



Halal Lifestyle; Expanding the Scope of Government Public Relations in Sharia Economy

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ABSTRACT

The concerns over the risks of COVID-19 have led to a greater understanding of the value of living a halal lifestyle. The halal lifestyle has positive implications to increase halal products in the business aspect. Despite having the largest Muslim population of any country, Indonesia's halal products only account for about 3.8 per cent of the global halal market, which was valued at US\$2.2 trillion in 2018 and is projected to reach \$3.2 trillion in 2024. To increase public awareness of the halal lifestyle, The Halal Product Assurance law No.13/2014 came into effect in October 2019 and requires a mandatory halal certification for all halal products. This has led to significant growth in the halal food, pharma, and cosmetics sectors and is a trend that is expected to continue. The National Committee for Sharia Economy and Finance (KNEKS) was also formed in early 2020 to increase the development of the Islamic economic and financial ecosystem and to turn Indonesia into the World's Halal Center. A mutual relationship has yet been done effectively among stakeholders in the halal lifestyle industry for its halal lifestyle messaging development. This study examines this phenomenon's potential magnitude and its mechanisms undertaken by Government Public Relations of halal lifestyle during Covid-19 Pandemic. Through in-depth interviews with a prominent spokesperson, literature study, and government documents review, this study concludes that Government Public Relations must expand their scope strategically for raising awareness of halal lifestyle during the Covid-19 Pandemic and for the growth of the sharia economy.

Keywords: *Halal Lifestyle, Messaging Development, Government Public Relations, Sharia Economy.*

INTRODUCTION

The COVID-19 pandemic has had the greatest impact on human health. Optimizing public health during a pandemic requires broader knowledge from medical, biological,

and human sciences related to lifestyles such as social studies and human behavior (Di Renzo et al., 2020). To avoid the spread of the virus, world health scientists ensure that people must maintain their immunity with new habits and lifestyles during the pandemic, one of which is a lifestyle of consuming healthy food. Healthy food, for Muslims, is halal and thoyyib food. According to Halal Science expert, Prof. Dr. Irwandi Jaswir, M.Sc, halal lifestyle can be the best alternative to improve the quality of human life. Halal which means 'allowed', has a broad dimension in everyday life. Apart from being a principle and quality, halal can also be a business value or customer protection for the peace of mankind (National Committee on Islamic Economic and Financial, 2020). The concerns over the risk of COVID-19 have contributed to the awakening of Indonesian public awareness of the importance of consuming halal and hygienic food (Prasidya, 2020). The halal lifestyle has positive implications in increasing halal products as it has great attraction and potential in the business aspect. Many non-Muslim entrepreneurs are active in producing halal products because they understand the great opportunities in the halal product market. As a country with the largest Muslim-majority population in the world, Indonesia has the potential to become the centre of the world's Islamic economy by strengthening the value chain for halal products. The potential is there starting from halal certification, public awareness about Muslim-friendly products and services, their faith, and much more (Bappenas, 2019). One of the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic is the limited community activities. This restriction causes the halal industry, which intersects with tourism and economic clusters creative, hampered its development. One of the development strategies carried out is to encourage transformation digital and creative economy. During the Covid-19 pandemic, Muslim fashion was one of the areas where adopting a halal lifestyle became a priority. On the e-commerce platform, the company's many products are displayed. Many virtual fashion shows have also taken place, utilizing digital technology. As a result, each halal industry cluster must be established through the use of digital media in order to address activity constraints caused by the Covid-19 pandemic (National Committee on Islamic Economic and Financial, 2020).

Globally, the world's halal industry has grown to include non-food products such as cosmetics, pharmaceuticals, health products, toiletries, and medical devices as well as service sectors such as logistics, marketing, media, packaging, and banking. The global halal industry is currently estimated to be worth around US\$2.3 trillion (excluding Islamic finance) (Al Teinz, Spear, & El-Rahim, 2020). Along with public awareness of the halal lifestyle, the Government of Indonesia has responded to the trend of standardizing halal products by issuing Law No. 33 / 2014 concerning Halal Product Guarantee, effective on October 7, 2019. Basically, government regulations related to product standards, especially halal food in Indonesia. Indonesia is nothing new. Indonesia has halal certification guidelines issued by the Indonesian Ulema Council (MUI), namely the HAS 23000 Halal Certification Requirements (Policies, Procedures and Criteria). Indonesia should be proud of the existence of this JPH Law, because this law is the first in the world. It is hoped that with the existence of this JPH Law, the

community, especially Muslims and generally the Indonesian people can be guaranteed the halalness of the products they will consume. In the JPH Law, there are at least 3 (three) parties that participate in the implementation of halal certification, namely; a) The Halal Product Assurance Agency (BPJPH) which is under the Ministry of Religion of the Republic of Indonesia, as a regulator, MUI as a fatwa, and the Halal Inspection Agency (LPH) as an institution in charge of checking the halal products (MUI, 2020). The increasing public awareness of the halal lifestyle during the COVID-19 pandemic has provided space for public institutions to support halal product guarantee services. In this condition, it is necessary to strengthen the government's public relations to develop key messages and elaborate halal lifestyle from each stakeholder especially in times of pandemic. The government public relations must expand its role to focus on the importance of halal lifestyle as new engine for sharia economy development in Indonesia. Although several pieces of works of literature were found regarding government public relations during the pandemic in Indonesia, there is limited research on exploring how the government communication process carried out by government public relations in disseminating the importance of a halal lifestyle in times of Covid-19 pandemic.

Vice President Ma'ruf Amin encourages the halal lifestyle in Indonesia to be further expanded. This can be started with an awareness of the importance of halal products or halal awareness among the public. The awareness of halal is quite good in the country. It can be seen from the sharia sector which is still able to survive, especially in the industrial sector amid the Covid-19 pandemic which has resulted in a slowdown in various sectors. However, the halal lifestyle can grow bigger if it has broad focuses. (Purnamasari, 2021) This is in line with the statement of Halal Lifestyle Center's chairman, Sapta Nirwandar that awareness must deliver a good halal lifestyle literacy in Indonesia. This non-profit organization always campaigns for the halal lifestyle and is engaged in the education and development of halal lifestyle literacy in Indonesia (Kelana, 2021). Although there is still much debate, the latest findings show that the current human coronaviruses have originated from animals that are not normally consumed by humans. (He, Han, & Lichtfouse, 2021; Joint WHO-China Study, 2021). This shows that what has been outlined as halal in an Islamic perspective is following human nature. COVID-19 shows that the existence of halal is very relevant, given that this virus originates from fang animals that are not suitable for consumption. The application of the halal lifestyle has been taught by Islam for a long time. A Muslim who adopts a halal lifestyle must consume healthy food, wash his hands, rinse his mouth and wash his nose at least five times a day during ablution.

Furthermore, the science of strengthening the immune system through appropriate lifestyle changes is still emerging, especially among COVID-19 cases suspected and confirmed. Some evidence suggests that adhering to a healthy lifestyle, such as a healthy diet, regular physical activity, adequate restorative sleep, good stress management, avoidance of tobacco and harmful substances, positive psychological

well-being, and healthy social connections with friends, family, and coworkers, can significantly improve the efficacy of the immune response to a variety of infections (Monye & Adelowo, 2020). It is said that the control of health risk factors such as healthy eating would be a major challenge during (and after) the COVID-19 pandemic. Since immune cells depend on the proper function of cofactors, eating habits are closely linked to immune function regulation. Individuals and families must also be provided with scientifically sound and actionable knowledge on healthy eating (Smirmaul et al., 2021).

The appeal of world health experts regarding how to prevent and control the COVID-19 distribution chain is actually in accordance with the values of the halal lifestyle. Lifestyle is a person's way of living his / her daily life which is influenced by the standards, values and principles of each. The standards, values, and principles of each person are of course different from one another. When adopted into a lifestyle, these standards, values and principles become the foundation for a person to live his daily life. Lifestyle can also be interpreted as the art of living one's life, starting from principles, behavior, habits, activities, to their interests and interests. As for halal, it has a very broad dimension. Vertically, halal is the fulfillment of a Muslim's obligations to God. However, horizontally, the scope of halal is very broad. Apart from being a principle and quality of life, halal can also be a business value. Besides that, halal can also be a customer protection for the peace of mankind. The word halal itself means 'allowed'. If applied to everyday life, halal means everything that can be done and consumed as long as there are no rules prohibiting it. Halal lifestyle can be interpreted as the art of one's life in carrying out daily life without violating things that have been regulated by religion. This lifestyle is an art that applies halal principles without leaving the current situation. Even though it comes from Islamic values, the halal lifestyle can be applied by anyone. This is because Islamic teachings have a universal or general nature. The adoption of a clean and healthy lifestyle, eating in moderation without overdoing it, always sharing with others, and dressing modestly are examples of a lifestyle based on the values of Islamic teachings that are in accordance with human nature. This shows that the halal lifestyle is not limited to Muslims, but can be applied by all people with any religion (National Committee on Islamic Economic and Financial, 2020). Therefore, halal lifestyle and halal industry can encourage the revival of the national economy during and after the COVID-19 pandemic.

Currently, there are 1.9 billion Muslims in the world, accounting for roughly 25% of the world's population (7.9 billion). The largest Muslim country is Indonesia, where an estimated 229 million Muslims are . They live in 57 OIC (Organization of Islamic Cooperation) member countries, including Indonesia, Malaysia, Turkey, Pakistan, Iran, Egypt, Saudi Arabia, and the United Arab Emirates. The OIC member countries have a combined GDP of 6.7 trillion dollars and high spending power (OIC, 2021). In this current era, Muslims are fully aware of the importance of Halal in their lives, as they sincerely desire to follow the Islamic regulations at all times. The sharia economy is based on the Muslim faith's philosophy. Sectors including core products/services that

are structurally affected by Islamic principles and law are referred to as Islamic sharia. The Islamic law that underpins the concept of "halal," or lawful, has a direct impact on a variety of economic areas, including food, finance, clothes, tourism, media, and recreation, pharmaceuticals, and cosmetics (Dinar Standard, 2020). According to the report by the State of the Global Islamic Economy (2020) in collaborations with Dinar Standards that presents and develops seven current potential Islamic economy sectors, Muslims are increasingly demanding halal products and services. The 2018 Pew Research Center studied that Muslims consider religion to be "extremely important" in their life, whereas just 54% of the overall public agrees. These feelings were strongest in Muslim-majority nations in Asia-Pacific, such as Pakistan, Indonesia, and Afghanistan, where more than 90% of the population considers religion to be "extremely important."

In the overall Halal Lifestyle Industry rankings, Indonesia continues to grow. The country is now ranked among the top ten in the world. In the media and recreation indicator, Indonesia rose 47 places to fifth place, and in the pharma and cosmetics indicator, it rose 19 places to sixth place. This is mostly due to the country's awareness surpassing that of other nations. Indonesia has climbed eight places in the halal food indicator list, by its exports to OIC countries. Indonesia saw a rise in the volume of sukuk and Islamic funds within Islamic finance. Islamic finance is also well-known and well-received (Dinar Standard, 2020). As the Halal Product Assurance law No. 13/2014 came into effect in October 2019 and requires mandatory halal certification for all halal products, Indonesia led to significant growth in the halal food, pharma, and cosmetics sectors. Halal certification were previously discussed in its historical, governance, and with its shifting system (Akim, Konety, Purnama, & Korina, 2019; Faridah, 2019; Hudaefi & Jaswir, 2019; Katuk et al., 2020). As for Halal Industry in Indonesia, it is examined the role of Sharia Financial Institution in driving industrial and halal ecosystem, to include Halal Tourism for Communication model and its messaging development (Aulia Rachman, 2019; Patrianti & Binol, 2019; Perbawasari, Wardiana Sjudro, Setianti, Nugraha, & Muda, 2019).

In the development of halal products, Indonesia has not yet fully provided quality and useful halal products (halal thayyiban). This is in view of the existence of fraudulent investment cases or low-quality halal products and travel services that tend to exploit Muslims, so that they can have a negative impact on the development of the halal industry in Indonesia. This challenge is also related to the development of Islamic finance in Indonesia. In Islamic finance, in 2019 Indonesia's ranking has increased, namely ranking 4 out of 131 countries according to the Islamic Finance Development Indicator (IFDI) and ranking first according to the Islamic Finance Country Index (IFCI). However, in the same year, the market share of Islamic finance in Indonesia only reached 8.6%, even Islamic banking only reached 5.6%. This figure is still far from the existing potential. Vice President Ma'ruf Amin stated that Indonesia must adhere to

the vision of economic development and sharia finance as a rational choice for the community that provides benefits and added value in carrying out economic activities.

In the past ten years, the Halal industry has become an increasingly important segment of the Islamic market globally. As a country with the largest Muslim population in the world, Indonesia has the opportunities to develop halal industry and halal lifestyle respectively. However, the development of the halal industry in Indonesia is actually more focused on halal certification. Compared to Malaysia, Indonesia is still far behind. Public awareness of the halal lifestyle is not accompanied by the government's efforts to communicate the importance of the halal lifestyle through messaging development and dissemination by government public relations. This causes low public awareness of the importance of having a halal lifestyle. During a pandemic, the opportunity to communicate a halal lifestyle is actually very high. However, various institutions related to halal and sharia economy hardly synergize communication messages of the importance of halal lifestyle. In fact, the Islamic economic sector, especially during the pandemic, is reported to still survive.

Furthermore, Islamic economic activities and financial goods can become a way of life for everyone. So that Islamic economics and finance are inclusive and global in nature, in accordance with the notion of rahmatan lil'alam (grace to the universe) (Communication and Informatic Ministry, 2020). The optimism expressed by the Vice President was also approved by Member of the Fatwa Commission of the Central Indonesian Ulema Council (MUI) K.H. Hamdan Rasyid that as the largest Muslim country with a large number of Muslim entrepreneurs, the awareness of the people must be increased to practice sharia economics and a halal lifestyle. However, the development of Islamic banking features is still a challenge that needs to be faced. This requires synergy between the government and the ulama by conducting communication campaigns in building messages about knowledge and understanding of sharia economics to support a halal lifestyle according to the guidance of hadith to provide blessings and convenience for the community. The synergy between government stakeholders in developing a halal lifestyle message in the economic sector is also a challenge for government communication through strengthening government public relations institutions. The Ministry of Communication and Information has not maximized its public relations institutions to synergize with the National Sharia Council, Sharia Banking, or regulators related to the halal industry. It is found that public relations activities in government institutions have not utilized a synergistic relationship pattern among other government institutions related to Syariah Economy or Halal Industry. Public relations activities for the Islamic financial industry, for example, are carried out by KNEKS (National Committee for Islamic Economy and Finance), which has only recently carried out the communication function in increasing public knowledge to be active in the Islamic finance sector.

However, to develop a message on how the people can develop more Islamic attitudes and behaviors in participating in Islamic finance as part of a halal lifestyle, it has not been used optimally. Public relations activities through a persuasive communication approach have not been carried out by public relations government agencies related to sharia economic policies or the halal industry to improve the community's halal lifestyle. Eventhough the essence of public relations activities is the concept of dialogical persuasive communication to convey the socialization of government policies. For government public relations, this is important to do to provide increased knowledge, understanding, and create enlightenment to the public about government programs and policies. An enlightened society is a society that really gets in-depth and comprehensive information, not just the skin. This in-depth and comprehensive government public relations officer does not just convey the contents of the policy, but what the aims and objectives are, and how to use the policy. so that the policy has a high use value. This dialogical communication is persuasive, where persuasive communication can influence the opinions, attitudes and actions of the people. Opinions that were initially negative about the government or its policies could be neutral or even positive with persuasive communication by emphasizing interpersonal communication. People who previously did not know what government policies were meant to be aware of and the public became enlightened and finally people could take appropriate actions (Prastowo, 2020). In fact, the government through the public relations function has not been able to develop a message to encourage a halal lifestyle. Good literacy to the public about halal products is still a major challenge faced by the government. Developing literacy about the importance of approaches to consuming halal food, or wearing halal products, and approaches in developing sharia economy and finance has also not been fully developed through messages that can generate understanding for the community. Halal as a terminology is still associated with the teachings of Islam. In fact, messages that can be developed can be made through a good approach so that the halal lifestyle becomes something that is inclusive and beneficial for all mankind. The development of messages like this requires strategic efforts from the government to build understanding and attitudes and change people's behavior in supporting government programs and policies in the halal industry sector, especially during the covid-19 pandemic.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Halal Lifestyle

Following the worldwide epidemic of Covid-19, the World Health Organization (WHO) has advised people to live a healthy and clean lifestyle, eat a nutritious food, and avoid disease-causing substances. This corresponds to the halal lifestyle, which emphasizes cleanliness, health, and beauty. Halal has a very broad dimension. Vertically halal is the fulfillment of a Muslim obligation to his Lord. But horizontally, halal coverage turned out to be very wide. Aside from being the principle and quality of life, halal can also be

business value. In addition, halal can also be customer protection for the peace of mankind.

The term halal itself means 'allowed'. When it comes to daily life, halal refers to anything that can be done and ingested as long as there are no regulations against it. The word halal was subsequently condensed into a phrase, halal lifestyle or halal lifestyle. If you look at it from a different perspective, lifestyle is a person's art of living, beginning with beliefs, conduct, habits, activities, and ending with interest and interest. As a result, the halal lifestyle may be understood by someone's everyday life without violating items that are controlled by religion. This way of living may be described as an art form that incorporates halal values while being in the present moment. Halal lifestyles encompass not just food and fashion, but many elements of life, one of which is technology. Prof. Hansel Winai Dahlan, the founder of the Halal Science Center at Chulalongkorn University in Thailand and a specialist in Halal Industrial Technique, describes the technology. Only academics, according to Prof. Winai, taught fiqh (law or rules) in the period of technology 1.0, including muamalah fiqh, which explains the laws linked to social activities and economists (National Committee on Islamic Economic and Financial, 2020).

Halal living has now become a global trend among Muslims, both in nations with a large Muslim population and in countries with a small Muslim population. The reason for this is that the Muslim community is becoming more conscious of the need of living according to Shariah (the teaching of Islam). Because Muslims make up the majority of Indonesians, halal products have a significant economic and social influence. The manufacturing of halal products necessitates extensive study and is backed by cutting-edge technology, necessitating significant investment in Indonesia (Nirwandar, 2018). Halal lifestyles have a lot of appeal and promise in terms of business. Given that Islam is one of the world's major faiths, there are already many non-Muslim entrepreneurs that actively create halal products because they see the vast potential in the halal product industry. Halal lifestyle developments are currently indicators of community needs for halal products and services. The existence of halal lifestyle is expected to support the maximum economic growth in the future. Indonesia's contribution to the world's halal market was still small. Indonesia only contributed 3.8 percent of the total USD2.1 trillion in the world halal market 2017. This condition is certainly better encouraged so that the contribution is better in the future and later Indonesia can feel the benefits of halal lifestyle.

Sharia Economy

The norms and laws that have been established by Allah (Islam God) or that have been outlined in the primary and enforced on mankind, particularly Muslims, to observe them are known as sharia. According to certain research, the sharia economy is not just an order, but also a kind of worship of God. Sharia Economy defined as an economic understanding which studies the economic problems of the society which are inspired

by the Islamic values . Positive sides found in Sharia Economy are the amount of production determines the even distribution of consumption, the increase of creativity and value together, people have the freedom to manage resources according to Islamic concepts and values, the recognition of personal rights has certain limitations, market mechanisms govern the economy, and tawhid, brotherhood, morality, productivity, equitable distribution of income. The sharia economy has a substantial influence on Muslim-majority nations such as the United Arab Emirates, the Middle East, and numerous countries in Southeast Asia, such as Malaysia, Brunei, and Indonesia. (Arfah et al., 2020).

In the previous two decades, the Sharia economy has grown at a fast pace. The primary influential element is the growing Muslim population, which will account for 27.5 percent of the global population by 2030. As a result, demand for halal products and services will rise (Deloitte, 2019) . The Sharia or Islamic economy as sectors comprising core products / services that are structure affected by Islamic ethics and law. Islamic law underlying the notion of halal or permissible, directly impacts the core products and services offered in a number of economic sectors, including food, finance, clothing, tourism, media, and recreation, pharmaceuticals, and cosmetics . Many of the values underpinning the Islamic economy sectors are universal and appeal to ethical consumers. A global study by Nielsen indicated that 66% of consumers are willing to pay more for ethical/sustainable products . As reported in State of the Global Islamic Report, Indonesia moved up eight positions in the halal food indicator ranking, helped by its exports to OIC countries. Within Islamic finance, Indonesia saw increases in the value of sukuk and the value of Islamic funds. Islamic finance is also well-known and well-received, with Indonesia hosting the most relevant events and publishing the second-largest number of research articles. Indonesia conducted 20 related events in the media and recreation sector in 2019, resulting in a substantial increase in its media and recreation index ranking. In October 2019, the Halal Product Assurance Law No.13/2014 went into force, requiring all halal items to be certified. The halal food, pharmaceutical, and cosmetics industries have seen substantial development as a result, and this trend is anticipated to continue (Dinar Standard, 2020)

Government Public Relations

Government public relations defined as "efforts by the government/administration to communicate in a non-partisan, balanced, and concise manner." These efforts are focused on the interests of the receiving citizen who needs to be informed (Gelders & Ihlen, 2010). Strömbäck and Kiouisis (2011) identified political public relations as a unique subject of academic public relations. Government public relations, a related topic, has been producing its own literature, focusing on public administration rather than elected individuals (whether in office or campaigning for office) (Lee, 2012). To inform citizen, government should not just employ public relations to communicate decisions, but should employ it throughout the policymaking process. Governments should analyze individuals' communication requirements and preferences about

proposed policies on a regular basis. This would require answering questions regarding how frequently individuals would like to communicate about the issue, as well as the medium they prefer, message length and style, and so on. In principle, this is related to the study of the public's perception that they have the right to know what kind of message choices can increase knowledge, attitudes, and to change behavior.

The main function of Public Relations requires identification of various communication circuits for shared values. If there are common values, then there are opportunities that can be developed to build the main message of these values. This role transformation means that PR becomes a meta-communicative function that communicates communication rather than doing the communication itself. By doing so, it not only carries out deliberative disintermediation, but achieves one of its long-cherished goals: becoming a meta-competence embedded in the organization (Gregory & Halff, 2017). In Indonesia, the primary function of public relations, including government public relations, is still evolving. The dynamics that evolved as a result of the transition from the new order era to reformation are reflected in the evolution of the government's public relations function. The impact to the public is significant as the shifting in the government system, particularly with the vast amount of information supplied by various media especially the emerging new media. This dynamic makes managing information released through the media a problem for government public relations practitioners. Ruslan (2016) stated that the main functions of government public relations include: (1) participating in maintaining government policies; (2) disseminate information on government policies and programs and provide services to the public; (3) bridging the interests of the institution and its public by accommodating the aspirations and paying attention to the public's wishes; and (4) creating a positive climate around the institution and its publics for political stability as well as national security (Prastowo, 2020). These four functions are considered to be left behind if they are far removed from the public's requirement for their participation at the start of a policy's formulation. The public should be allowed to participate in the policy-making process through messages regarding government policies or initiatives. This is relevant to the philosophy of public relations. The longstanding philosophy of public relations programs producing results that are mutually beneficial or "win-win" (Bobbit & Sullivan, 2014). When it comes to messaging, the government and citizens should share the same values. People can be pretty passive at times. Government public relations might begin by emphasizing ideals that encourage public participation. As a result, while developing messages, government public relations sticks to the 'do not preach' approach while encouraging people to take action (Dimitrov, 2018)

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The research was conducted using a qualitative approach. Qualitative research begins with assumptions and the use of an interpretive/theoretical framework that informs the study of research problems that address the meaning of individuals or groups referring to social problems as well as problems related to humans. To understand these problems, data is collected naturally through inductive and deductive data analysis to establish a pattern or theme (Creswell & Poth, 2018). This study uses data collection techniques through observations, interviews, literature studies, and the study of government documents containing programs and policies on halal assurance. Document reviews from globally recognized halal rating agencies are also carried out. Literature studies are taken from articles published in reputable international journals, which have studies on halal in Indonesia. In this technique, quotations taken from the literature are used as material to develop ideas and strengthen the results of previous studies. Quotations from the literature study are used to understand the important issues in this research (Harris, 2020). The author also explores the study of government documents containing government rules and policies related to halal systems and halal lifestyle industry. These documents come from institutions including the Ministry of Religion, the National Committee for Sharia Economy and Finance, the Ulema Council, and the halal sector rating agency. In the technique of collecting data through library studies, the authors take the essence of the literature review to refine the ideas written in this study.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Indonesia is unquestionably catching up to other countries in terms of sharia economic development, despite the fact that the world's largest Muslim population nation was once seen to be behind the curve in terms of Islamic economics. With a population of more than 270 million (Central Bureau of Statistics, 2020), of which almost 90 percent are Muslims, Indonesia is the world's biggest market for halal products, especially food, fashion, tourism, and pharmaceutical. According to the State of Global Islamic Economy Report 2020-2021, Muslim consumers spent US\$2.02 trillion in 2019 on halal food, beverage, pharmaceuticals, and tourism, making it the world's fourth most populous country to recognize the need to access the sharia economy's potential.

Table 1: Indicator Score Breakdown for Top 15 countries

Country	GIEI	Halal Food	Islamic Finance	Muslim-Friendly Travel	Modest Fashion	Pharma & Cosmetics	Media & Recreation
1. Malaysia	290.2	209.8	389.0	98.3	43.7	80.2	59.9
2. Saudi Arabia	155.1	51.1	234.2	36.8	22.1	33.4	34.7
3. UAE	133.0	104.4	142.5	78.3	235.6	72.1	125.3
4. Indonesia	91.2	71.5	111.6	45.3	57.9	47.5	43.6
5. Jordan	88.1	39.6	124.6	43.3	18.5	39.1	31.6
6. Bahrain	86.9	42.2	121.9	31.9	16.7	33.5	42.3
7. Kuwait	73.3	42.2	99.2	27.1	17.5	33.3	40.8
8. Pakistan	70.9	54.7	91.1	23.6	30.6	32.5	12.9
9. Iran	64.0	60.5	74.0	28.8	33.5	55.9	26.6
10. Qatar	63.1	44.3	80.1	36.7	20.3	32.1	40.2
11. Oman	60.0	47.1	73.4	33.2	28.7	33.5	35.3
12. Turkey	55.9	70.7	49.9	62.7	75.1	43.3	34.6
13. Nigeria	53.1	20.7	76.6	14.1	19.8	21.6	16.7
14. Sri Lanka	49.2	27.3	66.6	13.3	26.2	20.1	18.4
15. Singapore	47.4	125.2	16.9	42.6	30.6	62.9	46.8

As shown from the above table, Malaysia leads the overall GIEI rankings consistently growth in any sectors of halal lifestyle products, strong awareness and governance credentials. Despite having positioned lower, Indonesia continues to grow and is now ranked among the top ten in the world. The Indonesian government seeks various ways to play a bigger role in the sharia economy domestically and globally, by developing four aspects: halal industry, sharia finance, sharia social finance, and sharia entrepreneurship. The Government's support can be seen from several policies to develop the halal industry, including the establishment of a Special Economic Zone (SEZ) for the halal industry. President Joko Widodo as Chairman of the National Committee for Sharia Finance (KNKS), has launched the Master Plan for the Indonesian Sharia Economy (MEKSI) 2019-2024 in May 2019. It is the country's first roadmap for a sharia economy that aims to strengthen the national economy. In February 2020, KNKS changed to the National Committee for Sharia Economy and Finance (KNEKS). The National Committee for Sharia Economics and Finance was formed to promote the development of the Islamic economic and financial ecosystem to support national economic development. Since its promulgation on February 10, 2020, this institution has been tasked with accelerating, expanding and advancing the development of sharia economy and finance in order to support national economic resilience.

The COVID-19 epidemic has provided an impetus to alter marketing and transactions through digitalization. The four areas of halal industry, use of big data, artificial intelligence, and block chain in supporting the development of the halal industry from upstream to downstream levels as a new source of growth for the Indonesian economy are focused on the opportunities and challenges in the digitization of the sharia economy, according to the framework set by KNEKS. Despite the burden on economies around the world caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, the halal business has managed to post a favorable performance. It grew at a rate of 3.2 percent, which is greater than the national average. During the pandemic, the use of Islamic fintech is in great demand by the public. The company supports the social safety net movement. One of

the forms, the Indonesian Sharia Fintech Association together with the National Amil Zakat Agency, is seeking to open an online crowdfunding donation channel. KNEKS also encourages and assists sharia fintech so that their technology and business models have an impact on social movements. The program is called the Sharia Financial Services Collaboration (KoLaKS). This program helps connect collaborations between sharia fintech, e-commerce platforms, and Islamic boarding schools representing the farmer community to bridge funding, that in the midst of difficult situations sharia fintech can be assisted by Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) which are bridged by Baitul Maal wat Tamwil (BMT) or pesantren (KNEKS, 2020).

The increasing public awareness of the halal lifestyle during the COVID-19 pandemic has provided space for public institutions to support halal product guarantee services. In this condition, it is necessary to strengthen the government's public relations by exploring and developing halal lifestyle messages during the pandemic. This is where the policy communication regarding the guarantee of halal products and the existence of the implementing institutions and their services is continuously informed to the public by exploring and formulating communication process carried out by government public relations in disseminating the importance of a halal lifestyle during a pandemic. In an interview conducted via zoom (11 May /2021), a prominent person in Indonesia's Halal industry was taken to be one of informants in this research, named Dr.H. Sapta Nirwandar, SE. Known as an expert in halal industry, he has been invited as speakers in international events, including Global Islamic Economic Summit in Dubai 2013, 2014, and 2015, Thailand Halal Assembly 2015, and later he founded Indonesia Halal Lifestyle Center in 2015. He explained that during the pandemic, the shariah sector increased especially in the pharmaceutical and food sectors. People started looking for halal food and medicine consumption. However, there is still a lack in literacy of halal lifestyle . Hence, Halal Lifestyle Literacy needs to be improved by means, for example, through social media and influencers. The key messages can be created with an educational aspects, not only contain dogmas. He further explained that various halal events- related have been held, such as conferences, expos, talk shows, halal innovation, and so on.

“Unfortunately, the delivery of halal messages and a halal lifestyle has not become the main target”, (Sapta Nirwandar)

Based on the observations of researchers, in recent years, Indonesia has hosted halal events such as the halal lifestyle expo (2016 & 2017), then the Muslim Lifestyle Festival (2019 & 2020). The Muslim Lifestyle Festival is Indonesia's largest sharia and halal lifestyle exhibition, covering all sectors of the industry and featuring an integrated Islamic lifestyle concept complete with business matching, a ukhuwah stage, workshops, product presentations, community education, an Islamic playground corner, and many other interesting shows. Unfortunately, there were no signals from the government conveying the necessity of a halal lifestyle or engaging with the public

to gain participation and public trust in the development of Indonesia's Sharia Economy. There was no government spokesperson to explain the importance of a halal lifestyle and Indonesia's potential to become the world's largest sharia economy center.

Nevertheless, a sustainable program that conveys the messages of the importance of a halal lifestyle is found during this Covid-19 pandemic on Metro TV titled Sharia Economy Talk. METRO TV is the first news television in Indonesia that started broadcasting on November 25, 2000. Researchers observed the program, which airs every Thursday at 20.05, broadcasts information and education about the halal lifestyle with different speakers from Islamic finance observers, ambassadors from OIC member countries, academics, Islamic finance practitioners, to celebrities who implement a halal lifestyle. Tatang Suherman, a producer of the TV Talk Show, claimed in an offline interview (05 May 2021), that the Talk Show, which has aired for more than 25 episodes, has numerous educational features. The show is aimed at bridging the gap between Indonesia and the global shariah economy and finance.

“This program plays an important role in disseminating halal lifestyle messages. Government Public Relations can use the program to communicate the grand message of halal lifestyle and sharia economy to increase public’s awareness during this Covid-19 Pandemic”
(Tatang Suherman)

Dr. Sapta Nirwandar, a former Vice Minister of Tourism (2011-2014), explained that the absence of halal lifestyle awareness stems from the complicated responsibilities of halal institutions' policies. As a result, government public relations is required in the framework of Sharia literacy to ensure that people are not confused. There is currently no spokesman or public relations from government agencies communicating the halal lifestyle concept. Indeed, the government needs to send out a grand message. In the researcher’s observation, communication carried out by the government through public relations in each ministry or institution related to halal, does not yet have a grand message that can increase public understanding of the important values of the halal lifestyle.

The Halal Product Assurance Agency (BPJPH) which is under the Ministry of Religion of the Republic of Indonesia, communicates on certification of Halal. Halal Tourism is communicated by The Ministry of Tourism and Creative Economy. The Ministry of Finance disseminates Shariah Financial and its Halal ecosystem. Bank Indonesia stipulates the sharia economic management formula. The National Committee for Sharia Economy and Finance (KNEKS) is set to integrate various departments or institutions but has not yet implemented the said task. To equate the message of the halal lifestyle, the Ministry of Communication and Information is actually an umbrella that can synergize important messages about the halal lifestyle and the development of the halal industry for economic growth and improve Indonesia's position as the

center of the world's Islamic economy and finance. In fact, there has been no synergy of messages and coordination of message delivery about the importance of the halal lifestyle. The message of the halal lifestyle is not developed and built properly because there is no proper communication strategy from KNEKS. Therefore, there is no main message that synergizes all ministries or institutions and the integration of messages for the halal industry, and the halal lifestyle, has not been maximally disseminated to the public.

Messages must also be designed to have values, whether functional, or emotional, so that the Muslim community can have faith and finally approve and change their behavior to a halal lifestyle. Messages that have value in addition to being able to change attitudes and public attitudes, can also build the engagement between an organization or government and its public. The are minimum requirement of engagement in public relations. Engagement requires interaction with stakeholder or publics for relational purposes, outside of an immediate problem or issue. It also requires interaction with stakeholder or publics for their advice and counsel on issues of organizational or public's concern. Engagement requires interaction that contributes to a fully functioning society whereby organizations and publics recognize their interdependence and act together for the good of the community (Taylor & Kent, 2014). In addition to containing values, the message of the halal lifestyle built by the government must be able to realize engagement so that the process of increasing confidence and changing people's behavior to support government programs in the halal industry sector can be realized.

Furthermore, Nirwandar said that a government-led communication sector should pay attention to the contents. Because the institution has traditionally been associated with taking care of technical matters, such as the system for message dissemination. Therefore, KNEKS should include a communication strategy in its roadmap to make it easier for this institution to align communications and increase public engagement. He went on to say that the Vice President of Indonesia as the daily chairman of the National Committee for Sharia Economy and Finance (KNEKS), has always advocated a halal lifestyle.

“But The Vice President is a formal leader. The ministries must unite and consolidate all stakeholders including academics, experts, practitioners to convey the message of a halal lifestyle, especially during the pandemic to achieve a better understanding”. (Sapta Nriwandar)

In terms of consumer protection, the government can be encouraged to be responsible for conveying the message of a halal lifestyle. Nirwardar added that symbols, logos, certification, actually not only administrative completeness in halal products. Halal products are not only extended services but to increase income. Nirwandar stated that the challenge is that there must be a synergy between

government institutions to convey messages in an integrated system to contributors to the sharia economy in Indonesia. He said that the goal is one, namely Integrated Policy Based. Therefore, the planning, including communication planning, must be adjusted. He added that communication messages for the halal lifestyle have value that can be developed. For example, the change of civilization. This happens during a pandemic, where all Muslims must be awakened again that the halal lifestyle is to improve the quality of life and change civilization. Program changes, are in the element of protection or protection. The last one that he mentioned is the behavior change to is related to the halal lifestyle.

“Halal Lifestyle is a Halal Industry for the benefit of the people”.
(Sapta Nirwandar)

CONCLUSION AND IMPLICATIONS

As the country with the world's largest Muslim population. Indonesia has the opportunity to establish a halal lifestyle and become the global center of Islamic business and finance. This will not be accomplished until effective communication through Government Public Relations with its valued messaging is conveyed to the people in order to disseminate halal lifestyle awareness, create attitudes, and change halal lifestyle behavior.. The government has the opportunity to develop a halal lifestyle message during the COVID-19 pandemic to stimulate the achievement of shariah's economic and financial power. Changes in civilisation may begin as early as this year- Covid19 Pandemic, when the Muslims must be constantly reminded of halal values for a better quality of life.

There are certain limitations to this research. First, the study is based mostly on the comments of halal lifestyle specialists, however it is backed up by literature and government archives. Our incapacity to assess the authenticity of the government's halal lifestyle messaging during the Covid-19 outbreak is linked to this shortcoming. Further research involving interviews with halal sector stakeholders will give further insight into sharia communication policy.

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