

## THE INFLUENCE OF DIGITAL CONTROVERSY ON CONSUMER TRUST: A CASE STUDY OF BASO A FUNG AND INFLUENCERS IN SOCIAL MEDIA

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### ABSTRACT

*This study investigates the impact of digital controversies on consumer trust, focusing on the case of Baso A Fung, which faced backlash over a viral video suggesting halal status concerns. Using a qualitative case study approach, data were collected through social media content analysis and online news documentation. The findings reveal that the controversy damaged perceptions of the product's halal certification and diminished consumer trust. The research underscores the critical role of crisis communication strategies and social responsibility in addressing sensitive issues and preserving brand integrity in the digital age.*

**Keywords:** Digital Controversy; Consumer Trust; Halal Certification; Social Media; Crisis Communication

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

In an increasingly digital era growing, social media has become one of the main platforms to build connection between brand and consumer (Mere et al., 2024). Social media allows brand to reach consumer in a way wide with fast, but also own potential big to create controversy that can damage image brand (Septiani & Helfi, 2023). One of them interesting case attention is controversy involving Baso A Fung, a well-known brand wide with product halal certified, when an influencer, Jovi Adhiguna, uploaded a video showing consumption product together shrimp crisp pigs at the airport Ngurah Rai, Bali. Case this brings up various reactions on social media, including criticism regarding the halal status of Baso A Fung, which finally influence trust consumers. Phenomenon this shows that viral issues on social media can influence perception consumer in a way significant (Amin et al., 2021), especially in countries like Indonesia, where majority its population prioritize halal products.

Baso A Fung is a legendary meatball brand founded by Arif Sunggono. The first Baso A Fung outlet opened in 1985 on Jalan Pangeran Jayakarta, West Jakarta, and is known as the pioneer

of flat meatballs in Indonesia. Operated under PT Arif Citra Maju, the restaurant has many branches spread throughout Indonesia. When choosing a place to eat, people tend to consider various factors, such as cleanliness, service quality, satisfying food taste, and affordable prices (Handayani & others, 2024) . If consumers have an unsatisfactory experience, this can reduce their trust in the restaurant, which ultimately risks threatening the business's sustainability (Wijayati, 2019) . In increasingly fierce business competition, companies now rely more on public support and a positive image than the opposite (Tyasari & Ruliana, 2021) . When trust and a company's image are damaged, the risk of a crisis increases. This type of crisis usually begins with negative publicity and can have a serious impact on business continuity (Sari & Muria Putriana, 2024) . Therefore, maintaining consumer trust is a key factor in maintaining existence in this increasingly competitive industry. (Al-Mujtahid et al., 2024; Ritonga & Dalimunthe, 2024) .

Various study previously has study social media influence to trust consumer And image brand . For example , studies by (Violin et al., 2024) show that social media can become tool effective marketing but Also can become source crisis for brand If No managed with good . On the side other research by (Ariffin et al., 2024) find that issue halal product very sensitive in Indonesia and can cause doubt consumer If brand fail give adequate clarification in face controversy . However , research previously Still focus on impact general social media to image brand without delve into How issues specific such as halal branding is managed in context viral crisis (Fauzi, 2023) . By Because that , study This offer novelty scientific with focus on impact digital controversy against halal perception and trust consumer in case specific Baso A Fung.

Analysis to study previously show existence significant gap related management halal perception in face digital controversy (Irwansyah, nd) . Although various literature has discuss the importance of halal branding in build trust consumers , not yet Lots research that explores How controversy that went viral on social media can bother the halal perception . Besides That does not There is studies that are special analyze case Baso A Fung and the impact to trust consumers in Indonesia. Study This fill the gap with highlight connection between digital controversy , halal perception , and trust consumers , as well as give analysis deep about response public And implications business from case the .

Study This important done Because trust consumer regarding the halal status of the product No only impact on loyalty customer but Also on sustainability brands in the market . In context Baso A Fung , more understanding Good about impact digital controversy against trust consumer can help other brands in manage crisis similar in time front (Widawati & Elbana, 2024) . By Because that , research This aim For analyze influence digital controversy against trust consumer with studies case Baso A Fung, as well as give recommendation strategic for brand in manage issue halal in the era of social media .

## 2. RESEARCH METHODS

This study used a qualitative method with a case study approach to analyze the influence of digital controversy on consumer trust and halal perception of the Baso A Fung brand. The research subjects consisted of data taken from social media posts, user comments, and online news related to the controversy. The sampling technique used purposive sampling, where data was selected based on relevance to the case and research focus (Firmansyah & others, 2022). The primary data were obtained through analysis of social media content, including netizen comments on platforms such as Instagram and TikTok, as well as online news articles discussing the issue. The variables measured included consumer perceptions of halal status, level of trust in the brand, and the impact of information dissemination on social media. The data were analyzed using thematic analysis, which aims to identify patterns, themes, and relationships between variables from the collected data (Cahyadi et al., 2024). The research procedure included data collection from social media platforms and documentation, manual data coding to identify key themes, and interpretation of the results to answer the research objectives (Nartin et al., 2024). This study ensures data validity through source triangulation and review of analysis results by researchers (Saric et al., 2023).

## 3. RESULT AND ANALYSIS

The research findings indicate that the digital controversy involving Baso A Fung and influencer Jovi Adhiguna significantly impacted consumer perceptions, particularly regarding the brand's halal status. Most consumers expressed doubts about Baso A Fung's previous halal certification. This was due to the perception that sharing bowls with non-halal food could taint the product's halal status. As stated in consumer perception theory, brand confidence and trust can be undermined when there is a mismatch between expectations and reality (Safitri & others, 2022).

Another interesting finding is that many customers felt Baso A Fung's response to the controversy was overblown. Most of the protests came from consumers who felt Baso A Fung unnecessarily provided a lengthy clarification regarding the bowl used by the influencer. This perspective suggests that some consumers view the issue as frivolous, ultimately fueling the perception that the crisis is more of a social construct than a real problem (Dewi, 2022).



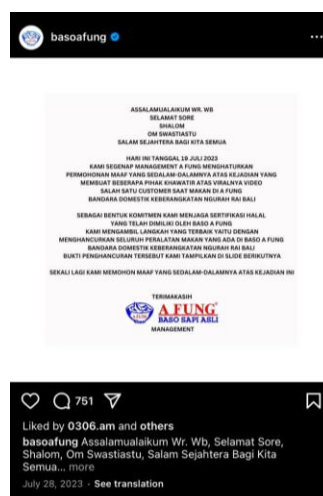
Figure 1. Comments on Baso Afung's Instagram account

The main factor triggering negative perceptions of Baso A Fung's halal status is the speed of information dissemination on social media. Analysis of public comments shows that the narrative about pork crackers consumed at the Baso A Fung outlet at Ngurah Rai Airport went viral faster than the official clarification from Baso A Fung. In this context, social media acts as a catalyst that amplifies the reputational crisis (Alfito et al., 2024) . This is consistent with research (Kuncoro et al., 2023) , which states that brand crises are often magnified by social media dynamics.



Picture 2 . Viral News Related to Baso Afung

From a crisis communication perspective, Baso A Fung's official statement regarding the bowl's use has helped alleviate some consumer concerns. However, this study found that overly detailed clarifications actually fueled speculation among consumers who had previously been unaware of the issue. This suggests that crisis communication strategies should be more targeted and consider audience sensitivities (Legi et al., 2024) .



Picture 2. Baso Afung's clarification regarding pork crackers

Scientifically, this controversy can be explained through the concept of the "halal perception gap," which is the distance between consumers' perceptions of a product's halal status and its actual reality (JANNAH A, 2023) . Indonesian consumers, who are predominantly Muslim, tend to have higher standards for product halalness (Camelia et al., 2024) . This phenomenon suggests that trust in halal certification can be undermined not only by product content but also by other elements such as cutlery, location, and brand association.

Links to previous research indicate that the impact of this controversy aligns with a study (Ayuni et al., 2024) , which stated that halal issues are often highly sensitive on social media, particularly in Indonesia. However, this study also highlights an important distinction: the role of consumers in debating brand responses. Criticism of Baso A. Fung's clarification demonstrates a new dynamic in brand-consumer interactions in the digital age.

Furthermore, data analysis also shows a polarization of opinion among consumers. Most negative comments came from consumers who already had low trust in the brand (Pramiarsih, 2024) . Conversely, long-time customers tended to support Baso A Fung, although they still expressed disapproval of the perceived overreaction. This phenomenon underscores the importance of customer loyalty in navigating a brand crisis (Xiayu et al., 2024) .

The impact of this controversy is not limited to halal perceptions but also to the overall brand reputation. These findings support the concept that sensitive issues like halal certification can impact broader reputational dimensions, such as brand reliability and credibility. In the case of Baso A Fung, the brand's reputation as a trusted halal food provider was temporarily affected by this controversy. (Primary, 2024) .

The study also found that speed and transparency in crisis management were crucial factors in restoring consumer trust. While some consumers criticized Baso A Fung's response, the brand's consistent clarifications helped it retain a significant portion of its customer base. These findings align with crisis communication theory, which emphasizes the importance of transparency and consistency in managing public opinion.

Overall, this study concludes that digital controversies like the one experienced by Baso A Fung demonstrate the complex relationship between brands, social media, and consumer trust. In Indonesia, where halal issues are highly sensitive, brands must be more careful in managing public perception. Therefore, an appropriate crisis communication strategy can be key to mitigating the negative impact of similar controversies in the future.

#### 4. CONCLUSION

The conclusion of this study confirms that digital controversies have a significant impact on consumer trust, particularly in the context of halal perceptions. The Baso A Fung case study demonstrates that the spread of negative issues through social media can create adverse perceptions, even if they are not entirely based on facts. In this case, the speed of information on social media often outpaces official clarification, exacerbating the crisis of trust. Therefore, a proactive and targeted crisis communication strategy is essential to mitigate the negative impact of similar issues in the future. This study also underscores the importance of strengthening consumer loyalty as a strategic asset in dealing with brand crises. The next step is to develop a more comprehensive approach to managing public perception, particularly in a Muslim-majority country like Indonesia, where halal issues are highly sensitive.

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