



The Use of Social Media by The Indonesian Council of Ulama (MUI) in Mandailing Natal District to Build Religious Awareness and Community Solidarity

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to analyze the use of social media by the Indonesian Council of Ulama (MUI) in Mandailing Natal District in building religious awareness and community solidarity. In the current digital era and globalization of information, social media has become an important communication tool to achieve this goal. This study uses a qualitative approach interviews with MUI members, direct observation, and analysis of MUI social media content in Mandailing Natal District. The results of the study show that the Mandailing Natal District MUI has actively utilized social media in an effort to build religious awareness and community solidarity. MUI uses various social media platforms such as Twitter, Instagram and TikTok to convey religious messages, fatwas, announcements and information related to religious activities. These contents cover various topics such as religious teachings, morality, worship, and social to Muslims.

Introduction

Social media has become a global phenomenon that influences many aspects of life, including in the context of religion. The Indonesian Council of Ulama (MUI), as a religious institution, plays a crucial role in building religious awareness and solidarity among the people. In Mandailing Natal Regency, a region with a majority of Muslim population, MUI is responsible for conveying religious messages and facilitating interactions among the community. The use of social media by MUI in Mandailing Natal has become an

interesting topic for research, considering the rapid development of information and communication technology. Social media offers significant potential in delivering religious messages, sharing knowledge, and building a network of solidarity among the community. However, the use of social media by MUI may also face challenges and negative impacts if not managed properly.

In this context, the research problem background emphasizes the importance of understanding how MUI in Mandailing Natal utilizes social media to build religious awareness and community solidarity (Syahputra 2020). Questions arising include: How does MUI use social media to convey religious messages? What content is disseminated through these platforms? How do interactions between MUI and the community occur through social media? Are there challenges in MUI's use of social media?

Answering these questions will provide a deeper understanding of the role of social media in building religious awareness and community solidarity. The research results can offer insights for MUI and other religious institutions to effectively utilize social media, as well as identify solutions to overcome potential challenges (Febri Nanda and Naupal 2022). Additionally, this research contributes to understanding the use of social media in the religious context of Mandailing Natal. The use of social media by MUI in Mandailing Natal has facilitated interactions and active participation of the community in various religious activities. People can provide feedback, ask questions, and engage in discussions through comments and private messages, strengthening communication between MUI and the community. Furthermore, social media serves as a platform for MUI to establish collaborations with other religious institutions, both locally and nationally.

However, this research also identifies several challenges in the use of social media by MUI in Mandailing Natal. These challenges include expanding internet accessibility in rural areas, ensuring the quality of verified content, and handling comments that violate ethical standards. Therefore, MUI needs to continually develop effective strategies for using social media, considering the local context and characteristics of the community in Mandailing Natal. This research deeper understanding of the role and use of social media by MUI in Mandailing Natal in building religious awareness and community solidarity. The research results are expected to serve as a reference for MUI and other religious

institutions to effectively use social media to strengthen relationships with the community and advance religious activities in society.

The use of social media by the Indonesian Ulema Council (MUI) holds significant importance in the religious and societal context. Social media provides broad and easy access for MUI to reach the Muslim community in Mandailing Natal, including those residing in remote or inaccessible areas (Nurhayani and Muslim 2019). By utilizing social media, MUI can effectively convey religious messages, fatwas, announcements, and information about religious activities to the community. Access through social media enables MUI to disseminate information in real-time. By regularly updating content, MUI can provide the latest information on religious events, seminars, guidance, and relevant social activities to the community. This allows the community to stay up-to-date with developments in the MUI environment. Through social media, MUI can build religious awareness among the community. Content delivered through social media can include religious understanding, worship practices, ethics, and religious values relevant to daily life. By providing quality educational materials, MUI can help improve the understanding and religious awareness of the community.

Social media allows for two-way interaction between MUI and the Muslim community (Cinelli et al. 2021). Muslims can provide feedback, ask questions, and engage in discussions through comments, private messages, or other interactive features. This strengthens the relationship between MUI and the community and encourages active participation in religious activities. MUI can also collaborate with other religious institutions, both locally and nationally, through social media. This enables MUI to share knowledge, experiences, and resources with these institutions, expanding the reach of influence and potential success of religious programs.

The use of social media by MUI provides significant opportunities to strengthen communication, build religious awareness, and reinforce community solidarity. However, it is crucial to pay attention to aspects of good management, content verification, and ethical handling in the use of social media to minimize negative impacts and ensure positive communication effectiveness.

Research Method

This research employs a qualitative approach to gain an in-depth understanding of the use of social media by the Indonesian Ulema Council (MUI) in Mandailing Natal Regency in building religious awareness and community solidarity. At the onset of the research, in-depth interviews were conducted with MUI members responsible for managing social media (Farid 2023). These interviews aimed to comprehend the purposes of utilizing social media, the employed strategies, the types of content disseminated, and interactions with the community through social media.

Subsequently, the study involved observing the content shared on MUI's social media accounts, encompassing religious messages, announcements, religious activities, and interactions with the community (Zachlod et al. 2022). This observation included regular monitoring to obtain up-to-date and relevant data. The next step involved analyzing the content uploaded on MUI's social media to identify the types, themes, and focuses of the conveyed messages. This analysis included the identification of patterns and trends within the posted content.

Results And Discussion

1. Results

The use of social media by the Indonesian Ulema Council (MUI) in Mandailing Natal Regency has yielded significant results in building religious awareness and community solidarity. Through various social media platforms such as Twitter, Instagram, and TikTok, MUI has been able to disseminate religious messages to a broader audience (Liao 2023). The content includes religious messages, fatwas, announcements of religious activities, religious teachings, as well as sermons and religious lectures. In this research, it was found that the use of social media by MUI has a positive impact on enhancing the religious awareness of the community. The religious content conveyed helps improve the understanding of the community regarding religious teachings, worship practices, and religious ethics. The community becomes more active in seeking religious information and deepening their understanding through the content provided by MUI.

Moreover, the use of social media by MUI also plays a role in building community solidarity (Acharya et al. 2015). The community can interact with MUI through comments, private messages, and other features, fostering a closer relationship between MUI and the community. Content that promotes religious activities and collaboration with other religious institutions also helps strengthen community solidarity. In this research, it was found that the use of social media creates space for the community to support each other, share experiences, and build a strong social network in the religious context. This also helps reinforce the religious identity of the community and expands their participation in religious activities.

However, the use of social media by MUI also faces several challenges. One of them is consistent and relevant content management. MUI needs to ensure that the content conveyed through social media remains of high quality, informative, and in line with the highly valued religious values (Pekkala and van Zoonen 2022). Additionally, negative perceptions of religion can hinder the building of religious awareness and community solidarity through social media. MUI needs to actively address these challenges by constructing positive narratives and providing a deeper understanding of religious teachings to the audience.

Social Media of MUI Mandailing Natal

The use of social media by the Indonesian Ulema Council (MUI) in Mandailing Natal Regency is a significant effort in building religious awareness and community solidarity. This research indicates that MUI employs social media with the primary goal of building religious awareness and community solidarity. MUI uses social media as a means to disseminate religious messages, announce religious activities, and facilitate interactions between MUI and the community (Dutt 2023). The identified strategies for using social media include utilizing various platforms such as Twitter, Instagram, and TikTok. MUI also employs images, videos, and text in the conveyed content to attract the community's attention and facilitate understanding of the messages. The Mandailing Natal Regency MUI

disseminates various content through social media with the aim of strengthening religious awareness and community solidarity. First, MUI spreads relevant religious messages concerning daily life to help the community understand and apply religious teachings in their daily lives (Appiah et al. 2022). Additionally, MUI uses social media to convey fatwas and religious guidance. This content explains contemporary issues related to religion, such as legal issues, worship, ethics, and social matters. Through social media, MUI can reach the community quickly and provide accurate information while addressing the community's questions regarding religion.

MUI Mandailing Natal also utilizes social media to promote religious activities organized by the institution. MUI shares information about lectures, studies, training sessions, and other religious events through social media. This helps the community actively participate and attend these activities, strengthening the sense of solidarity and togetherness in practicing worship and deepening religious knowledge.

Overall, the content conveyed through social media by MUI Mandailing Natal has diverse focuses, ranging from religious messages, fatwas and religious guidance, to the promotion of religious activities. This content aims to strengthen the religious awareness of the community, provide correct guidance, and build solidarity in practicing religious teachings. Through social media, MUI can effectively reach the community and engage them in the religious activities organized by the institution.

The content conveyed through social media by MUI includes religious messages, fatwas, announcements of religious activities, religious teachings, as well as sermons and religious lectures (Wolfers and Utz 2022). This content is tailored to the needs and interests of the community to be more relevant and engaging. Religious messages aim to build awareness of the teachings and values of religion in everyday life. Through social media, these messages can reach the community widely and help them understand the importance in every of life. Religious messages through social media aim to enhance the understanding and

knowledge of the community about religious teachings. These messages may include explanations of religious concepts, Sharia laws, worship practices, ethics, and contemporary issues related to religion (Alawamleh, Al-Twait, and Al-Saht 2022). They aim to provide accurate information that is understandable to the community. One of the social media platforms used by MUI Mandailing Natal to disseminate religious messages is the Twitter platform.



Figure 1. Twitter Account MUI Kab. Mandailing Natal

Twitter provides various benefits for the Indonesian Ulema Council (MUI) in Mandailing Natal Regency to strengthen connections with the community and disseminate religious messages. Through the official Twitter account, MUI Mandailing Natal can reach a broad and diverse audience. Twitter has a global reach and can be used to communicate with the Muslim community worldwide,

allowing MUI to spread religious messages and information related to religious activities to a wider and more diverse audience.

Twitter enables direct interaction between MUI and the community through replies, mentions, and retweets (Yang, Muhamad, and Yang 2019). By utilizing these features, MUI can encourage active engagement, solicit responses, answer questions, and share experiences or religious knowledge. This engagement can strengthen the relationship between MUI and the community, building a more solid and active religious community. Twitter serves as a real-time news and information platform. MUI Mandailing Natal can quickly disseminate up-to-date information, such as announcements of activities, schedule changes, or urgent religious messages. In emergency situations or when sensitive issues require clarification, MUI can promptly respond through Twitter to convey accurate messages and reinforce the community's trust in the institution.

By leveraging Twitter, MUI Mandailing Natal can establish stronger connections with the community, effectively disseminate religious messages, and enhance community participation in religious activities. This platform allows MUI to reach a wide audience, engage directly with the community, and deliver information quickly and accurately.

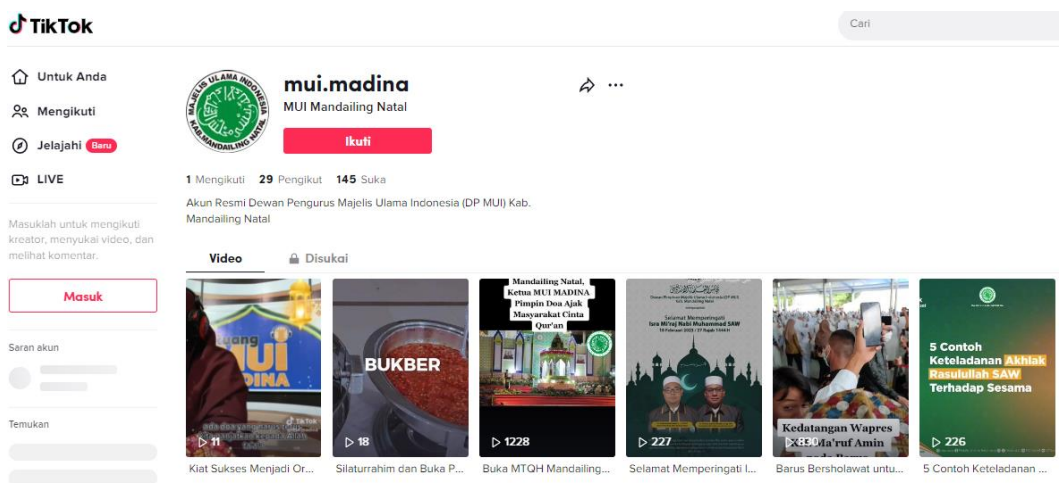


Figure 2. TikTok Account MUI Kab. Mandailing Natal

TikTok, as a short-form video-based social media platform, can also provide benefits for the Indonesian Ulema Council (MUI) in Mandailing Natal Regency in various ways. TikTok is highly popular among the younger generation (Rahmat 2021). By leveraging this platform, MUI Mandailing Natal can more easily reach and communicate with the younger generation who uses TikTok as a source of entertainment and information. This enables MUI to creatively and engagingly disseminate religious messages and Islamic values to the younger generation. TikTok offers features that encourage user engagement, such as duets, challenges, and comments. MUI can utilize these features to interact directly with TikTok users, answer questions, provide advice, and invite users to participate in challenges or activities related to religion. This can enhance user engagement and participation with MUI Mandailing Natal on TikTok.

TikTok provides an opportunity for MUI to convey religious messages creatively through captivating short videos. MUI can use music, visual effects, and editing tools available on TikTok to create content that is both engaging and entertaining while still containing the desired religious values (Sharabati et al. 2022). This can help strengthen the appeal of religious messages and make them more easily understood and remembered by TikTok users (Montag, Yang, and Elhai 2021).

By leveraging TikTok, MUI Mandailing Natal can reach the younger , increase community engagement, and creatively and engagingly convey religious messages. This platform can to reinforce religious understanding and awareness while building a closer relationship between MUI and the younger generation in Mandailing Natal Regency. In addition to TikTok, MUI Mandailing Natal also uses the Instagram platform to update documentation of activities and disseminate religious messages.

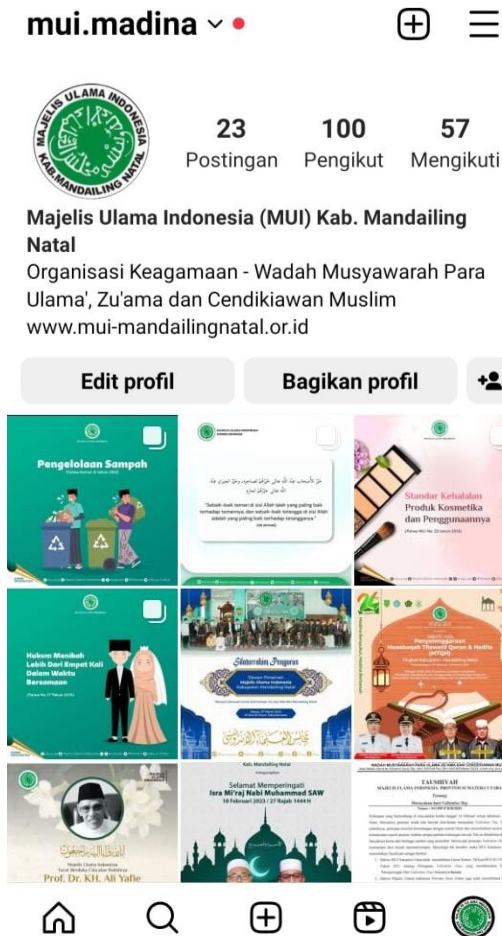


Figure 3. Instagram Account MUI Kab. Mandailing Natal

Instagram is a visual-based platform that allows the Indonesian Ulema Council (MUI) in Mandailing Natal Regency to visually convey religious messages in an engaging and creative manner. MUI can utilize photos, graphics, quotes, and relevant videos to deliver religious messages in a more captivating and easily digestible way for the community. This helps enhance the appeal and effectiveness of the conveyed religious messages.

Through features such as comments, likes, and direct messages, Instagram enables MUI to interact directly with the community (Staniewski and Awruk 2022). MUI can answer questions, provide advice, and encourage the community

to participate in discussions or religious activities through this platform. This interaction can build engagement and participation in MUI activities, strengthening the relationship between MUI and the community.

Instagram is used as a tool to promote religious events and activities organized by MUI in Mandailing Natal Regency. Through posts, stories, and other features, MUI can provide information about schedules, themes, locations, and registration procedures for these activities. This helps increase awareness and participation of the community in religious activities organized by MUI. Instagram allows MUI to build a strong and supportive online community (Park and Namkung 2022). By using relevant hashtags and interacting with other users, MUI can expand its network and build relationships with the community, youth, and other religious communities in Mandailing Natal Regency. This helps strengthen community solidarity and facilitates the exchange of experiences and religious knowledge among community members.

Overall, Instagram holds significant benefits for MUI in Mandailing Natal Regency in visualizing religious messages, increasing community participation, promoting religious activities, and building a strong community. Through Instagram, MUI can strengthen its connections with the community and effectively disseminate religious messages in visually appealing forms.

2. Discussion

The use of social media by the Indonesian Ulema Council (MUI) has a positive impact on building religious awareness among the community. Religious content conveyed through social media aids in enhancing the community's understanding of religious teachings, worship practices, and ethical values. The community becomes more active in seeking religious information and deepening their understanding through the content provided by MUI. Social media also serves as an effective means for MUI to build solidarity among the community. Interaction between the community and MUI through comments, private messages, and other features fosters a closer relationship between MUI and the community. Content

promoting religious activities and collaboration with other religious institutions further strengthens community solidarity.

Through social media, MUI can reach the community widely, without geographical limitations. Religious messages, advice, and information related to MUI activities can be accessed by the community from various regions and even countries. This helps MUI disseminate religious messages more effectively and reach a larger audience. Social media provides a platform for MUI to convey religious knowledge, Quranic interpretations, Sharia law, and other topics related to Islam. By sharing articles, quotes, videos, and other resources, MUI can help improve the community's understanding of religion and support them in deepening their religious knowledge.

The official website of MUI Mandailing Natal Regency is an and religious guidance issued by MUI. The community can quickly find the information they need regarding Sharia laws, worship practices, ethics, and other religious issues. This website serves as a reliable guide for the community in performing daily religious activities.



Figure 4. The official website of MUI Mandailing Natal

Furthermore, the official website of MUI Mandailing Natal Regency serves as a platform to announce religious activities organized by the institution. The community can learn about the schedule of lectures, studies, training, and other religious events through this website. Information about the location, time, and

contact details provided on the website makes it easy for the community to participate in and follow these activities. This helps build a sense of solidarity and togetherness among the community in performing worship and deepening religious knowledge.

The MUI Mandailing Natal Regency website also provides space for consultation and submitting questions to religious scholars. The community can submit their questions through forms or contacts available on the website. With this facility, the community has direct access to receive answers and guidance from scholars regarding religious issues they face. This allows the community to obtain correct guidance and avoid misunderstandings in their religious practices. Overall, the official website of MUI Mandailing Natal Regency provides significant benefits to the community in obtaining accurate religious guidance, information about religious activities, and direct consultation facilities with religious scholars. This website is a crucial source of information in strengthening religious awareness, building community solidarity, and assisting the community in better practicing worship and religious life.

The use of social media by MUI in Mandailing Natal Regency has proven effective in achieving the goals of building religious awareness and community solidarity. Through varied and relevant content, MUI can convey religious messages more easily and reach a broad audience. The two-way interaction between MUI and the community through social media also enhances community engagement in religious activities. MUI Mandailing Natal Regency also provides Sharia consultation services to the Islamic community in the region. This was discovered from posts by MUI Mandailing Natal Regency on the Twitter platform.

Syariah Consultation Service Poster by MUI Mandailing Natal: Enhancing Clarity, Visual Appeal, and Accessibility

The Syariah Consultation Service Poster by MUI Mandailing Natal is a crucial initiative in providing information and services to the community regarding religious matters. However, there are several aspects that need attention to improve the design and effectiveness of this poster (Suman et al. 2021). Firstly, the clarity of the message conveyed by the poster should be a priority. The use of text and images should complement each other to explain the purpose and benefits of the Sharia consultation service provided by MUI. Messages should be structured and easy to understand, ensuring the poster captures attention and motivates the community to utilize the service.



Figure 5. Syariah Consultation Service Poster

Next, the visual design of the poster needs careful consideration. The use of colors, fonts, and visual elements should align with MUI's official image, reflecting the sacredness and trust that the community has in this institution. An appealing

and professional design will enhance the poster's attractiveness and communicate the credibility and sustainability of MUI's Sharia consultation service in Mandailing Natal. Lastly, the use of clear and simple language in the poster should be considered. The poster should be easily understood by the community, avoiding confusion with overly technical terminology or complex language. Using easily comprehensible language will facilitate the community's understanding of the purpose and benefits of MUI's Sharia consultation service, making them more interested in utilizing it.

With attention to clear messaging, appealing visual design, and the use of accessible language, the Syariah Consultation Service Poster by MUI Mandailing Natal can become an effective tool in promoting and disseminating information about this service to the community. The use of social media by MUI also faces various challenges, such as consistent content management, addressing negative perceptions of religion, and ensuring security and privacy when interacting with the community. However, social media usage also opens new opportunities for MUI to reach a wider audience, especially the actively social media-engaged younger generation. Overall, this research indicates that MUI's use of social media in Mandailing Natal has a positive impact on building religious awareness and community solidarity. With relevant content, established interactions, and utilized opportunities, MUI can achieve these goals. However, the challenges faced cannot be ignored. to strengthen religious awareness and community solidarity in Mandailing Natal.

Conclusions

The research findings highlight the effectiveness of Majelis Ulama Indonesia (MUI) in Mandailing Natal in using social media as a powerful tool to enhance religious awareness and strengthen community solidarity. The success lies in the strategic approach adopted by MUI in creating diverse and pertinent content on various social media platforms. This content serves as a means to seamlessly communicate religious messages, facilitating a deeper understanding and engagement among the community members. The research

emphasizes that MUI's use of social media has notably contributed to increased participation in religious activities. The accessibility and relatability of the content have played a crucial role in capturing the attention of the community, encouraging them to actively partake in religious events and discussions.

Despite facing challenges inherent in the digital landscape, such as managing consistent content and addressing negative perceptions towards religion, the research underscores that social media has opened up novel avenues for MUI. Particularly, it has become a valuable medium to connect with the younger generation. The adaptability and widespread use of social media among the youth present MUI with an opportunity to bridge generational gaps and cultivate a sense of religious solidarity among diverse age groups. The research suggests that by intelligently navigating the potential of social media, MUI can perpetuate its impact in Mandailing Natal. By remaining mindful of the challenges and embracing innovative strategies, MUI can further solidify its role in nurturing religious awareness and fostering a sense of unity within the community. This is crucial not only for the continuation of religious traditions but also for the adaptation of these traditions to the evolving dynamics of contemporary society.

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