

# Representation and Commodification of Muslim Identity Through Halal Food Content by Influencer in Instagram

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## Abstract

Instagram is one of the spaces used by influencers to influence their followers' perception of certain ideologies and lifestyles, includes halal lifestyle. This study aims to analyze halal lifestyle represented and commodified by halal influencers through halal food content. One of the lifestyles that is also promoted by Instagram is halal lifestyle, which represented by Dian Widayanti dan Anca Syah among others through accounts @dianwidayanti and @anca.id. These two halal lifestyle influencers use Instagram to inform and educate their followers about halal food through the contents they produce. Using Krippendorff (2019) content analysis method, this study analyzed the contents of the influencers to show the representation of halal lifestyles on Instagram in the halal food content uploaded during November 2024 – April 2025. The results interpretation analysis uses the representation theory of Stuart Hall (1997), the commodification of Arjun Appadurai (2013) and the symbolic authority of Pierre Bourdieu (1991). This study shows @dianwidayanti and @anca.id using halal concept and differences in persona representation such as appearance, communication style and content narration as a branding strategy and reveals the commodification of religion through the capitalization of religious identity that occurs in the halal industry. The practices of representation and commodification construct religious authority through symbolic power in the public sphere and halal industrial world in Indonesia.

**Keywords:** *Authority, Commodification, Halal, Influencer, Representation*

## Introduction

The “No Pork No Lard” label is often used by restaurant to give impression or even become a claim, that the restaurant serves halal food. This label is a sign that a restaurant does not sell food contain pork, lard, or other elements of pork. Saha (2024) revealed that the “No Pork No Lard” label is a form of self-declaration by restaurant to simplify the public's understanding of halal labels and is a strategy used to convince consumers, even though it does not guarantee that the product is truly halal. On the other hand, according to Indonesia's Government Regulation Number 29 of 2023 concerning Halal Product Assurance (JPH Law), halal product assurance is having halal certification issued by the BPJPH, institution involved Halal Certification Indonesia (Hardiantoro & Pratiwi, 2024). Halal certification is based on the provision of halal fatwa by MUI which guarantees the raw materials, distribution process, storage, processing and equipment in accordance with Islamic Law. The “No Pork, No Lard” label is still widely used in various restaurants and not a problem for Muslim customers, even though it is not the same as halal certification and does not guarantee the halal status of the dish. This phenomenon indicates a gap between halal standards set by Islamic Law and formal halal authorities and the flexibility of the halal meaning in the context of everyday consumption, still leaves

room for customer interpretation and open up space for other actors to fill the knowledge gap.

Halal certification and labeling are considered important by Muslim, especially those who live a halal lifestyle. In Indonesia, halal lifestyles have developed and applied in all aspects of daily life, ranging from food, cosmetics, fashions, tourism, to finance. A halal lifestyle encourages a Muslim to apply a way of life, interest, activities, consumptions, and habits in accordance with Islamic rules. Halal lifestyle is reflection of Muslim rationality and influencers encourage the creation of halal ecosystem in Indonesia (Rohman et al., 2022). A person who has implemented a halal lifestyle must consume, use, and utilize halal products or services as well as to obtain halal ones (Aprilia & Syarif Ismail, 2024). This research discusses halal lifestyle represented through halal food content in Instagram which has not been discussed in previous research.

In Indonesia over the past five years, there has been an increase in halal consumptions up to 14,96% per year<sup>1</sup>. The widespread of halal lifestyle, which concur with the trend of *hijrah*, is inseparable from the role of social media that affects young people (Hartono et al., 2024). Through the influencers, a term of social media users who have many followers and produce content that is considered to be able to influence their followers' perception, social media disseminates information and understanding about halal in halal discourse in Indonesia. Social media influencers are challenging traditional religious authorities and move to digital actors (Zaid et al., 2022). Thus, influencers become an agent who plays a role in constructing the meaning of halal so as to influence the increase of halal awareness in Indonesia society through education and promotion of halal products. This research also discusses commodification and religious authority in media social which is conducted by halal influencers.

Dian Widayanti and Anca Syah are two halal lifestyle influencers who are active in spreading education and information about the meaning of halal, restaurant and food recommendations, halal products and services Rohman et al. (2022). They are active on various platforms, including Instagram, with more than 260.000 followers as of April 2025 (Widayanti, 2025) and more than 144.000 followers as of April 2025 (Syah, 2025). These two influencers educate their followers about halal critical points and the importance of halal certification and fill several events as speakers at various events and talk shows. Dian and Anca's activeness and dedication in voicing halal issues make them two important figures in the halal community in Indonesia.

Awareness of choosing products and services in accordance with halal principles and halal lifestyle increases halal commercialization. Halal certification and labeling are no longer just a sign that a product or service has met halal standards according to Islamic laws, but also become an effective marketing strategy and attract the attention of Muslim consumers. Halal label can increase competitiveness and increase product sales (Muntholip et al., 2025). In addition, the concept if halal is no longer just a spiritual aspect and principle but also a branding strategy used by influencers in building personas and gaining the trust of their followers. The influencers that promote a halal lifestyle can attract audiences, both Muslims and non-Muslims, who are interested in halal lifestyle, information, and consumption because they are considered to be of high quality, safe and ethical (Noviyanti & Albab, 2024). Thus, halal commercialization not only reflects religious values, especially Islam, but also becomes a trend that affect various industry aspects and various product and service consumptions and lifestyle.

Influencer show their identity articulation in digital da'wah activities on social media related to halal food. Zaid et al. (2022) and Noviyanti & Albab (2024) argue that Muslim influencers on social media can displace religious authority through the content presented. Zaid et al. (2022) said that engaging content reform can be entertaining and relevant for young Muslims. Meanwhile, Noviyanti & Albab (2024) stated that the form of information and education content increase halal understanding and awareness. This is agreed by Abdullah et al. (2022) and Sholeha et al. (2024) who argue that influencers are cultural agents who construct halal literacy and influence decisions to choose halal food products through content they produce. Previous research focused on how influencers play a role on halal education and their influence, and not yet thoroughly examined the commodification of Muslim identity related to the image of halal brands that promote halal as a lifestyle and no longer a spiritual principle. This shift can have an impact on the meaning of halal itself.

Religious commodification occurs in an online space represented through religious symbols and halal labels displayed by product owners. Kholqiana et al. (2020), Anggraeni & Wuryanta (2020) dan Alamsyah et al. (2024) stated that Islamic iconography, such as halal-labeled products, women wearing hijab, texts and Islamic products become religious commodification's that are displayed to increase attractiveness and credibility of products and provide benefits for the media and influencers. Kholqiana et al. (2020) said that halal claims and hijab advertising stars can enhance the charm of products. In addition, the product takes advantage of market demand because Indonesia is one of the halal economy centers. Similar to Kholqiana et al., Anggraeni & Wuryanta (2020) mentioned that the religious commodification that occurs can attract products owners to advertise their products and benefit media owners. Meanwhile, Alamsyah et al. (2024) stated that the commodification of religion that occurs is the impact of religious commodification, religious mediatization, and the construction of influencer identities that take place simultaneously and support each other. These studies have highlighted the commodification of religion through product owners use halal claims, Islamic symbols, and Islamic stars or influencer to gain financial advantage. However, further studies are still needed on halal influencer who construct the meaning of halal and make halal part or the branding strategy.

Halal lifestyle and representation are persona and brand image of halal influencer and halal commodification that is raised through Islamic symbols and halal claims. In addition, the influencers shift the authority of halal meaning that was previously owned by official state or religious authorities in Indonesia. This research examines halal influencers through cultural studies perspective that sees them as actors who construct halal concept on Instagram in the context of contemporary Indonesia through practices of representation, commodification, and symbolic power shown by @dianwidayanti and @anca.id account. This research specifically compares the construction of halal identity and meaning of halal food content by different gender influencers, thus opening up analytical space for religious values that are negotiated differently in digital practices.

This analysis uses Stuart Hall's (1997) theory of representation to understand how influencers represent and construct religious identity and halal food through Instagram content. Arjun Appadurai's (2013) commodification theory is used to understand how identity, halal knowledge and credibility of both are commodified and Pierre Bourdieu's (1991) symbolic power theory is used to understand how the halal influencer identity of @dianwidayanti and @anca.id has authority in Instagram. For this aim, this study discusses how representation of halal concept in the @dianwidayanti and @anca.id

Instagram accounts shows the flexibility if the meaning of halal and the commodification of religion in the industrial world in Indonesia.

## Method

This study uses a cultural studies approach to observe the representation of Muslim identity on social media by content analysis method by Krippendorff (2019) to find how patterns of representation and commodification are formed, disseminated and negotiated. Content analysis is a research technique for drawing replicable and valid conclusions from a text (or other meaningful text) within its context and emphasizes close reading of the textual material to enable interpretation text into a new narrative (Krippendorff, 2019). This research data used 56 @dianwidayanti content and 70 @anca.id content on their Instagram account related to halal food information and education uploaded during November 2024 – April 2025. Journals, books, and online articles related to influencers, social media, representation, commodification and symbolic power become secondary sources. Data collection was carried out by observing @dianwidayanti and @anca.id Instagram accounts, documented by collecting archives of screenshots and content transcriptions with halal food content criteria. The collected data were selected by purposive sampling with the sampling unit criteria being content discussing halal food and restaurants. The selected data were grouped based on an analysis unit of influencer account and halal food content; recording unit in the form of content type (education, review and/or endorsement), uploaded date, appearance, setting, communication style and halal narrative; and the context unit is the entire content in an upload. The data was coded into categories of halal food educational content and endorsement, representation, commodification practices and authority, then selected samples used in this article. Researchers analyzed and identified patterns and meanings emerging from the content, then linked them to Stuart Hall's representation theory, Arjun Appadurai's commodification theory and Pierre Bourdieu's symbolic theory.

## Results

@dianwidayanti and @anca.id are halal influencers who construct halal concept through their self-image representation, the practices of commodification and religious authority on halal food Instagram content with their respective personas, religious symbols, and different style of appearance and communication. This suggest that different appearances will show different visual identities and religious narrative. Instagram content of @dianwidayanti and @anca.id are a representation form of halal lifestyle that is part of a pious, informative and modern Muslim identity. Both actively promote a halal lifestyle and assess the halal-ness of product through the appearance and education of halal food with their respective personas. @dianwidayanti tends to appear assertive, educational, and religious. On the other hand, @anca.id presents a relaxed, trendy, sociable and communicative image. @dianwidayanti and @anca.id consistently represent the importance of halal consumption in daily life through their content. Their persona's representation uses as branding strategy to increase trust and credibility. However, this halal representation is inseparable from the process of commodification where halal is not only a spiritual value but also a selling point that can be exchanged and traded. Their representations, identities and commodification practices construct religious authority in social media. Thus, @dianwidayanti and @anca.id play the role of actors in digital religious market that is marketed through their uploaded content which is further elaborated in the discussion.

## Discussion

### Halal Influencer Representation through Halal Food Content on Instagram

#### Datum 1



Figure 1: Content @dianwidayanti on April 3, 2025 about non-halal culinary in Eid homecoming

*"For friends who want to go hometown, be careful with this food in your area. This is commonly called marus, saren or dideh and this is haram guys. This food comes from animal blood that freezes by steaming. Usually, this saren is commonly used as food ingredient for opor, satay, and others. As Muslims, we both know that blood is impure and haram, especially for us to eat. Actually, it's not only this, guys, any culinary in any area you have to make sure it's halal. There are also some areas where the chicken is pierced and not slaughtered, it said to make the chicken taste sweeter. But still, this is not in accordance with the sharia. Because the chicken should be slaughtered in the name of Allah. So, for friends who go Eid homecoming, be aware whatever is consumed. Is there any culinary, any regional culinary that must be watched out for as well? Write it in the comment section!"*

@dianwidayanti is a halal influencer who represent devout Muslim women. She has a neat shar'i appearance by wearing loose clothes that cover almost her entire body in the form of abaya or blouse with a skirt, a veil covering her chest and a hand sock that is consistently seen in halal food content. This appearance shows devout to Islamic rules and represent religious identity, thus building trust when discussing halal. The communication style tends to be serious with the choice of diction is polite, firm and informative but still easy to understand in providing information and education about halal food and restaurants for example "friends" to call audience, "any culinary in any area you have to make sure it's halal" to engage audience to consume halal food and "Write it in the comment section" to increase engagement. This representation provides an audience understanding regarding halal standards. @dianwidayanti also use Islamic term and quotes from verses of the Quran or hadith in conveying information and invitations to consume anytime and anywhere. The Quran and hadith become legitimacy that constructs influencer's position as a mediator of religious knowledge in digital space. In addition, @dianwidayanti choose restaurant and open space for the content background. The setting choice shows a direct closeness to the halal consumption object and the halal lifestyle as part of Muslim daily life.

@dianwidayanti, as an Instagram female influencer, represent the image of pious and religious Muslim through the contents and appearances that consistently represent devout Muslim identity. Dian's appearance in clothes in accordance with Islamic law but still fashionable with various colors and motifs makes her an urban Muslim woman who is elegant and neat. The persona represents by Dian on her Instagram account describes herself as a polite, insightful and has firm principles woman with the choice of language that combines religious narrative and informative message delivery with serious but friendly expression that reflect her self-image that has competence in the halal food scope, in accordance with Islamic teachings, and can be reached by the audience. The open space setting is an illustration that halal discourse can be discussed openly and become part of Muslim life. Persona Dian is a holistic attraction both visually and narratively which can be proven by the large number of followers, likes and video viewers. Thus, @dianwidayanti represent halal influencer as spiritual and moral identities with a serious and distanced style of appearance and communication but still not reduce her appeal.

The representation of @dianwidayanti as halal influencer reflects religious identities through her shar'i appearance, semi-formal communication style and contain religious narration constructed visually and narratively in social media. According to Stuart Hall (1997), meaning does not only reflect reality but is formed through symbolic practices, including language, fashion and visuals. In this case, @dianwidayanti represents her identity and persona as devout Muslim woman and actively functioned as signifier and produces meanings about devout to halal and compliance with Islamic laws as part of religious narratives in digital space. Her decision to use shar'i clothes and halal framing through quotations from verses of the Quran or hadith is a part of the aesthetic religion in the public space compared to Islamic values (Wildan & Witriani, 2021). These strategies are used to direct how the audience interprets halal and Islam "correctly" and become social code for Muslim woman. In addition, religious identities and symbols are strategies to build trust and credibility to their audiences (Alamsyah et al., 2024). Her gender as a woman is also influential because she is considered to have a higher halal awareness than men (Shafariah & Gofur 2024). Thus, @dianwidayanti's persona on social media is part of an identity construction that represent the aesthetic of devout and pious Muslim women and negotiation between religiousness and digital visibility so that she positioning herself as a worthy figure to follow in the digital halal discourse.

## Datum 2



Figure 2: @anca.id content about a restaurant with frog menus uploaded on February 18, 2025

*"I want to ask, is this me who stupid or how? This on the menu has a halal logo, but below this there is a frog menu (snippets from other content). How come? Let's discuss the case. The first possibility is this restaurant has a fake halal certification because it is very unlikely that a restaurant with halal certification sells a frog menu which is a frog is haram and this is the evidence. Second, it is possible for the restaurant to register self-declare only halal menus without taking out the haram menu. Third, because we don't know where this restaurant is, what restaurant name is, and we don't have detailed information on the halal certification number, it is a bit difficult to trace this restaurant. So friends, if you find something or restaurant that is not accordance with Indonesian halal standard, you can report it to BPJPH or the halal inspection agency. Hopefully this information is useful"*

@anca.id, or known as Bang Anca, is a halal male influencer who has sociable, fun, friendly, consistent, and reliable personas in providing halal food and restaurant reviews. This is the result of a signifying practices that construct the meaning of halal influencer with young urban Muslim style. Visually, he presents himself as a young Muslim with modern streetwear such as t-shirt, hats, pants, glasses, and sneakers, constructing a closeness with young urban lifestyle. However, he still represents Islamic values by maintaining his beard as a marker of religious identity. This combination produces a representation of piety in a contemporary lifestyle.

@anca.id consistent informing and educating about halal food and restaurants and labels himself as a *Halal Foodies & Lifestyle Creator* which can be seen from his username which serves as influencer identity marker. In other words, he represents halal values himself. He uses polite and friendly language choice and sometimes added with Jakarta's slangs to build familiarity with young audience. From Hall's perspective, language becomes medium for producing meaning, framing halal as fluid and relevant to young daily life. @anca.id uses restaurant, kitchen, in the car, and a green screen as background setting in his content, representing halal consumption practices, mobility and adaptability as a digital creator. @anca.id's image as a consistent and trusted halal influencer reinforced by his achievement as the 40 inspiring Muslim figures 2024 in the world award by @halaltrip. This recognition serves as a form of external legitimacy as a recognized halal influencer.

@anca.id represents himself as a male halal influencer who is modern, sociable, trendy, and not rigid but still follows religious rules by eating halal food. The choice of clothing and communication style used by Bang Anca tends to be casual but still polite and uses religious terms represents active, sociable and relaxed Muslim so that the religious narrative presented has a more fluid impression, is not patronizing, and become part of daily life. This is in accordance with the setting choice where Bang Anca chooses places that are close to daily life and still related to food, such as kitchen. This religious symbol that is not too dominant does not reduce his credibility as a halal influencer because he positioning himself as a role model in the halal community in digital media by winning an award for inspiring Muslim figures in the world. This award becomes a tool to legitimize his credibility as a halal influencer. @anca.id succeeded in bringing a narrative of piety not only about external appearance but the entire representations and ideas that he brings. Thus, @anca.id represents himself as a halal influencer as social identities and trendy lifestyle which is modern and trendy while still following Islamic law.

The representation of halal influencer @anca.id shows Muslim identity formed on social media through mixing of religious expression and modern trendy lifestyle of young people. @anca.id produces and represents his identity as a friendly Muslim, close to young people, trendy and a figure trusted by halal community in Instagram. This is in accordance with Hall (1996) opinion's that identity is not something fixed, but formed continuously

through the practice of representation and social relations. @anca.id's persona is the result of negotiations between religious values and the logic of digital industry through compatible and relevant identity to contemporary lifestyle. The appearance, communication, and setting style that chosen represent religious expression that affect audiences toward Islamic identity (Fitryansyah & Sofiyati, 2024). Thus, @anca.id holistically represents an Islam that is more accessible, keeps up with the times and remains obedient to religious laws.

@dianwidayanti and @anca.id have their own personas in representing themselves as halal influencers on Instagram. Dian's appearance as a pious and devout Muslim can be seen directly from the clothes she wears. In addition, an elegant and graceful self-image emerges from her communication and narrative style which serious and firm in carrying out religious principles. This gives Dian's impressions as an older sister who is a role model. The persona asserts ideal standards about how Muslim should behave. Sharia appearance and religious self-confident become standard signs for looking trendy and professional while maintaining religious identity in public spaces (Wildan & Witriani, 2021). On the other hand, @anca.id represents himself who is relaxed and sociable but remain firm and consistent in conveying halal values principles. A stylish and trendy appearance gives close friend impression who is fun to chat. The persona reinterpreted and rearticulation in a more fluid and market-friendly format. Many urban youth Muslim adopt integrate modern practices in ways that align with their religious and cultural norms that allows them to benefit from modernity without compromising their core values (Fitryansyah & Sofiyati, 2024).

Although they have different personas, they consistently upload halal-themed content based on issues and contexts that are being talked in the digital space. @dianwidayanti and @anca.id inform and educate their audiences about foods and restaurants that already have BPJPH halal labels, non-halal foods, invite their audiences to consume halal products and open discussion space about the issues raised in their content. This shows that the obedience of both as something that displayed, recognized and followed, has an attractive power, and becomes a credibility strategy.

@dianwidayanti and @anca.id, as halal influencer on Instagram, represent image of Muslim who are pious and religious but have strategy and identity according to the persona they want to show. Through their content and consistency in conveying halal information and education, both portray the identity of devout Muslim and succeed in positioning themselves as role models in the halal community in digital media. In addition, both use phrases related to Islam, halal, and involve or invite followers or digital communities to participate on their social media accounts. Even though they have similarities in uploading content with the theme of halal food and restaurants and view halal and halal certification as urgency when determining the products to be consumed, each still has its own characteristics that distinguish it from each other. The choice of different fashion and communication styles creates visual appeal, gives a certain impression, and creates trends that reinforced messages about the importance of consuming halal food to audiences, especially Muslim individuals who practice Islamic values and live a halal lifestyle. Through their content, halal lifestyle and halal consumption are not just religious obligations, but part of their identity as a Muslim and halal influencer.

The phenomenon of halal influencers promoting halal food and restaurants on social media reflects the negotiation of religious and modern Muslim identities in terms of visual and narrative content. As discussed by oleh Rohman dan Ulinuha (2022), this influencer's digital content is constructed through visual strategies that include images,

facial expression, voices, to body language that display halal lifestyle as a religious practice and identity marker. Stuart Hall (1997) opinion on representation is relevant to understanding how the halal meaning is constructed through the media. Representation is understood as a process of producing meaning through a system of signs that translate the concept of thought into narratives, images, and so on. Symbols such as the type of clothing, appearance, choice of images and languages used represent @dianwidayanti and @anca.id as religious and informative halal influencers but each still has a highlighted individual identity which diverse articulated that shows complex multilayered character of Islamic identity in contemporary Indonesia. This is in line with Hall (1996) that identities are, as it were, the positions which subject is obliged to take up while always 'knowing' that they are representations, that representation is always constructed across 'lack, across a division, from the other place of the other, and thus can never be adequate - identical - to the subject processes which are invested in them. Thus, the promotion of halal food by halal influencers does not only show compliance with religious laws, but is part of cultural representation and construction that shapes contemporary Muslim identity in the digital realm.

### Commodification of Muslim Identity @dianwidayanti and @anca.id

As halal influencers, @dianwidayanti and @anca.id are inseparable from the practice of commodification where their identities as Muslims and halal food and restaurant educators become interchangeable commodities. In this case, @dianwidayanti and @anca.id promote halal food and restaurants with each personal branding that is consistent in Islamic identity and self-positioning as a role model of halal lifestyle.

### Datum 3

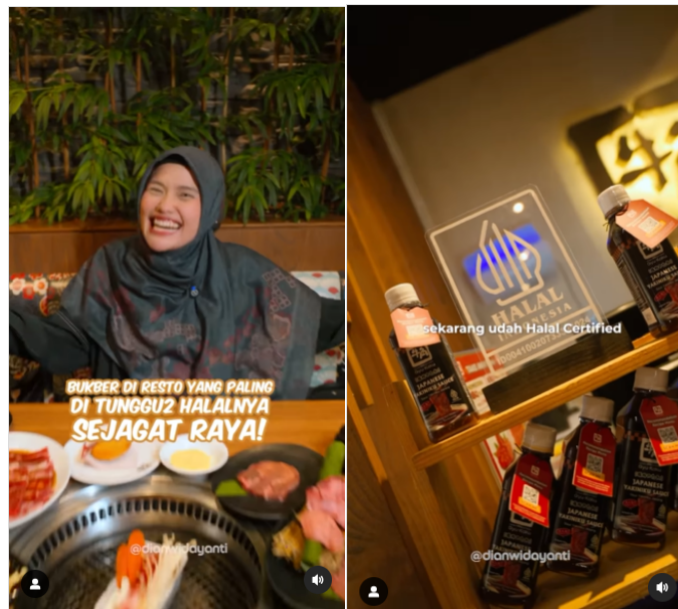


Figure 3: Yakiniku restaurant endorsement content @dianwidayanti upload on March 12, 2025

*"Iftar gathering at the most awaited halal restaurant in the universe. Finally, after a long wait, I was able to show off the first moment I ate at this restaurant. Yes, it's Gyukaku. Authentic yakiniku restaurant with the best quality meat and ingredients, which have a different grill concept, are now halal certified. It turns out that if you come here, you can choose the menu you want to eat: all you can eat or ala carte. Special Ramadan, you can get*

*free takjil (iftar snacks) Ramadan, clear beef soup with any purchase at Gyukaku ala carte or buffet menu. During Ramadan, Gyukaku has a new Ramadan buffet menu. There are rendang kerimitang and rendang tender karubi. Now it's time for us to cook, because this is the first time I know that it turns out that chopstick for raw meat and cooked meat is different. For raw meat you use this and when the meat is cooked, you use this. Mashaa Allah, it's really good. I admit that the meat here is soft, juicy, and very tasty. It turns out that the meat here is different. And the meat choices are also very diverse that if eaten without anything, it is already delicious. How is that? Last but not least, they said they wouldn't be here if we didn't eat the milk pudding. It's so delicious, I even added more. Once again, congratulations to Gyukaku who is finally halal certified. Who has been waiting for Gyukaku halal certified since a long time ago? Write it in the comments!"*

@dianwidayanti, as a halal influencer, promotes halal food and restaurants as information, education and also endorsement of halal products. This pattern is evident in @dianwidayanti's consistency in promotes halal food products, trending restaurant and well-known restaurant that have just received halal certification. Her popularity, which is marked by the number of followers and likes, has made her invited to collaborate with big brands such as Puck Indonesia, Pancious and Gyu-Kaku Indonesia indicating the economic ties behind halal food content production. The appearance, religious symbols and communication style are the same as other contents demonstrate religious identity and credibility amidst capitalized content. Although, there are phrases of invitation to try, taste, and eat the advertised product like "*Mashaa Allah, it's really good*" to encourage audience try the food as well as metaphorical or hyperbolic phrases like "*the most awaited halal restaurant in the universe*" which show religious elements are maintained to ensure the audience trust in the promotional message. Personal experience, product promotions feature visual aesthetics that are appetizing to the viewing audience to purchase the product. halal certification and product taste are the main focus, main selling point and strengthen the consumer appeal of @dianwidayanti endorsement content so halal certificate image and the words of "halal" continue appears while explaining the product. Thus, @dianwidayanti practices show a process of commodification in which religious value is converted into economic value.

Muslim persona and identities that are consistently represented by @dianwidayanti experience a change process to the commodification phase. Her appearance as a devout, pious Muslim woman and living a halal lifestyle is a selling point not only regarding halal food educational and information content, but also in endorsement activities. This shows that @dianwidayanti religious personas used in producing content with an inviting people narrative to buy halal food products as means of value exchange on social media. In contrast to representation in educational content, in endorsement content, she chooses a more modern, relevant and attention-grabbing choice of words to make her audience interested to try and buy the promoted food products. Her religious identity, the selection of narrative according to her experiences, her focus on the halal certification aspect, and her popularity on social media are tools of value exchange production that can be seen through collaboration and endorsement with brands. Thus, @dianwidayanti shows that her representation in the digital space is an exchangeable commodity and her religious, modern persona, and knowledge she possesses are part of the commodification that has value as a halal influencer figure and economic value.

Religious identity in the form of piety, religious obedience and halal lifestyle become commodities that are commodified by influencer. @dianwidayanti is influencer who face commodification in the public sphere by becoming devout Muslim and living a

halal lifestyle in all aspect of life (Rohman & Ulinuha, 2022). Commodification itself is the process associated with capitalism by which objects, qualities, and signs are turned into commodities (Barker, 2016). Thus, the use of religious symbols and their adaptation in public is a symbol of piety and a sign of commodification (Wildan dan Witriani, 2021).

#### Datum 4

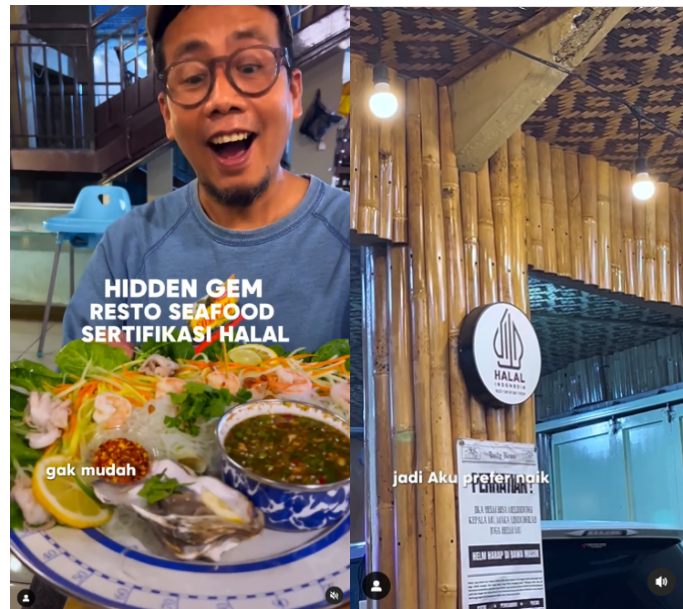


Figure 4: Halal seafood endorsement content of @anca.id uploaded on December 18, 2024

*“It’s not easy to find seafood restaurant that have halal certification, especially those who have fresh seafood. Yep, this is a hidden gem seafood restaurant for Jakarta tourists when going to Bandung. The place is quite far from the city center, so I took a taxi here. They provide crab, lobster, fresh oyster at friendly prices. But I came here because I wanted to eat the seafood somtam. The contents are shrimp, squid, oyster, young papaya, carrot drizzled with a fresh and spicy Thai sauce. I ordered a medium menu that can be eaten by two people. There is also seafood tampah menu. To be honest, I wanted to order lobster but my stomach was full. O yeah, the price of fresh water lobster here is 35.000 per ounce. I would like to come back here again to try lobster and other menus. Anyway, the name of the restaurant is Roemah Seafood.”*

@anca.id introduce halal food and restaurants not only from experiences or trending issues but also through endorsement of halal products. His relaxed, trendy, sociable yet pious style is maintained in his endorsement contents. His achievements as an inspiring figure in the world, Anca showed off and pinned on Instagram and became a sign of his credibility besides being marked by the number of followers and likes. @anca.id promotes halal food and restaurants, ranging from trendy foods, ‘hidden gem’ foods, MSMEs products, restaurant, and big brands such as Ichiban Sushi. It is complementing Rohman et al. (2022) that @anca.id tends to review MSMEs and street vendors. In the endorsement video narration, @anca.id uses a narrative that suits his experience and chooses words that are inviting. In promoting products, halal aspects and certificates, taste, price, and experience are aspects that are focused by him.

Similar to @dianwidayanti, the identity, knowledge and credibility owned by @anca.id have shifted functions into exchange value objects in the digital space. His persona as a trendy but pious Muslim is not only represented in halal educational content,

but also in promoting halal products through endorsement. @anca.id produces halal product promotion content in addition to halal information and education contents. This is a process in which his identity as halal influencer has entered the commodification phase. This process arises when his religious but trendy identity, as well as narrative he carries is used in the exchange of value in the digital space. In the content of halal restaurant endorsements, he showed that halal products packaged with visual aesthetic and informative narratives are selling points. The narrative that emphasizes halal certification, taste, price, location, and personal experience shows that halal is part of a lifestyle that can, not only be consume, but also reproduced and become a selling point. Thus, the endorsement practice by @anca.id shows that the process of commodification through aspects such as halal, symbols of piety, and aesthetic packaging can provide him with both benefits economically and as a role model in the digital halal community.

These results are reinforcing and complementing the results of Rohman et al. (2022) research of @anca.id as a halal influencer classified as a micro-celebrity who is consistent in promoting halal consumption and halal lifestyle. This is because @anca.id uses various resources such as being a devout Muslim, a halal lifestyle, the use of MUI fatwas as a reference, MUI training as credibility, good communication, consumer behavior analysis and involving followers in discussions as a way to face modernization and commodification in the public sphere (Rohman et al., 2022).

Religious but modern identity, knowledge and content are commodity object of commodity process. Appadurai (2013) emphasize that commodification is not only an economic object and phenomenon but also part of social and cultural phenomenon. He explained that knowledge is a commodity because the knowledge (technical, social, aesthetic and so forth) that goes into the production of the commodity; and the knowledge that goes into appropriately consuming the commodity. In addition, @anca.id's identity and content are part of the commodification of religion. According to Wildan & Witriani (2021), a form of religious commodification is part of re-Islamization that transforms traditional Islam into modern Islam. A modern identity represented by Muslims influencers are seen as something that sells, is interchangeable, and relevant to market needs. This is because religious identity is easier to materialize through the way of thinking, acting and behaving (Fakhruroji, 2019). This, the process of commodification of religion is a way to reshape religion to be more modern through symbols in the dorm of identity and knowledge.

@dianwidayanti and @anca.id exchange their knowledge, experience and information about halal products with brand endorsements. They promote halal food and restaurants, ranging from trendy foods, MSMEs products, cafes, big and famous brand products that have halal certification. @dianwidayanti and @anca.id use their value such as the number of their followers and engagement, their credibility and persona that has been constructed through consistency of halal content production. Those contents represent Islamic identity such as the choices of fashion, background setting, language and narrative in accordance with each personal branding to sell the advertised products. These phenomena are undergoing a process of commodification in digital media. The practice of halal consumption is not only seen as a form of piety and obedience but also as a commodity that has value in the symbolic and social economy. This is in line with Appadurai (2013), that is the value of commodities is very complex because it is formed from social relations, ideologies and the power surrounding it. This is because religiosity (public Islam) and commodification have a dynamic relationship and are a reciprocal phenomenon in which broad public Islam reflects the greater the need for religious

commodities and wider the Islamic commodities consumed, the wider the spread of public Islam (Wildan & Witriani, 2021).

@dianwidayanti and @anca.id position themselves as Muslims who have integrity but remain in the capitalist market. They position themselves as Muslims who can influence their audience and their power and value are exchanged for endorsement. In addition, halal, which became a religion symbol, was modified as a lifestyle and part of the trend, especially among young urban Muslims. The consumption practice and halal food became the practice of commodification. In other words, the spiritual value of halal food is part of the symbol and culture in the digital world in the form of consuming practices and commodification practices. It is because not only objects that are used as commodities but also ideas and practices that can be exchanged economically (Appadurai, 2013). Islamic symbols used by halal influencers in exchange for endorsement is a commodification process that occurs on religious mediatization where religious commodification, religious mediatization, and identity construction occur simultaneously and support each other (Alamsyah et al., 2024).

Halal is positioned as a moving commodity from spiritual value like a symbol of piety identity and lifestyle to an influencer identity that adapts to prevailing market trends and tastes. The use of religious symbols and halal concepts has become a form of religious commodification used for commercial purposes (Kaur & Mutty, 2016). Halal influencers utilize their popularity, credibility, halal knowledge and certification to be a valuable medium of exchange. It is in accordance with commodity candidacy that is conceptual features and refers to standards and criteria (symbolic, classificatory and moral) that define the exchangeability of objects in a particular social and historical context (Appadurai, 2013). In other words, halal is commodified by halal influencers through their credibility and identity which is produced and reproduced through the content presented.

@dianwidayanti and @anca.id use religious identity and concept as a practice of religious commodification in the digital space. The content, especially endorsement content, they produce has an exchange value and symbolic value that is represent through their Islamic values, halal, and communication strategies. This shows that Instagram is an arena where religious identity, lifestyle, and market interest are intertwined and shows that Islam and halal lifestyle are constructed and reproduced in a capitalist context. In addition, the presence of @dianwidayanti and @anca.id is a reflection of religious authority formed from religious knowledge, credibility on Instagram and their performance as halal influencer

### **The shift in Religious Authority in the Digital Space**

Religious authority on social media is not centered in formal religious institutions, but shifts to non-formal-agencies such as influencer. @dianwidayanti and @anca.id positioning themselves as representation agents with a pious, modern, relate-able and have knowledge about halal through the content they produce and distribute. This makes them have authority in defining the meaning of halal in the digital space because they are considered to have credibility which is reflected in their halal knowledge and the number of followers and engagement. The popularity and credibility of influencers provide power of capacity to be heard, trusted and obeyed (Bourdieu, 1991). This finding supports argument that a new generation of social media influencers are challenging traditional religious authorities as reimagining Islam and reshaping spiritual beliefs and religious practices (Zaid et al., 2022).

Religion narration such as the verses of the Quran and hadith become their legitimacy in saying the halal-ness of a product and this is a form of credibility of their religious knowledge. Legitimacy is the social recognition that a form of power, ownership of capital is correct and worthy of obedience (Bourdieu, 1991). If Bourdieu (1991) explain that legitimacy is guaranteed by the state, in the halal influencers context, religious rules in the Quran and hadith is the owner of legitimacy and social truth hold monopoly on symbolic power and give it to halal influencers, so that the halal narrative can be universally recognized. It aligns with research by Hartono et al. (2024), which states that the presence of social media has reduced the dominance of traditional religious authorities through the emergence of non-intellectual Muslim groups who are not linked with any religious authority and have no lineage from any religious organization.

Influencers authority is also formed from performance and content narratives that are based on personal experiences, everyday life narratives, and fast-trending issues that spread and reach a wide audience. Religious identity, halal knowledge and communication style and appearances also form credibility and emotional closeness with the audience so that halal concepts and practices are easy to understand and implement. By structuring the perception which social agents have of the social world, the act of naming helps to establish the structure of this world, and does so all the more significantly the more widely it is recognized. i.e. authorized (Bourdieu, 1991). Halal knowledge and practices are habitus that have as a Muslim. The habitus produces practices and representation that are objectively differentiated; however they immediately perceived as such only by those agents who possess code, the classificatory schemes necessary to understand their social meaning (Bourdieu, 1989) This provides Rohman et al. (2022) findings that influencers use their personal experience strategies to internalize religious understanding and provide examples of how influencers utilize viral issues to provide education regarding the critical points of halal products.

Halal influencers are more in demand by the digital community compared to official authorities because of the number of followers and likes more than the official accounts of MUI and BPJPH on Instagram. Influencer halal constructs their authority through transformations of social capital (identity, the number of followers and Instagram platform), cultural capital (halal knowledge and media literacy), economy capital (personal branding and endorsement content), and symbolic capital (credibility, persona, and achievement) which collaboration to get symbolic power. There is different form of capital ... One of the most important properties of field is the way in which they allow one of capital to be converted into another (Bourdieu, 1991). This shows that religious meanings, especially halal, are not only disseminated by scholars and formal institutions, but also through visual content and religious symbols produced by halal influencers. The authority built through representation is capitalized, becomes a commodity and is spread through the process of commodification. This finding supports Alamsyah et al. (2024) research states that representation of religious identity, Islamic lifestyle and endorsement halal products and services are capitalized and commodified as marketing tools to generate financial profits.

Thus, religious authority is a form of symbolic capital through representation and market tastes and halal influencers act as an actor who voices and interprets religion with symbolic assets in the form of religious postulates, halal certification, halal practices and identities, that are exchanged for credibility, symbolic value and economic value.

## Conclusion

As halal lifestyle influencers, Dian Widayanti and Anca Syah consider the importance of halal consumption and certification, and represent the halal concept through content uploaded on Instagram. By actively informing and educating their followers about halal food and restaurants, the influencers articulate their identity as pious, religious, and modern Muslims. Despite using different articulation strategies, the analysis of the content on @dianwidayanti and @anca.id accounts managed by the influencers shows a representation of the same Muslim identity, namely obedient, insightful, and principled in religion. Analysis of the accounts also shows a commodification of religious identity shown through the use of religious symbols and teachings, as well as the term halal attached to food products and restaurants. The finding corresponds with the characteristics of the digital era, in which social media plays a significant role in various aspects of life, including the religious sphere, which in Indonesia is considered one of the nation's core principles.

This research is limited to visual and narrative on @dianwidayanti and @anca.id accounts. Thus, this study does not cover the distribution and reception aspects of halal meaning on Instagram, which can be further researched through an analysis of comments as a form of interaction in social media, and the relationship between visual narrative and captions. In additions, this research can also be complemented by an analysis of the gender influence in commodification practices and religious authorities for a more comprehensive understanding of Muslim religious identity in Indonesia.

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