

Religion and COVID-19 Vaccination: The Use of Religious Language in Vaccination Socialization in New Media

Mualimin

Institut Agama Islam Negeri Palangkaraya, Indonesia
mualimin@iain-palangkaraya.ac.id

Abstract

This study aims to explore using religious language to socialize the COVID-19 vaccination in new media. This study is qualitative research. The source of data in this study is the official online platform of the Komite Penanganan COVID-19 Republic of Indonesia's, namely websites and social media. The data collected is related to the use of religious language in socializing the COVID-19 vaccination. Data collection is carried out through observation of the official online platform. The data obtained were then analyzed by means of an interactive qualitative analysis model of Miles and Huberman: data collection, data display, data reduction, and drawing conclusions. There are three findings in this study. First, religious terms and language used in the socialization of COVID-19 vaccination have a pattern based on the dynamics of socio-cultural reality and vaccination achievements. Second, the terms and religious language used to relate to the legitimacy of the permissibility and halalness of vaccines. This tendency aims to convince the public of the vaccination program. Third, religious figures, institutions, and facilities are used as tools to legitimize socialization messages. Departing from these findings, it can be concluded that religion is not only related to the dimension of spirituality but also consumed and commodified with a specific purpose. In the context of this study, the consumption and commodification of religion were carried out by the Komite Penanganan COVID-19 in the socialization of vaccination using religious terms, narratives, and language as legitimacy tools to convince the public about the importance of vaccination.

Keywords: Religious Language; COVID-19; Vaccination, New Media

Introduction

It has been three years since the COVID-19 pandemic has been present during human life. Even though a downward trend has begun to appear and its spread can be controlled, various policies and agendas have been carried out by the government and authorized institutions in dealing with the COVID-19 problem. This is because if it is not handled correctly, there may be a spike in cases of COVID-19 infection again.

Vaccination is one of the main agendas pursued by the World Health Organization (WHO) to overcome the COVID-19 problem. This is because social restrictions only slow the spread of the virus, but with vaccination, humans will have immunity against COVID-19 (Wardhana, 2020; World Health Organization, 2022). At this level, if most humans have immunity to the COVID-19 virus, the health risks are no longer too significant, and human social activities can return to normal.

In the Indonesian context, in the initial period, the vaccination program experienced various rejections from the public. Interestingly, the refusal related to vaccination is not dominated by a scientific debate but is motivated by religious reasons (Rahayuwati, 2021). Since its inception, many have linked COVID-19 with religious doctrines and narratives (Hasanah, 2020). Even COVID-19 is often seen as a punishment for human sins (Østebø et al., 2021). It is not surprising then that one of the reasons for rejecting the vaccination program is religious reasons. At this level, problems related to halal and haram vaccines, both the ingredients and the process of making vaccines, up to the permissibility of vaccination in religious teachings, are the issues behind the rejection of vaccination (Feizollah et al., 2022; Itmam, 2022; Sholeh & Helmi, 2021). The results of a survey conducted by the the Ministry of Religion of the Republic of Indonesia (2021) found that 48.39% of the public refused vaccines due to doubts regarding their halal status and 9.27% because they considered the vaccination process contrary to religious teachings. Likewise, a study by Indicator Politic of Indonesia (2021) found that the halal status of a vaccine greatly determines the public acceptance of vaccination. The study found that 81.9% of people were willing to be vaccinated only if the vaccine was halal.

Refusal and doubts about the COVID-19 vaccination on religious grounds did not only occur in Indonesia but were also found in other countries. Edward et al. (2021) found that people who doubted the COVID-19 vaccination in Australia were from circles with higher religiosity. Likewise, Murphy et al. (2021) found that groups with high religiosity in Ireland and the UK tend to doubt the Covid-10 vaccination. In line with that, Neumann-Böhme et al. (2020) found that religion is a factor in considering people not willing to be vaccinated in Europe. These findings show that rejection and doubt about COVID-19 vaccination occur not only in developing countries but also in countries that are relatively advanced in science and technology.

The rejection of vaccination in Indonesia has slowed the achievements of the vaccination program in the initial period, namely January 2021. Even up to August 2021, vaccination results have yet to reach 30% of the population for the first dose. However, vaccination achievement significantly increased from October 2021 to April 2022, reaching above 80% of the total population for the first dose. Meanwhile, in the same period, the results of the second vaccination dose exceeded 71% of the total population. This achievement has met the national vaccination target of 70% of the population (2022). This achievement exceeded the WHO target of 40% of the world's population (Komite Penanganan COVID-19, 2022).

Significant progress regarding vaccination achievements in Indonesia shows that doubts and rejection of vaccines for religious reasons can slowly be overcome. This is inseparable from the religious approach used by the government in socializing vaccination (Martens & Rutjens, 2022). In addition, the government also involves religious and cultural figures to understand and convince the public about the importance of vaccination (Darussyamsu et al., 2021; Tan et al., 2022; Toharudin et al., 2021). A concrete form of the role and support of religious leaders in convincing the public about vaccination is the existence of a fatwa from the Majelis Ulama Indonesia regarding COVID-19 vaccination (Khoiri & Nasution, 2022; Zuhdi et al., 2021).

New media (online platforms) play a crucial role in socializing vaccination during a pandemic in Indonesia. This is because, during a pandemic, vaccination socialization activities were faced with two sides. On the one hand, socialization must still be carried out. On the other hand, a social restriction policy does not allow face-to-face socialization with many participants. The importance of the role of new media for socializing vaccination during a pandemic has even been confirmed by the results of a study conducted by the Indonesian Ministry of Health (2020), which found that as many as 54% of Indonesians wanted to get information related to COVID-19 and vaccination from social media and 2% from online platforms.

Socialization of vaccination through new media requires the message to be appropriately packaged to convince the public. At this level, religious narratives and language cannot be avoided. Several previous studies have shown that using religious narratives and language effectively legitimizes messages in the communication process (Al-Azami, 2016; Alshoibani, 2017; Talabi et al., 2021). In line with that, Rustandi (2022), in his

study, stated that the packaging of religious language is vital in influencing the opinions and perceptions of audiences on social media. Likewise, Hidayat (2018) found that using religious language contributes to the legitimacy of messages so that they can be more convincing to netizens in new media.

Therefore, departing from this background, this study aims to explore the use of religious language in socializing the COVID-19 vaccination in the official online platform of the Komite Penanganan COVID-19 Republic of Indonesia's. The locus for this study was chosen because the Komite Penanganan COVID-19 is an institution that has the authority to deal with and make policies related to COVID-19 in Indonesia. Thus public communication through online platforms will become an authoritative reference source for information on handling COVID-19 and vaccination. This is in line with the results of a study by Kilic et al. (2021), which found that in conditions where people are experiencing anxiety due to pandemic uncertainty, accurate information from authoritative sources is very much needed by the community. The significant results of this research can be used as academic material in formulating various approaches and strategies for socializing government policies and programs through a religious approach using new media.

Literature Review

COVID-19 does have not only an impact on the order of human social life but also on the landscape of academic studies. Various academic institutions and publishers have even made the study of COVID-19 the central theme in their published editions (Aristovnik et al., 2020; Chen et al., 2021; Roychowdhury et al., 2022; Wang & Hong, 2020). Therefore, many studies on COVID-19 have been carried out from various perspectives. Likewise, in the context of studies related to religious relations and COVID-19. Precisely, the study can be mapped into four perspectives. First, a study that focuses on the impact of COVID-19 on various dimensions of religious life. In their study, Al Adawi et al. (2021) found that the pandemic negatively impacted religious practices. This is because the pandemic causes limitations in carrying out various religious ritual activities. Likewise, Tsironis et al. (2022) found that in the context of religious tourism, COVID-19 had a sizeable impact on the decline of religious tourism.

Even though the two studies show that the pandemic has harmed the freedom to carry out religious teachings, various social restrictions during the pandemic have indirectly positively impacted the experience of religion. In their study, Molteni et al. (2021) found that social restrictions due to COVID-19 led to an increase in religiosity. This is because the limitations to activities outside the home cause individuals to have more time to carry out various religious rituals. Likewise, Bentzen (2021), found that there was an increase in religiosity globally after the pandemic. This increase is due to the human tendency to seek explanations, comfort, and spiritual support for the crises they face. In addition, social restrictions during a pandemic have caused humans to seek alternative channels for social interaction related to religious life. This is in line with Othman's findings (2022) that there was a development in religious behavior during the COVID-19 pandemic, namely the discovery of religious ritual practices online. These findings are further strengthened by Sparey's study (2022) that social restrictions during COVID-19 caused the relationship between religion and the digital world to become closer. These findings lead to the same conclusion, namely the occurrence of a paradigm shift and religious practices during a pandemic.

Second, studies related to the COVID-19 pandemic from the point of view of normative studies and religious doctrine. These studies have something in common: analyzing texts and authoritative sources in religion in explaining pandemics. This is done by Supriatna (2020), who found no specific term related to the COVID-19 pandemic in Islam. However, in Islamic history during the time of Rasulullah SAW, there was an outbreak of a disease similar to the current pandemic. The term used to refer to the plague is *tho'un*. Likewise, Qudsy and Sholahuddin (2020) found that in religious literature, the book of Bazl al-Maun is a complete reference source for discussing pandemics based on references to hadiths. In the context of religious doctrine, one of the studies was carried out by Qotadah (2020) regarding *Maqashid Syariah*. His study found that during this pandemic, *hifzh nafs* must take precedence so that the prohibition on carrying out worship rituals in congregation or mass is basically in accordance with *Maqashid Sharia*. These findings are supported by Sulaeman (2021), who, in his study, views that not complying with restrictions on holding congregational worship during a pandemic is a form of egoism in religion and is contrary to *Maqashid Syariah*.

Third, the relationship between religion and vaccination. Studies in this context, among others, were carried out by Martens and Rutjens (2022), who found that religion and

spirituality have a reasonably close relationship with the success of vaccination. This finding is in line with the results of a study by Adetayo et al. (2022), which found that religious considerations are a reference in responding to COVID-19 vaccinations, either in the form of accepting or rejecting. In addition, religion is also a benchmark in validating various information related to the COVID-19 vaccination.

Fourth, the contribution of religion in handling and mitigating COVID-19. In the context of this study, Shor (2022) found that rituals in religion play a role in overcoming anxiety and stress caused by social limitations due to the pandemic. In addition, Tan et al. (2022) found that religion is essential in mitigating and preventing adverse impacts on people's psychology during a pandemic. This role is shown by religious institutions that actively provide social support to people exposed to COVID-19. This support includes spiritual services for anxiety due to a pandemic and religious facilities such as mosques for handling pandemics and vaccinations (Kotani et al., 2022). In the context of the COVID-19 vaccination, Simon et al. (2021) found that religious leaders have a crucial role in the success of the COVID-19 vaccination program.

Previous studies related to religious relations and COVID-19 were still limited to aspects of the impact and relations of religion and COVID-19 at a general practice level. In the context of studies related to religion and vaccination, although there have been studies related to religious relations and the success of the COVID-19 vaccination, there is still a void in studies that specifically examine the use of religious language in the socialization of the COVID-19 vaccination program, especially in Indonesia. Therefore this study aims to fill the void by focusing on the use of religious language in the official online platform of the Komite Penanganan COVID-19 Republic of Indonesia's.

Research Method

This study is qualitative research. The data source in this study is the official online platform of the Komite Penanganan COVID-19 Republic of Indonesia, the website (<https://covid19.go.id/>) and Instagram (https://www.instagram.com/lawancovid19_id/). The data collected is related to the use of religious language in socializing the COVID-19 vaccination. Data collection is carried out through observation of the official online platform. The data collected are all posts from 2020 to 2022. The data obtained is then analyzed using an interactive qualitative analysis of the Miles and Huberman model: data collection, data display, data reduction, and conclusion.



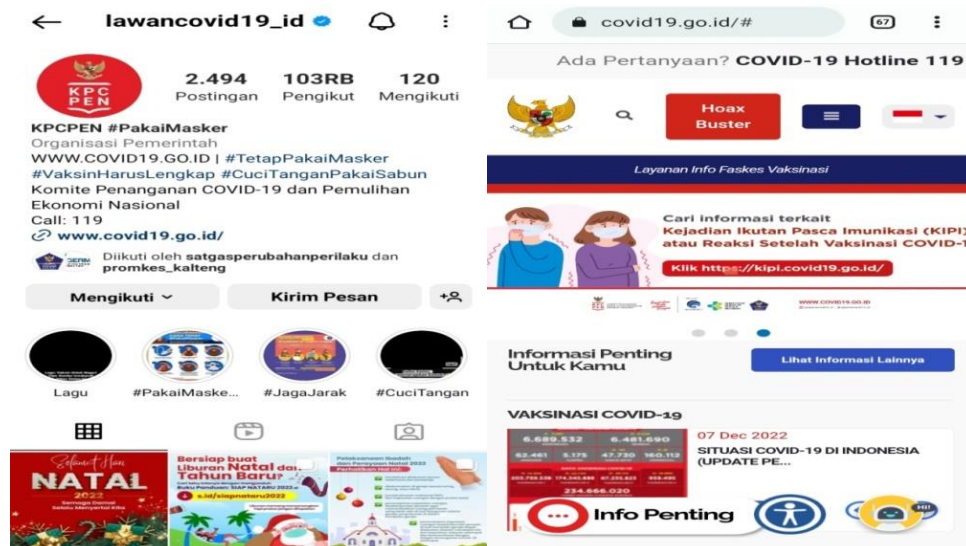


Figure 1. Instagram and Website for the Komite Penanganan COVID-19

Analysis

Repetition of the Religious Language: Efforts to Convince the Public about Vaccination

Language plays a vital role in life. The use of language is not only a medium for communication but also a tool for building images, convincing, and influencing the perceptions of others. Li and Sai (2020) say that language is used as a medium to "acquire" religious beliefs. In other words, this view shows that language can be used as a medium for preaching, namely, convincing someone about the truth of a religion. In line with that, Kustyarini (2017) found that language is fundamental in character formation. Even the language used in communication often represents a particular ethnic, group, and religious identity (Gudykunst & Schmidt, 1987; Nordin & Yusoff, 2014; Sudjalil, 2010). These studies show that the use of language dramatically determines one's perceptions and attitudes toward something.

In the context of socializing the COVID-19 vaccination in Indonesia, using the correct language is also very important to convince people to want to be vaccinated. At this level, selecting persuasive terms or narratives must consider various aspects that make people doubt vaccines. In other words, the term or narrative used can be the "antithesis" of the doubt, as previous studies have found that religion is one of the reasons for rejection and doubts about vaccination (Indikator Politik Indonesia, 2021; Kementerian Kesehatan Republik Indonesia, 2020; Tim Peneliti Puslitbang Bimas Agama dan Layanan Keagamaan, 2021). Therefore, the language used in the socialization of vaccines by the Komite Penanganan COVID-19 should not only be language that is an invitation to be vaccinated

but also uses religious terms or narratives. The goal is that people who doubt vaccines based on religion become willing to be vaccinated.

Narrative substance and religious terms used in vaccination socialization. In other words, not all religious terms or language are used appropriately, but it is necessary to choose the correct term and have a meaning that can convince the public. At this level, the use of appropriate religious terms or narratives will enable people to be willing to be vaccinated. Between 2020 and 2022, the use of religious narratives and terms by the Komite Penanganan COVID-19 in socializing vaccination in new media (online platforms) found 20 posts on the website, as follows:

Table 1. Posts on website

Date	Posts Link in Website	Title
16-10-2020	https://covid19.go.id/artikel/2020/10/16/fatwa-mui-dapat-menjadi-rujukan-umat-islam-menghadapi-pandemi-covid-19	Fatwa MUI dapat Menjadi Rujukan Umat Islam Menghadapi Pandemi COVID-19
16-10-2020	https://covid19.go.id/artikel/2020/10/16/wapres-maruf-amin-vaksinasi-sejalan-dengan-ajaran-islam	Wapres Ma'ruf Amin: Vaksinasi Sejalan Dengan Ajaran Islam
18-10-2020	https://covid19.go.id/artikel/2020/10/18/imunisasi-upaya-jalankan-perintah-agama-untuk-jaga-kesehatan	Imunisasi, Upaya Jalankan Perintah Agama untuk Jaga Kesehatan
19-10-2020	https://covid19.go.id/artikel/2020/10/19/mui-kawal-pengadaan-vaksin-covid-19	MUI Kawal Pengadaan Vaksin COVID-19
19-11-2020	https://covid19.go.id/artikel/2020/11/19/satgas-covid-19-jangan-takut-dan-ragu-karena-vaksin-aman-dan-halal	Satgas Covid-19: Jangan Takut dan Ragu Karena Vaksin Aman dan Halal
07-12-2020	https://covid19.go.id/artikel/2020/12/07/tahapan-vaksinasi-covid-19-tunggu-evaluasi-badan-pom-dan-mui	Tahapan Vaksinasi COVID-19, Tunggu Evaluasi Badan POM dan MUI
08-12-2020	https://covid19.go.id/artikel/2020/12/08/badan-pom-mui-dan-para-ahli-kawal-vaksin-covid-19	Badan POM, MUI, dan Para Ahli Kawal Vaksin COVID-19
09-12-2020	https://covid19.go.id/artikel/2020/12/09/majelis-ulama-indonesia-berkomitmen-kawal-kehalalan-vaksin-covid-19	Majelis Ulama Indonesia Berkomitmen Kawal Kehalalan Vaksin COVID-19
13-01-2021	https://covid19.go.id/artikel/2021/01/13/vaksin-sinovac-teruji-minim-efek-samping-berkhasiat-dan-halal	Vaksin Sinovac Teruji Minim Efek Samping, Berkhasiat dan Halal
13-01-2021	https://covid19.go.id/artikel/2021/01/13/tak-perlu-ragu-divaksinasi-vaksin	Tak Perlu Ragu Divaksinasi, Vaksin

	ragu-divaksinasi-vaksin-halal	Halal
30-01-2021	https://covid19.go.id/artikel/2021/01/30/hoaks-gereja-haramkan-vaksin	Hoaks: Gereja Haramkan Vaksin
19-03-2021	https://covid19.go.id/artikel/2021/03/19/vaksin-astrazeneca-kantongi-izin-penggunaan-dari-mui-dan-bpom	Vaksin AstraZeneca Kantongi Izin Penggunaan dari MUI dan BPOM
19-03-2021	https://covid19.go.id/artikel/2021/03/19/fatwa-mui-penggunaan-vaksin-covid-19-astrazeneca-pada-saat-ini-dibolehkan-mubah	Fatwa MUI: Penggunaan Vaksin COVID-19 AstraZeneca Pada Saat Ini Dibolehkan (Mubah)
14-04-2021	https://covid19.go.id/artikel/2021/04/14/puasa-tak-halangi-pembentukan-daya-tahan-tubuh-usai-vaksinasi	Puasa Tak Halangi Pembentukan Daya Tahan Tubuh Usai Vaksinasi
16-04-2021	https://covid19.go.id/artikel/2021/04/16/fatwa-mui-vaksinasi-covid-19-dan-tes-swab-tidak-batalkan-puasa	Fatwa MUI: Vaksinasi COVID-19 dan Tes Swab Tidak Batalkan Puasa
18-06-2021	https://covid19.go.id/artikel/2021/06/18/apakah-vaksin-yang-hadir-sudah-dipastikan-kehalalannya	Apakah vaksin yang hadir sudah dipastikan kehalalannya?
22-07-2021	https://covid19.go.id/artikel/2021/07/22/menag-vaksinasi-sejalan-dengan-spirit-agama-untuk-menjaga-kehidupan	Menag: Vaksinasi Sejalan dengan Spirit Agama untuk Menjaga Kehidupan
28-02-2022	https://covid19.go.id/artikel/2022/02/28/mui-vaksin-merah-putih-suci-dan-halal	MUI: Vaksin Merah Putih Suci dan Halal
31-03-2022	https://covid19.go.id/artikel/2022/03/31/vaksinasi-covid-19-dan-tes-swab-tidak-batalkan-puasa	Vaksinasi COVID-19 dan Tes Swab Tidak Batalkan Puasa
09-04-2022	https://covid19.go.id/artikel/2022/04/09/sehat-beribadah-dengan-prokes-dan-vaksin	Sehat Beribadah dengan Prokes dan Vaksin

Meanwhile, on Instagram, 11 posts used religious language. Specifically, these posts are:

Table 2. Posts on Instagram

Date	Post Link in Instagram	Title
07-10-2020	https://www.instagram.com/p/CGC1ecOA4qg/?igshid=MDJmNzVkMjY%3D	Hoax MUI Larang penggunaan vaksin buatan Tiongkok
18-10-2020	https://www.instagram.com/p/CGerac2g7ud/?igshid=MDJmNzVkMjY%3D	Imunisasi upaya jalankan perintah agama untuk kesehatan
19-10-2020	https://www.instagram.com/p/CGhZbkHgr3Q/?igshid=MDJmNzVkMjY%3D	Imunisasi upaya jalankan perintah agama untuk kesehatan
19-10-2020	https://www.instagram.com/p/CGgxP0WAKd1/?i	MUI kawal pengadaan vaksin COVID-19



	gshid=MDJmNzVkMjY%3D	
18-03-2021	https://www.instagram.com/p/CMi4bz-BK1a/?igshid=MDJmNzVkMjY%3D	Fatwa MUI: vaksinasi injeksi tidak membatalkan puasa
24-03-2021	https://www.instagram.com/p/CMY0aeXhfEr/?igshid=MDJmNzVkMjY%3D	Pondok Pesantren di Jawa Timur terima vaksinasi AstraZeneca
13-04-2021	https://www.instagram.com/p/CNmNPPGsA0_/?igshid=MDJmNzVkMjY%3D	Saatnya masjid menjadi sentra vaksinasi COVID-19
20-07-2021	https://www.instagram.com/p/CRh57IZFiw2/?igshid=MDJmNzVkMjY%3D	Selamat hari Raya Idul Adha: Mari kita merayakan makna pengorbanan dan keikhlasan di hari raya kurban dengan saling mengingatkan untuk selalu di rumah saja demi keluarga, perketat protokol kesehatan, dan segera vaksinasi
17-09-2021	https://www.instagram.com/p/CT6Fvc-FtTx/?igshid=MDJmNzVkMjY%3D	7 Pesantren di 7 Kota di Indonesia laksanakan vaksinasi COVID-19
18-02-2022	https://www.instagram.com/p/Cag5EkbMfV3/?igshid=MDJmNzVkMjY%3D	MUI: Vaksin merah putih suci dan halal
03-03-2022	https://www.instagram.com/p/CaoJBjCp06w/?igshid=MDJmNzVkMjY%3D	Selamat hari raya Nyepi 2022: Ayo pakai Masker, Ayo Cepat Vaksin

The socialization of vaccination by the Komite Penanganan COVID-19 in new media does not only contain calls for vaccination but also uses religious terms and language. Referring to the posting period and the narration used, a pattern of posts using narration and religious language was found in socializing the COVID-19 vaccine. Specifically, the use of religious language in the socialization of vaccination by the Komite Penanganan COVID-19 can be found in three patterns. First, when approaching and approaching religious holidays. In this situation, the Komite Penanganan COVID-19 links the substance of this religious holiday with the importance of vaccination. Second, when public rejection of vaccines on religious grounds increases, vaccination achievements are still low. In this situation, the Komite Penanganan COVID-19 often presents figures of religious figures or religious institutions to explain the importance of vaccination from a religious point of view. Third, when hoaxes related to vaccines were found that were connected with religion. In this situation, the Komite Penanganan COVID-19 immediately clarified the hoax.

Another finding in this study is that there are two tendencies of religious terms or narratives used by the Komite Penanganan COVID-19 in the socialization of COVID-19 vaccination in new media. First, religious terms and narratives related to religious legal

aspects of COVID-19 vaccination. Terms such as *halal*, *thayyib*, holy, and following the Shari'a are used repeatedly and can even be found in almost every post related to religious narratives.



Figure 2. Vaccine halal posts

The terms used by the Komite Penanganan COVID-19 are basic terms used in religion to explain and provide legitimacy for the ability to use or carry out an agenda. Therefore this reality shows that the repeated use of specific terms is an attempt to show the existence of religious legitimacy for the vaccination program. In addition, the repeated use of narratives or religious terms such as holy, *halal*, and *thayyib* attempts to convince the public about guarantees of safety and benefits and does not conflict with religious teachings. The repetition of specific messages or terms in religion carried out by the Komite Penanganan COVID-19 is part of a communication strategy. At this level, Koch and Zerback (2013) in their study found that consistent repetition of persuasive messages is crucial in efforts to convince others of an argument or narrative you want to build. In line with that, Ballester et al. (2012) stated that consistent delivery of messages repeatedly would increase public perception of the substance of the message to be conveyed. Delivering messages or narratives repeatedly can have implications for the subconscious's belief in believing in the message. Even Ernst et al. (2017) found that specific message repetition strategies were used in political campaigns to build specific branding toward political issues, political figures, and political parties.

Second, religious terms and narratives are related to normative and dogmatic aspects of religion. Terms such as *fatwa*, *Maqashid Syariah*, prevent *Mafsadat*, *Hajah Syar'iyah*, and *Darurah Syar'iyah* from being used as a basis for the legitimacy of the permissibility of

vaccination. The use of dogmatic terms and language aims to show that halal vaccination has a strong legitimacy foundation in religion. In other words, the justification regarding the halalness of vaccines and the permissibility of vaccinations is built based on the arguments and methodologies justified by religion. This reality shows that, on the one hand, fatwas, the concept of *maqashid sharia*, and *ushuliyah* are used as theological foundations in carrying out religious teachings. Meanwhile, on the other hand, these terms are used as commodities to achieve the goal of socializing the COVID-19 vaccination. This practice by Greg Feely (2008) is called "religious consumption." Interestingly, the practice of commodification is not only carried out by the Komite Penanganan COVID-19 but has also been frequently carried out, for example, in politics and tourism (Handoko et al., 2020; Olsen, 2003)

Religious Leaders and Religious Institutions as Legitimacy Tools for Vaccination Dissemination Messages

Religious figures and institutions are seen as very important in socializing vaccination by the Komite Penanganan COVID-19 in new media. This can be seen from the various posts related to religious narratives, the involvement of religious figures such as *Kyai*, Priests, and *Bhikku* always shows. Opinions from religious leaders regarding the COVID-19 vaccination were also cited and even used as the central message of the post. In addition, the involvement and support of religious institutions such as the Majelis Ulama Indonesia (MUI), the Pondok Pesantren, and the Dewan Masjid Indonesia is the narrative built on several posts. This reality shows that religious figures and institutions are treated as authoritative and credible sources in the interpretation of religious texts and used as tools to legitimize vaccination programs delivered through new media.



Figure 3. posts using religious figures and institutions as a tool for legitimizing messages

Religious figures and institutions are references in interpreting religious texts and dogmas for religious communities. At this level, religious figures and institutions indirectly have legitimacy and credibility in various religious interpretations. Therefore it is only natural that the words of religious figures such as *Kyai*, *Priest*, and *Bhikku* regarding vaccination or fatwas from religious institutions such as the Majelis Ulama Indonesia (MUI) and the council of church guardians regarding vaccination are quoted and made into posts by the Komite Penanganan COVID-19 in new media. This finding is in line with the view of Aagaard (2019) that receiving messages in communication has a relationship with public legitimacy for these sources of information. In line with that, the view of Tallberg and Zürn (2019) is that the credibility of information sources dramatically determines public trust in this information. Therefore it is natural that in their study Dellmuth and Tallbergh (2021) found that the higher the credibility of the elite, the higher the level of public acceptance and trust in the messages conveyed.

Conclusions

The data obtained show that the use of religious narratives and language in new media is part of the strategy of the Komite Penanganan COVID-19 in socializing vaccination in Indonesia. Specifically, there are three findings in this study. First, there is a pattern in each post regarding the use of religious language by the Komite Penanganan COVID-19 in new media. At this level, these posts must be connected to the socio-cultural reality of Indonesian society and the development of vaccinations. Second, the Komite Penanganan COVID-19 tends to use terms or narratives related to the legitimacy of the permissibility and necessity of vaccination for religious people. Terms such as *halal*, *holy*, and *thayyib* are even used repeatedly to build religious belief regarding the permissibility of vaccination in religion. Third, religious figures, institutions, and facilities are used to legitimize messages. At this level, statements from religious leaders or representatives of religious institutions regarding vaccination are used as a basis for the permissibility and necessity of vaccination from a religious perspective. Departing from these findings, it can be concluded that religion is not only related to the dimension of spirituality but also consumed and commodified with a specific purpose. In this study, the consumption and commodification of religion were carried out by the Komite Penanganan COVID-19 in the socialization of vaccination using religious terms, narratives, and language as legitimacy tools to convince the public about the importance of vaccination.

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