecca: Markaz al-Bahs al-'Ilmi, 1400 H), p. 402-403; Yusuf Ahmad al-Badawy, *Maqasid al-Shari'ah 'inda Ibn Taimiyah* ('Amman: Dar al-Nafa'is, 1421 H), p. 471.

<sup>27</sup> Ahmad bin 'Abd al-Halim bin Taimiyah, *Majmu' al-Fatawa*, ed. 'Abd al-Rahman al-Qasim, vol. 10 (Jeddah: Maktabah Ibn Taimiyah, 1406 H), p. 194.

<sup>28</sup> Muslim bin al-Hajjaj al-Naisaburi, *Sahih Muslim*, ed. Muhammad Fu'ad 'Abd al-Baqi, vol. 6 (Lebanon: Dar al-Kutub al-'Ilmiyyah, 1405 H), p. 245.



is also another term which is closely related to *al-a'rad*, namely *al-murū'ah*. Islam also forbids the act of *al-qazaf* or throwing accusations of having unlawful relations (adultery) on someone without evidence. The reason for this prohibition is nothing but to protect one's self-image from actions that he has never done.<sup>29</sup>

For that reason, the researcher is of the view that the parties who are reported on through the media are greatly harmed by their self-image and honor. Their private life is used as a daily 'meal' regardless of their feelings, and also the feelings of their extended family. Moreover, generally the news is only at the level of assumptions, even gossip, and rumors. It is clear that news without clear evidentiary support like this cannot be allowed to roll into public consumption.

b. Infotainment violates *maqṣad hiḥz al-'aql* (the purpose of maintaining reason)

Maybe someone will refute the first reason above by saying "What if the news and gossip were deliberately raised and have received the blessing of the celebrity himself/herself?" To answer that, it is necessary to explain that the negative impact caused by infotainment does not only affect the object of the news, but what is no less worrying is the impact it has on its viewers.

Maybe no one had time to think about how big the influence of infotainment on the behavior of households, which are indeed the targets of infotainment. Today's children, as reported by Kompas on January 26, 2006 edition, are getting used to say unethical words such as "curse" (kutukan), "lawless child"(anak durhaka), "secretive marriage" (nikah siri), "cheating" (selingkuh), "mistress" (istri simpanan) and some other language expressions that are very rarely used by our mass media before.<sup>30</sup>

Unhealthy shows that appear through infotainment have clearly been feeding the minds of the viewers. If common sense should be used to think and digest useful things, now the mind is forced (or voluntarily) to digest news and information that are completely useless. Even more worrying is if the audience of this show has reached the point of addiction. In relation to that, according to Ibn Taimiyah, "drunk" (*al-Sukr*) is of two kinds: physical and metaphorical. Physical drunkenness can occur through food and drink. Meanwhile, metaphorical drunkenness is caused by what is consumed by the human eye, hearing, mind, and heart.<sup>31</sup>

This infotainment show also affects the mindset and lifestyle of the viewers. The lifestyle of celebrities is the main mecca. Deviations from religious norms by celebrities are slowly becoming normal and ordinary. *Kumpul kebo* (living together without

<sup>29</sup> Yusuf bin Khalaf al-Harith, *al-Ta'rid bi al-Qazaf; Hukmuhu wa 'Uqubatuhu*, (n.d.), p. 3.

<sup>30</sup> Sholahudin, *op.cit.*

<sup>31</sup> Ahmad bin 'Abd al-Halim bin Taimiyah, *al-Istiqamah*, ed. Muhammad Rashad Salim, vol. 2 (Cairo: Maktabah Ibn Taimiyah, 1410 H), p.144.

marriage), instant marriage and divorce, infidelity, and exhibiting *aurat* are among them.

Based on that, infotainment – by looking at its contents – has undoubtedly violated this *maqṣad hifz al-'aql*. This is also the basis for strengthening his prohibition.

## 2. Elements of 'Illat in Prohibiting Infotainment

Apart from violating the two main objectives of Islamic law (*maqāṣid al-Syarī'ah*), infotainment also contains several elements that further strengthen the prohibition of such a broadcast. Those elements are:

a. The element of *ghibah* (backbiting)

The most appropriate understanding of *ghibah* is the understanding described by the Prophet Muhammad PBUH in the hadith:

أَتَدْرُونَ مَا الْغَيْبَةُ؟ قَالُوا اللَّهُ وَرَسُولُهُ أَعْلَمُ ، قَالَ : ذِكْرُكَ أَخَاكَ بِمَا يَكْرَهُ  
قِيلَ : أَفَرَأَيْتَ إِنْ كَانَ فِي أَخِي مَا أَقُولُ؟ قَالَ إِنْ كَانَ فِيهِ مَا تَقُولُ فَقَدْ اغْتَابْتَهُ ، وَإِنْ لَمْ يَكُنْ فِيهِ فَقَدْ بَهْتَهُ

(The Holy Prophet asked): "Do you know what *ghibah* is?" They (the companions) replied: "Only Allah and His Messenger know better." He said: "(*Ghibah* is when) you tell your brother what he doesn't like". He was asked: "What do you think if what I said was indeed with my brother?" He replied: "If what you say is indeed in him, then you have done *ghibah* on him. But if what you say is not in him, then you have slandered him."<sup>32</sup>

Based on this hadith, it is no longer relevant to say that infotainment shows do not contain an element of backbiting on the grounds that their shows have been preceded by an investigation. This is because backbiting itself is different from slander. If the slander completely contains elements of accusations, lies and manipulation, then backbiting actually tells something that is in accordance with the actual facts and data. In other words, even if the information presented in infotainment is valid and can be justified, the element of *ghibah* cannot be separated from it.

In the Qur'an it is explicitly stated on the prohibition of *ghibah*. Allah SWT. said (al-Hujurat: 12)

وَلَا يَغْتَابَ بَعْضُكُم بَعْضًا أَيُحِبُّ أَحَدُكُمْ أَنْ يَأْكُلَ لَحْمَ أَخِيهِ مَيْتًا فَكَرِهْتُمُوهُ  
وَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ إِنَّ اللَّهَ تَوَّابٌ رَحِيمٌ

<sup>32</sup> Muslim bin al-Hajjaj al-Naisaburi, *op.cit*, vol. 12, p. 476.

...And don't some of you backbite some of the others. Would one of you like to eat the flesh of his dead brother? Then of course you feel disgusted with him. And fear Allah. Verily, Allah is Most Accepting of repentance, Most Merciful.<sup>33</sup>

At least, in this verse, there are two things that emphasize the prohibition of backbiting, namely: (a) *lā nāhiyah* which means prohibition, and (b) *tasybih* (likeness) the act of *backbiting* by trying to eat your own sibling's flesh alive. That is why, Islamic scholars have agreed upon the prohibition of backbiting.<sup>34</sup> According to Ibn Kathir, this prohibition of *ghibah* applies in general except for things whose benefit cannot be achieved except by doing it.<sup>35</sup> There are at least three conditions for the permission of backbiting:

*First*, when asked for opinion on important and significant matters such as a woman who is proposed to by a man she does not know. If she asks for consideration from his parents or community leaders, the parents or the figure must tell honestly about the person's strengths and weaknesses so that she can refuse or accept the proposal.

This is based on the Hadith of Fatimah bint Qais who came to the Prophet Muhammad PBUH and said that she was proposed by two people, Mu'awiyah and Abu Jahm, then the Messenger of Allah PBUH explain the shortcomings of these two people.<sup>36</sup>

*Second*, to uncover a case, such as allegations of corruption. Since the crimes and wrongdoings of the accused person must be investigated, their wrongdoings need to be exposed. However, the wrongdoings disclosed must be related to the crime charged against the person.

*Third*, in the narration of hadith, a person may mention someone's badness. For example, by saying that a person is a liar or that a person is likely to cheat. The goal is that the hadith narrated by people who like to cheat are rejected. Because logically, people who like to lie and cheat, have great potential to lie by making false hadiths.

Meanwhile, infotainment does not have any of the benefits mentioned above. Infotainment broadcasts are nothing more than entertainment to satisfy the desire of most people who are always thirsty to know the disgrace and shortcomings of others, or just to know the frenetic and glamorous life of celebrities.

#### b. The element of *Namimah*

According to al-Ghazali, -as quoted by al-Nawawi- *namimah* usually refers to the term used for the behavior of transferring a conversation about a person to the

<sup>33</sup> Ministry of Religious Affairs of the Republic of Indonesia, *op.cit*, p. 517.

<sup>34</sup> Isma'il bin Kasir al-Dimasyqi, *Tafsir al-Qur'an al-'Azim*, ed. Sami bin Muhammad Salamah, volume 7 (Riyad: Dar Tayyibah, 1420 H), p. 380.

<sup>35</sup> *Ibid.* p. 277.

<sup>36</sup> Muslim bin al-Hajjaj al-Naisaburi, *op.cit.* volume 4, p. 134.

person being discussed. For example, by saying: "So and so said so and so about you." According to him, the meaning of *namimah* is actually broader than that. In his definition, the essence of *namimah* is an effort to reveal and spread things that are actually not liked by its disclosure and dissemination; displeased either by the source from which it came, or by the party who received the word.<sup>37</sup>

Still according to al-Ghazali, the disclosure and dissemination for such is done either through speech, writing, symbols, signs or anything else. Things that are disclosed and disseminated can be in the form of words or actions, which are disgraceful or not. The point is that *namimah* is an attempt to spread badness and dismantle what should not be dismantled.<sup>38</sup> The main difference between *gibah* and *namimah* is that *namimah* is based on the purpose of destroying human relations.<sup>39</sup>

In a hadith it is stated:

عَنْ أَبِي وَائِلٍ عَنِ حُدَيْفَةَ أَنَّهُ بَلَغَهُ أَنَّ رَجُلًا يَنْمُ الْحَدِيثَ فَقَالَ حُدَيْفَةُ  
سَمِعْتُ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ يَقُولُ: لَا يَدْخُلُ الْجَنَّةَ نَمَّامٌ

From Wa'il, from Huzaifah, that it had reached him about a person who spread the talk (*namimah*), then Huzaifah said: "I have listened to the Messenger of Allah PBUH said: 'No *namimah* perpetrator will enter heaven.'<sup>40</sup>

By looking at the things contained in *namimah*, according to the researcher, infotainment has similarities with *namimah* in many aspects. It is at least in 3 ways, namely:

1. Unpacking and disclosing things that should not be disclosed to the public domain.
2. Spreading these things to other parties, even by using a very fast information dissemination technology, that is television.
3. The impact of the damage caused - intentionally or not - has been proven time and time again due to infotainment broadcasts. This is such as the divorce of celebrities and pornographic scandals.

Thus, based on all that, it is increasingly clear that infotainment is an information product that is forbidden to be produced and forbidden to be consumed.

<sup>37</sup> Abu Zakariyya Muhyi al-Din al-Nawawi, *al-Adzkar*, ed. Salim bin 'Ied al-Hilali, volume 1 (Medina: Maktabah al-Guraba', 1412 H), p. 348.

<sup>38</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>39</sup> Ahmad bin 'Ali bin Hajar al-'Asqalani, *Fath al-Bari Sahih al-Bukhari*, ed. 'Abd al-'Aziz bin Baz et.al, vol. 7 (Lebanon: Dar al-Rayyan, 1412 H), p. 216.

<sup>40</sup> Muslim bin al-Hajjaj al-Naisaburi, *op.cit.*, vol. 1, p. 214.

c. The element of *al-Jahr bi al-Fahisyah*

*Al-jahr bi al-fahisyah* or displaying vile and indecent behavior in a transparent manner is one element that is also evident in various infotainment shows. If not from the production house, it is not uncommon for celebrities themselves to proudly display or tell about their unethical behaviors. Not infrequently we are displayed with intimate behaviors from both married couples and fake couples. All of that can be categorized as *al-jahr bi al-fahisyah*.

In Islam, this kind of behavior is forbidden. Strictly speaking, the Prophet states in his hadith:

عَنْ سَالِمِ بْنِ عَبْدِ اللَّهِ قَالَ سَمِعْتُ أَبَا هُرَيْرَةَ يَقُولُ : سَمِعْتُ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ يَقُولُ : كُلُّ أُمَّتِي مُعَافَى إِلَّا الْمُجَاهِرِينَ وَإِنَّ مِنَ الْمُجَاهِرَةِ أَنْ يَعْمَلَ الرَّجُلُ بِاللَّيْلِ عَمَلًا ثُمَّ يُصْبِحُ وَقَدْ سَتَرَهُ اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ فَيَقُولُ يَا فُلَانُ عَمِلْتُ الْبَارِحَةَ كَذَا وَكَذَا وَقَدْ بَاتَ يَسْتُرُهُ رَبُّهُ وَيُصْبِحُ يَكْشِفُ سِتْرَ اللَّهِ عَنْهُ

From Salim bin 'Abdillah, he said: I have heard Abu Hurairah say: I have listened to the Messenger of Allah PBUH said: "Every one of my ummah will be forgiven except the *mujahirun*. And indeed one of the forms of *mujaharah* is if a person commits an act (sin) at night and Allah has covered (the sin) until morning comes, but he then says (to others): "O so and so, verily last night I did this and that." Even though he had spent the night covered in disgrace, in the morning he had exposed the veil of Allah that covered his sins.<sup>41</sup>

Ibn Hajar al-'Asqalani explained the meaning of *mujahirun* by saying:

قوله إلا المجاهرين أي المعلنين بالمعصية

(Meaning) the words of the Prophet: "*except the mujahirun*" are people who announce/expose their disobedience.<sup>42</sup>

In today's infotainment reality, it was found that there was a very real process of *al-jahr bi al-fahisyah*; whether with the blessing of the artists and celebrities or not. One of the bad effects is that people are slowly losing their sensitivity to things that are considered taboo and even forbidden in religion. People become accustomed to infidelity, disgrace, and the like.

<sup>41</sup> Muhammad bin Isma'il al-Bukhari, *Sahih al-Bukhari*, vol. 10 (Lebanon: Dar al-Fikr, 1400 H), p. 15.

<sup>42</sup> Ahmad bin 'Ali bin Hajar al-'Asqalani, *op.cit*, vol 1, p. 98.

## d. Prohibition to report everything that is heard

One of the ethics that must be carried out by a Muslim is to be careful in reporting what he receives or listens to. Because not everything that is heard deserves to be reported and spread, even though it is something that is true. In a hadith narrated by 'Hafs bin 'Asim ra., the Messenger of Allah PBUH said:

كَفَى بِالْمَرْءِ كَذِبًا أَنْ يُحَدِّثَ بِكُلِّ مَا سَمِعَ

It is enough for a person to be considered a liar if he tells all what he hears.<sup>43</sup>

Regarding this hadith, al-Nawawi said:

فَفِيهَا الرَّجْرُ عَنْ التَّحْدِيثِ بِكُلِّ مَا سَمِعَ الْإِنْسَانُ فَإِنَّهُ يَسْمَعُ فِي الْعَادَةِ الصِّدْقَ وَالْكَذِبَ  
فَإِذَا حَدَّثَ بِكُلِّ مَا سَمِعَ فَقَدْ كَذَبَ لِإِخْبَارِهِ بِمَا لَمْ يَكُنْ

In this hadith there is a strong warning not to tell everything that a person hears, because usually he listens to the truth as well as the lies. So if he tells everything he hears, then he has lied because (also) has told what is not really there.<sup>44</sup>

In another hadith, the Prophet also says:

إِنَّ اللَّهَ حَرَّمَ عَلَيْكُمْ عُفُوقَ الْأُمّهَاتِ وَوَادَ الْبَنَاتِ وَمَنْعَ وَهَاتِ  
وَكْرَهُ لَكُمْ قَيْلَ وَقَالَ وَكَثْرَةَ السُّؤَالِ وَإِضَاعَةَ الْمَالِ

Verily, Allah has forbidden you to be disobedient to mothers, to bury daughters alive, to be stingy, and He also hates you *qila wa qala*, asking a lot of questions and wasting wealth.<sup>45</sup>

Al-Muhib al-Tabari -as quoted by Ibn Hajar al-'Asqalani- explained that the Prophet's statement: "*And He also hates for you qila wa qala*" has several meanings, including:

1). This statement is a signal not to talk too much, because talking too much will lead to mistakes.

2). What is meant by *qila wa qala* is the desire to always find out what other people say and then spread that: "The A said this... the B said this..."<sup>46</sup>

<sup>43</sup>Muslim bin al-Hajjaj al-Naisaburi, *op.cit.* volume 1, p. 15. See also Muhammad Nasir al-Din al-Albani, *Silsilah al-Ahadis al-Sahihah*, vol. 1 (Riyad: Maktabah al-Ma'arif, 1412 H), p. 376.

<sup>44</sup> Abu Zakariyya Muhyi al-Din al-Nawawi, *Sahih Muslim*, vol. 1 (Beirut: Dar al-Kutub al-'Ilmiyyah, 1413 H), p. 5.

<sup>45</sup> Muhammad bin Isma'il al-Bukhari, *op.cit.*, vol. 8, p. 251.

By comparing these explanations with today's infotainment reality, a similarity can be seen between the two. The processes of searching for news until it is broadcasted are almost inseparable from the two prohibitions contained in the traditions of the Prophet above.

Maybe the infotainment actors can dodge<sup>47</sup> by saying that they had carried out the *tabayyun* process by conducting an investigation. However, the results of the investigation were immediately broadcasted because the *infotainment* program must always catch up and not run out of information. So actually in an infotainment investigation process there is no *tabayyun* effort, because one of the consequences of *tabayyun* is that news cannot be spread if it is still in the status of suspicion, prejudice, gossip, issue or - in the language of *hadith* - *qila wa qala*. Therefore, according to the researcher, one of the contents of the meaning of Allah's Word in al-Hujurat verse 6:

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا إِنْ جَاءَكُمْ فَاسِقٌ بِنَبَأٍ فَتَبَيَّنُوا أَنْ تُصِيبُوا قَوْمًا بِجَهَالَةٍ فَتُصْحَبُوا عَلَىٰ مَا فَعَلْتُمْ نَادِمِينَ

O you who believe, if a wicked person comes to you with news, examine it carefully, so that you do not inflict a disaster on a people without knowing the situation that causes you to regret what you did.<sup>48</sup>

In addition to the order to cross-check, there is also a command to be patient and refrain from spreading and publishing information before it is really clear about its truth and its benefit. Hence, these two things - truth (validity) and benefit - must be the guide in conducting investigations and publications.

Thus, based on the explanation above, the general conclusion that can be drawn from the discussion is that there is no doubt whatsoever to state that infotainment shows in their current format are unlawful (haram) to be produced, broadcasted, and consumed. *Wallahu a'lam*.

## CONCLUSION

Based on the explanation and discussion above, at the end of this research, it can be concluded that:

First, infotainment is basically an information product that contains elements of entertainment. In terms of content, an infotainment can contain news and information about any celebrity, who is involved in the world of entertainment or not. In subsequent

<sup>46</sup> Ahmad bin 'Ali bin Hajar al-'Asqalani, *op.cit*, vol. 11, p. 98.

<sup>47</sup> As did by Ilham Bintang, the king of Indonesian infotainment in his interview with *Suara Hidayatullah*. See "Suara Hidayatullah, Ya Memang Tidak Ada Privasi" <http://www.hidayatullah.com/berita/cover-story/134-cover-story/13710-ya-betul-memang-tidak-ada-privasi?format=pdf> (accessed on March 19, 2021)

<sup>48</sup> Ministry of Religious Affairs of the Republic of Indonesia, *op.cit*, p. 516.

developments in Indonesia, infotainment products experienced a shift. The content of infotainment news is dominated by news about celebrities that viewers never really need. Even more than that, the news actually causes negative impacts that are very dangerous for the social life of the community.

Second, the information media in all its forms that continue to develop in the perspective of Islamic law is something that is neutral. The legal status largely depends on the purpose of its use. If it is used to spread goodness, moral nobility, and character, it can become lawful, even under certain conditions it becomes mandatory, according to the needs of the people for it. On the other hand, trivial goals and contents that are contrary to Islamic values will make the use of the information media forbidden. Therefore, the law of information media if it is related to infotainment is closely related to this explanation.

Third, by looking at the elements contained in an infotainment show, namely *ghibah*, *namimah*, and *al-jahr bi al-fahisyah*, coupled with violations of at least two main objectives of Islamic Sharia, namely *hifz al-a'rad* and *hifz al-'aql*, there is no doubt that infotainment with its current reality is something that is forbidden. The implication is that all efforts to produce, distribute, and consume them become haram. *Wallahu a'lam*.

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