

# **Netizens' Opinions on the "Boycott Misleading Horror Movies" Action on Social Media Instagram**

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## **Abstract**

*This study aims to analyze netizen responses to the boycott of horror films that use religious symbols on Instagram social media, as well as identify factors that influence netizen behavior after watching the film. This research uses a qualitative method with a content analysis approach and a netnography study. The results show that the majority of netizens support the boycott of films that are considered misleading and damaging to the faith, with the film «Kiblat» as one example that is considered to harass Islamic symbols. Netizens' reactions are influenced by various factors, including social factors, personality, religiosity, age, and the role of social media. Instagram, as the main platform, allowed netizens to express their opinions regarding the boycott of this horror movie, which shows that social media has an important role in shaping public opinion and can have a significant impact on the film industry in Indonesia. Netizens' negative reactions to the use of religious symbols in horror films reflect a high sensitivity to religious issues, especially when they are perceived to undermine faith values. This research provides important insights into how religious symbols in horror films can trigger widespread social reactions among social media users, as well as how such reactions can influence trends in the creative industry in Indonesia, particularly in the production of films involving religious elements.*

**Keywords:** Opinion; Netizen; Boycott; Movie; Horror

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## INTRODUCTION

Indonesian horror films have come a long way since their first appearance in the colonial era with the 1934 film "Doea Siloeman Oeler Poeti en Item", the forerunner of the genre. Initially, Indonesian horror films focused on mystical and supernatural themes that were closely related to traditional beliefs, myths, legends, and folklore filled with spiritual and supernatural nuances.

The golden age of Indonesian horror films occurred from the 1970s to the 1990s, where the genre reached its peak popularity by combining mystical elements and sensuality, and gave birth to iconic figures such as Suzanna, the "Queen of Indonesian Horror". The films of this era became classics and strengthened the horror genre's position in the national film industry. Entering the 2000s, Indonesian horror films became more varied, exploring psychological, social, and political themes, as well as exploring internal character conflicts. Controversy arose with the involvement of adult film actresses in the production of horror films, triggering public reaction.

In the recent era, Indonesian horror films have significantly improved in narrative, character development, and cinematography techniques. Films such as "Pengabdi Setan" and "Danur: I Can See Ghost" exemplify this progress, being commercially successful and gaining international attention. This progress reflects the evolution of the Indonesian horror genre, which is increasingly daring to experiment with themes and techniques, while maintaining a local cultural signature that is relevant to modern audiences.

In the field of communication, movies play a crucial role in the system by which individuals and groups send and receive messages (Asti et al., n.d.). Horror films are now not only considered entertainment, but have also become an integral part of Indonesian culture, reflecting its adaptability to changing tastes and times.

In a previous study entitled "the dynamics of Indonesian horror films in the reform era 2001-2012" with the aim of getting an overview of the struggle of Indonesian horror filmmaking after the New Order, obtaining an overview of the zeitgeist of Indonesian horror films produced between 2001-2012, and analyzing the decline of Indonesian horror films in 2012. The results of this study are It can be concluded that there is a big difference in the narrative of horror films between the New Order era, which contained many elements of violence, sex, and comedy with moral messages. (Yusri, 2020). However, the controversy surrounding horror films, particularly those considered vulgar such as "Hantu Puncak Datang Bulan" and "Suster Keramas", has sparked uproar in society. These controversies raise questions about the boundaries of horror filmmaking in Indonesia, pointing to the need to re-evaluate the content presented, so that it does not only focus on sexuality but also provides the audience with a true horror experience. From a psychological perspective, watching horror films can have negative impacts, especially on children, including difficulty distinguishing between reality and fiction, anxiety and phobias, sleep disorders, and aggressive behavior.

The banning of the horror film "Siksa Neraka" in Malaysia and Brunei



The phenomenon of boycotting misleading horror movies has become a hot topic in Indonesia. The controversy was sparked by films such as “Kiblat”, which was heavily criticized by various groups, including the Indonesian Ulema Council (MUI) and religious leaders, for being misleading and demonizing the practice of worship in Islam. Film activists highlighted the use of religious symbols in horror films as exploitation of religion for commercial gain, potentially undermining understanding and respect for religion. The poster and title of the movie “Kiblat”, which features a woman in the rukukuk position with a mukena, but in a creepy nuance, became one of the triggers of controversy. The response of the community and religious leaders showed concern about the negative impact of these films on religious practice, especially prayer, which is feared to make people afraid to worship.

The boycott that has been buzzing on social media demonstrates the strength of public opinion in opposing content deemed incompatible with religious and moral values. While this controversy highlights the challenges of combining religious elements with the horror genre, it also underscores the importance of sensitivity and the responsibility of filmmakers in presenting works that respect and educate about religious values without exploiting or defaming them.

In a similar study entitled “acts of rejection in the film twilight by catherine hardwicke (a pragmatic analysis)” this research aims to identify and classify the various types of rejection shown in the film Twilight. This research also aims to analyze and describe the aspects of rejection, by

understanding how these rejections are manifested and acted out in the narrative and visuals of the film. The result of this study is that the author distinguishes the acts of rejection in Twilight into two types, namely rejection that is expressed overtly or explicitly and rejection that is implied or implicit. The author then analyzes these two types of rejection utterances based on their structure and effects on the recipient of the utterance. (Tumalun, 2019).

Opinion is a person's subjective opinion on a matter, based on personal experience or interpretation, which can be expressed orally or in writing and often requires further verification. Opinion is a field of study that analyzes the opinions, feelings, judgments, attitudes, and emotions of a person expressed in written language. (Anggara, Widiono, Tri Hidayat. In simple terms, opinion can be interpreted as opinion. But at least there is an expression of that opinion both verbally and nonverbally. As long as the opinion has not been expressed, it is a personal opinion. (Qadri, 2020).

In previous research with the title “analysis of netizen comments through the @dagelanmusik Instagram account on Indonesian television content”. researcher name al fazzatil a'la (2022). The purpose of this study is to find out what comments are uploaded by netizens on the @dagelanmusik account on Indonesian television content, and netizens are more interested in what content issues and whether netizens have strong power in criticizing Indonesian television broadcast content. The results of the study show various types of netizen comments on television content, which can be categorized into criticism, suggestions,

positive, negative, complaints, religious, and sarcasm. The most commented issues are content that does not contain positive elements, does not comply with regulations, and does not provide benefits to the audience. Instagram is a place to express opinions and criticize the content on television, this shows the concern and strength of netizens in providing input and criticism on Indonesian television content. The high number of negative reports from netizens regarding a program can cause the television to close the program. Thus, netizen opinions on social media have a significant influence on the evaluation and sustainability of television programs in Indonesia. (Al FAZZATIL A'LA, 2022).

Opinions play an important role in public discussions as they allow individuals to share their views and participate, but care needs to be taken to distinguish between facts and opinions, especially in information disseminated through the media.

New media, or "new media," is the result of developments in communication technology since the 1960s that are digital, interactive, and networked, allowing users to select, respond, exchange information, and connect directly. *"Digital media has become a dynamic means of communication, making us feel almost always connected to the people closest to us."* Digital media has become a dynamic means of communication, making us feel almost always connected to the people closest to us. (Sponsored et al., 2023). New media offer flexibility of form and texture, influence people's experiences, and have changed the way information is accessed and disseminated, with social media becoming the main platform for

interaction and communication. New media also plays an important role in various aspects of life, including politics, entertainment, and education, allowing information to spread quickly and widely to the public. The main characteristics of new media according to Denic McQuail in research (Ahmadi, 2020) being the main media and perhaps also the most significant mass media, is characterized by its ability to connect society at large, allow individuals to access and share information as recipients and senders of messages, offer high interactivity, provide a variety of functions that can be accessed openly, and are widely available, accessible from various places.

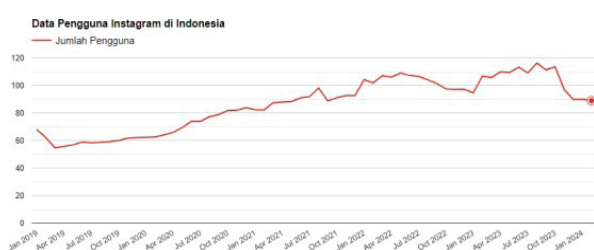
In previous research entitled "Instagram New Media for News Dissemination (Study on @feydown\_official Account)" with the research objective, this study evaluates how Instagram as a new media platform in disseminating news through the @feydown\_official account functions as an effective online communication tool in connecting many people with information quickly. The results of this study show that the @feydown\_official Instagram account is effective in disseminating information quickly through interactions such as comments and direct messages. Instagram is considered a medium that integrates technology with conventional mass media and becomes a source of criminal information that can increase public awareness. This platform also allows for faster news dissemination without relying on other mass media. (Mutiah & Rafiq, 2021).

Social media, especially Instagram, has become an important part of everyday



life, facilitating social interaction, self-expression, and information exchange, making communication easier without being limited by distance, time, or space. As long as the gadget used is connected to the internet, a person can freely communicate anywhere and anytime, even without having to face the interlocutor directly. (Rohman & Aesthetika, 2021).

**Figure 2: Instagram User Data in Indonesia**



Source: [www.upgraded.id](http://www.upgraded.id)

Figure 2 is data from ([www.upgraded.id](http://www.upgraded.id)) In February 2024, 88,861,000 people used Instagram, which is 31.6% of the total population of Indonesia. with an age range from 17 to 40 years old, The data shows that Instagram occupies the third position as the platform with the highest number of users. (Michelle & Susilo, 2021). This becomes interesting if it is associated with research on Netizen Opinions about the Action "Boycott Misleading Horror Films" where many horror films currently use religious symbols, especially in Qibla films. With social media, it feels like there is no limit to communicating with others even though they are far away. Social media allows interested people to participate by commenting and responding to irregularities on social media.

Instagram provides a powerful platform for individuals to creatively express their views, opinions or experiences

through various formats, such as photos, videos and writing. Through constantly evolving features, such as Stories, Reels, and IGTV, users can convey their messages in a more interactive and engaging way, reaching a wider audience around the world.

Previous researchers have been studied by other researchers with the title "the influence of social media in building public opinion". Name of researcher Muhammad Qadri (2020). The purpose of this study was to determine how the influence of social media in building public opinion. The use of social media has a positive impact on the process of conducting social, political and economic interactions. The results of this study indicate that social media has a major influence in shaping public opinion because it can be an effective two-way communication link between political communicators and the wider community.

Social media plays an important role in shaping political behavior and influencing society. With its widespread popularity, the right political message through social media can quickly attract public opinion. Ultimately, good social media management can shape public opinion in favor of political communicators. (Qadri, 2020). On Instagram, people can make posts about trending or controversial topics. Because mass media is one of the centers of information that is not limited in the sense that it can be accessed by anyone and at any time, it requires a wise attitude from the community to process and filter the information presented. (Holilah, n.d.).

The problem in this research is the controversy arising from the "Boycott

Misleading Horror Films" action on social media Instagram, which has sparked widespread debate regarding the use of religious symbols in works of art, especially films. The boycott campaign was supported by many parties, including religious leaders and the general public, as a response to the misuse of Islamic religious symbols, which have the potential to mislead and portray religion in a frightening light. This concern was not unwarranted, given that some of the films used elements with strong religious connotations in Islam. The reactions from the public and religious leaders show how sensitive the issue of using religious elements in art is. They see the boycott campaign as an attempt to prevent a possible smear campaign against religious teachings, which could affect people's perception and understanding of religion itself. In response to the criticism, some filmmakers took proactive steps by withdrawing controversial promotional materials and apologizing for the uproar caused. This step shows the filmmakers' awareness and responsibility towards society's sensitivity towards religious issues. Despite the controversy, there is still a desire to contribute to the film industry without intending to offend or denigrate religious values. The boycott calls that have emerged show that the public and religious leaders want filmmakers to be more careful in portraying religion and belief in their work. The controversy also sparked a broader discussion about the responsibility of filmmakers in portraying religion and belief in their work, as well as finding the line between freedom of expression and respect for religious values. This highlights the importance of dialog

between filmmakers and religions to avoid misunderstandings and attacks on certain beliefs, and to ensure that works of art can be enjoyed without causing controversy or uproar in society.

This research has two objectives. First, this study aims to analyze public responses to the boycott of horror films that use religious symbols. In this purpose, the researcher wants to investigate the reactions and opinions of people on the internet (netizens) regarding the call to boycott horror films that are considered to misuse Islamic religious symbols and terms. Some of the aspects to be analyzed include how many netizens support or reject the boycott, the reasons expressed by the public in response to this issue, the differences of opinion among the public and the debates that arise on social media.

The second objective of this study is to investigate the factors that influence netizens' behavior after seeing movies that use religious symbols. Some of the factors to be investigated include netizens' background knowledge and understanding of the correct religious teachings.

## OVERVIEW

In this study, researchers used Robert Kozinets's netnography theory. Netnography theory developed by Robert Kozinets is a research method that adapts ethnographic techniques to understand behavior and social interactions in digital communities, especially in the online context. In the research entitled "Netizen Opinions on the Action of 'Boycott Misleading Horror Films' on Instagram Social Media," this theory is used to analyze how netizens interact, communicate, and form opinions about the boycott action on the Instagram

platform. Kozinets defines netnography as “the study of social networks through online interactions,” emphasizing the importance of understanding social interactions that occur through social media by collecting digital data such as posts, chat conversations, and comments on discussion forums. In his book, Kozinets said that netnography was initially positioned more at the level of “analysis” which did not sufficiently discuss and develop its epistemology, but today netnography develops itself analysis into the design of methods or procedures (Kozinets’s book “social media research procedures, big data & cybercommunity”).

In this context, netnography will involve collecting data from Instagram posts and comments related to the horror movie boycott, as well as understanding the social relations and interactions between members of the social network. The research will identify key actors, interaction patterns and community dynamics that encourage or oppose the boycott movement. Thus, using Kozinets’ netnography theory allows the researcher to gain an in-depth understanding of the Instagram community’s response to the horror movie boycott issue, showing how social media becomes a public space for discussion and opinion formation.

## RESEARCH METHODS

The method used is qualitative with a content analysis approach and netnography study. According to (Sugiyono, 2003) *Qualitative* research is research that provides insight and understanding of a set of problems or problems. Qualitative research methods are included in the

type of exploratory research, where the data collection process is flexible and unstructured with a relatively small sample size, qualitative research aims to describe and explain a phenomenon in depth using words. According to Soegianto in the book *Qualitative research methodology* dr. Nursapia Harahap, m.hum (Dr. Nursapia Harahap, 2020) Qualitative research aims to reveal and understand a phenomenon in depth and detail.

This is achieved through an extensive and thorough data collection process, where every aspect and nuance of the phenomenon is thoroughly explored. This approach emphasizes the importance of the depth and detail of the data obtained, because only with rich and detailed data can researchers truly understand the complexity and meaning behind the phenomenon under study.

Content analysis is one of the research methods used to interpret the content of textual data. Content analysis according to Hsieh and Shannon is a qualitative research method used to explain textual data subjectively through the process of classification categorization and identifying themes or patterns. This method involves the process of systematic classification of text (be it in the form of writing, speech, or other media) to identify specific patterns, themes, or meanings. In the context of qualitative research, content analysis is used to understand the context and process of the source documents, so that the results obtained reflect an in-depth understanding of the material being analyzed. Content analysis or content analysis initially developed in the field of quantitative newspapers, the



pioneer of content analysis was Harold D. Lasswell, who pioneered content analysis. Lasswell, who pioneered the symbol coding technique, namely recording symbols or messages systematically. (Isko, 2022). Qualitative content analysis aims to deepen insight and explore the meaning of a phenomenon that is the object of research, so that a more comprehensive and in-depth picture of the phenomenon can be obtained. (Alapján-, 2016).

It was coined by Dr. Robert Kozinets in 1995 and combines the words "internet" and "ethnography". Netnography uses internet-mediated communication as the main source of data. Netnography allows researchers to collect data by reading comments that occur on posts, analyzing netizen comments and opinions, and does not require direct face- to-face interaction with informants. Netnography is a new qualitative research method adapted from ethnography. This method is used to study the uniqueness of people's behavior, habits, and culture formed through online interactions, according to (Kozinets, 2019) in research. (Damayanti, 2020).

The data collection technique in this study was carried out by selecting Instagram accounts @aissyaaahhh and @fiqiamd that actively discussed the issue of "Boycott Misleading Horror Movies." Data was collected through manual observation, by identifying and recording comments on posts related to the horror of boycotting horror films. Based on the analysis, the researcher found twenty-one comments that would become the object of research. The data inclusion criteria were comments that were relevant to the boycott topic and selected based on their involvement in the discussion, while the exclusion

criteria included comments that were not directly related to the issue or that were inaccessible. This technique is important to ensure transparency and replicability in the research, as well as maintaining the validity of the data used.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Misleading horror movies are being discussed by people on social media, one of which is Instagram. In the joint movie boycott. Each relevant comment upload of the @aissyaaahhh\_ and was recorded, accompanied by a brief description and a screenshot as visual evidence. For ease of analysis, comments were divided into three categories: positive, negative and neutral.

The object of this research is the uploads on the Instagram accounts @fiqiamd accounts on March 25, 2024 which discussed "Boycott misleading horror films".

**Figure 3: Instagram post with @aissyaaahhh\_ and @fiqiamd.**



Source: [https://www.instagram.com/p/C47QtVJLJId/?img\\_index=1](https://www.instagram.com/p/C47QtVJLJId/?img_index=1)

Misleading horror movies can disseminate inaccurate information or link to issues that cause conflict, or use content that is not in accordance with the faith or culture in Indonesia. For example, horror movies that use the name of religion can become controversial, such as the current movie *Kiblat* starring Ria Ricis. This movie uses the direction of Muslims, but the content of this movie is demonic interference against a Muslim who is praying.

The boycott of this horror film was carried out by several parties, including the Indonesian Ulema Council (MUI) as quoted from *antaranews.com* "If this is true, indeed this film is not worthy of distribution and includes a black campaign against religious teachings. So this movie must be taken down and not allowed to air," said Cholil in the same upload, MUI considers that these films are a black campaign against religious teachings and must be taken down. Netizens are also clamoring for a boycott of horror films that are considered misleading and can weaken the faith of a Muslim. These movies are considered to cause fear and concern for religion and moral values, and can weaken faith. However, some also argue that boycotting horror films is not an ideal solution and can have a negative impact on the economy of the Indonesian film industry and harm many people involved in its production. Filmmakers argue that movies are works of art that have the right to express various ideas and viewpoints, including mystical and horror elements, and that audiences have the ability to interpret movie content critically and not necessarily be affected by scary scenes.

**Figure 4: MUI response related to horror movie using religious symbols**



Source: <https://www.antaranews.com/berita/4028556/ini-tanggapan-mui-atas-film-horor-yang-memakai-istilah-simbol-agama>

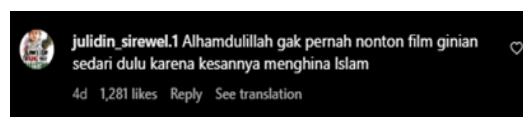
The researcher found twenty-one top comments on the "Boycott Misleading Horror Films" post on Instagram, which revealed the diverse reactions and perspectives of netizens to the boycott call. These comments reflect the concerns, support, and criticism from the public towards horror films that are considered misleading due to the use of religious symbols, especially Islam. Some comments show strong support for the boycott, considering the films to be damaging to religious values and potentially weakening the faith of the audience. Others criticized the boycott call, emphasizing the importance of freedom of expression and calling for more focus on educating the public about the correct understanding of religion. The comments also highlighted the role of social media as a public space that allows for extensive discussion and exchange of opinions on controversial issues.

**Table 1 Positive Comments**

No	Akun	Komentar
1	@rii.kee_	"Bukan nya bikin film yg bisa bikin semangat ibadah malah bikin film yg bikin org waswas pas ibadah, sakit bgt"
2	@julidin_sirewel.1	"Alhamdulillah gak pernah nonton film ginian sedari dulu karena kesannya menghina Islam"
3	@boroko_kok	"Apapun jenis film horor semuanya melumpuhkan logika. Stop nonton film horror. Membodohkan generasi bangsa"
4	@juwiyanti2	"yah apalagi film makmum bikin orang pada takut sholat tahajud..padahal sholat malam itu indah bangeet -_-...pada takut sama setan...padahal manusia lebih tinggi derajatnya dari setan"
5	@binti4612	"Saatnya horor turun pamor. setan kok di kasih renting atas.. jelas2 dia di bawah kita"
6	@pusdok tamaddun	"Harus Turun untuk Somasi Film2 yg Menyesatkan Kepribadian Nasional"
7	@nabina07	"Ini film kayak memang buat mendoktrin generasi2 muda untuk meninggal syariat islam, seakan akan ibadah adalah hal yg berhubungan dgn mistis, para pemainnya entah sadar atau tdk kalo film2 yg mereka peranin itu sebenarnya menyesatkan aqidah umat islam"
8	@nedy_nadia	"Stop film horor, g bermutu sm sekali"

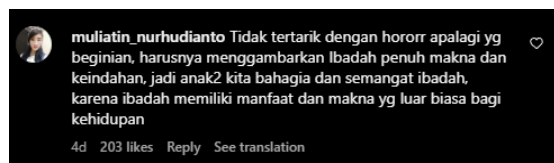
9	@pramudita4539	"Akhirnya ada gerakan ini dari dulu ga suka film kayak gitu"
10	@muliatin_nurhadio	"Tidak tertarik dengan hororr apalagi yg beginian, harusnya menggambarkan Ibadah penuh makna dan keindahan, jadi anak2 kita bahagia dan semangat ibadah, karena ibadah memiliki manfaat dan makna yg luar biasa bagi kehidupan"

Table 1 (Positive Comments). We found some positive comments that show that there are netizens who think that the boycott movement can help change conditions in the movie industry. The comments include conversations about the success of the boycott and the good that can be gained from the movement. For example, one comment from the account @julidin\_sirewel.1 said "Alhamdulillah, I have never watched this movie before because it insults Islam". Another from the account @muliatin\_nurhadio said "Not interested in hororr especially this one, it should depict worship full of meaning and beauty, so our children are happy and enthusiastic about worship, because worship has tremendous benefits and meaning for life".

**Figure 5: Comment by @julidin sirewel.1**

Source: Documentation of @julidin\_sirewel.1 account screen capture

4 @juwiyanti2

**Figure 6: Comment by**

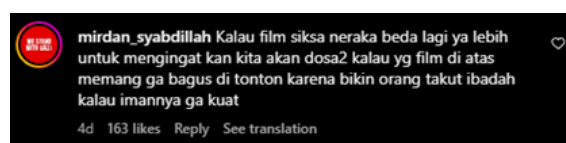
Source: Screenshot documentation of @muliatin\_nurhadianto account

**Table 2 Negative Comments**

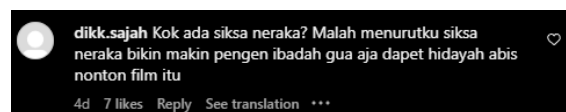
No	Akun	Komentar
1	@mirdan_syabdillah	"Kalau film siksa neraka beda lagi ya lebih untuk mengingat kan kita akan dosa2 kalau yg film di atas memang ga bagus di tonton karena bikin orang takut ibadah kalau imannya ga kuat"
2	@ukhty_chintia99	"Kalo siksa neraka aku kurang setuju di boikot krna itu utk muhasabah tpi kalo film sholat ada setannya memang wajib di boikot"
3	@setitikcahayaa_	"Siksa neraka kyknya masih boleh untuk di tonton agar jadi pengingat untuk kita masih yg suka lalai"
4	@dikk.sajah	"Kok ada siksa neraka? Malah menurutku siksa neraka bikin makin pengen ibadah gua aja dapet hidayah abis nonton film itu."

Table 2 (Negative Comments). Researchers found several negative comments that still consider the boycott of this misleading horror film, as for some films that according to them can still be accepted by the public because there is a positive message behind the film, such as an example from the @mirdan\_syabdillah account saying "If the hell torment movie is different, it is more to remember us about sins if the film above is not good to watch because it makes people afraid of worship if their faith is not strong", from the @dikk.

sajah account saying How come there is hell torment? In fact, in my opinion, the torment of hell makes me want to worship more, I just got guidance after watching that movie. It can be concluded that the movie entitled "Siksa Neraka" is still acceptable to them, because there are those who think "to remind us of sins".

**Figure 7: @mirdan\_syabdillah's comment**

Source: Screen capture documentation of @mirdan\_syabdillah account

**Figure 8: @dikk.sajah's comment**

Source: Documentation of @dikk.sajah account screen capture

**Table 3 Neutral Comments**

No	Nama Akun	Komentar
1	@gazan_palestine	"Bagaimana dg film siksa neraka? Apakah termasuk bagian dari itu?"
2	@yogie.wijayaa	"Mending nonton film hantu Thailand atau film vampire cina jaman dulu 😊"
3	@dewiyn_07	"Alhamdulillah GK pernah nonton semua ❤️"
4	@mamah8592	"film hororr mending suzanna 😊😊"
5	@tiyaarimurti	"Team yg gak suka nonton horor ->"

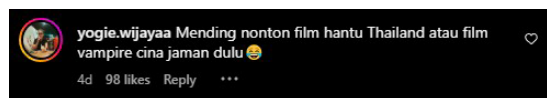


6	@s_ dyahhakim	"Alhamdulillah ga pernah nonton dari judul nya aja ga masuk di akal ku 😊"
7	@masyege	"Ga tertarik sih dari awal, isinya juga paling ampas"

Source: Commentary Analysis Results, 2024

Table 3 (Neutral Comments). Researchers found several neutral comments that showed netizens did not give a pro or con opinion on the misleading horror movie boycott movement. Neutral comments like this only explain information or facts without adding opinions or behavior. For example, the account @yogie.wijayaa said "Better watch Thai ghost movies or old Chinese vampire movies ", "Team who don't like watching horo [REDACTED]"

Figure 9: Comment by @yogie.wijayaa



Source: Screenshot documentation of @yogie.wijayaa account

## Discussion

In this discussion, the researcher will explain the results of research related to the purpose of the study "Netizen Opinion Action "Boycott Horror Movies That Mislead" the first goal is to analyze netizen responses to the boycott of horror films that use religious symbols, this includes the number of supporters and the number of rejections of boycott action as well as the reasons that people convey and also the debates that arise on social media. The second objective is to find out the factors that influence netizen behavior after

watching horror films that use religious symbols, this factor includes background knowledge and understanding of netizens about the true teachings of religion. As for people who do not respond to the phenomenon.

## Analysis of Netizen Responses to the Boycott of Misleading Horror Movies

Netizens' response to horror movies that use religious symbols, particularly Islam, has sparked widespread boycott calls on social media. Netizens have expressed concern that these movies can mislead and corrupt the faith. The boycott

call is driven by objections to the use of religious symbols in movie narratives that are deemed inappropriate and have the potential to lead to a misunderstanding of religious teachings. Netizens expressed their concerns through various social media platforms, seeing that these movies could damage religious understanding and weaken faith. They considered that horror films that combine religious elements with the horror genre could damage the courage of Indonesian children and disturb the aqidah.

Some netizens also stated examples such as @rii.kee\_ saying "Instead of making movies that can make the spirit of worship, they make movies that make people wary when worshipping, it hurts" and @nabina07 who said "This movie is like it is to indoctrinate young generations to die from Islamic law, as if worship is something related to the mystical, the players are either aware or not that the films they play are actually misleading the aqidah of Muslims". The public's response



to the boycott call was mixed. Some fully support the boycott call, considering it an important step to protect religious and moral values. Meanwhile, others emphasized the importance of freedom of expression and criticized the boycott as a restriction on artists' creativity, such as from @ukhty\_chintia99 who said "If the torment of hell, I don't agree to boycott it because it's for muhasabah, but if the prayer film has demons, it must be boycotted" and from @dikk.sajah who said "Why is there a torment of hell? In fact, I think the torment of hell makes me want to worship more, I just got guidance after watching that movie.". However, the main concern is the negative impact of these movies on people's understanding and practice of religion.

In the face of this controversy, netizens demonstrated the power of social media as a platform for voicing opinions and organizing social action, with boycott calls being one way for people to express their disapproval of content deemed incompatible with religious and cultural values. The boycott illustrates the crucial role of social media as a platform for expressing opinions and building shared perceptions among the public, as described in relevant literature (Dwi Novaria Misidawati<sup>1</sup>, Umi Rahmawati<sup>2</sup>, Muhammad Junaid Kamaruddin<sup>3</sup> & Tahalele<sup>4</sup>, 2024).

**Factors Affecting Netizens' Behavior After Watching Horror Movies Using Religious Symbols** A person's social environment can influence how they interpret and react to horror movies. If in an environment, watching horror movies is considered a common and enjoyable thing, then a person is likely to enjoy it. On the other hand, if society

considers horror movies to be negative and inappropriate, then the viewer may feel guilty or scared after watching them. A person's personality also plays a role in determining their reaction after watching a horror movie. People with a gripping personality tend to like suspenseful movies and are able to enjoy the fear they evoke. While people with more sensitive and anxious personalities may feel excessively frightened after watching a horror movie.

A person's religiosity can influence their perception of the use of religious symbols in horror films. Religious viewers are likely to find it inappropriate and may cause outrage or rejection. They may boycott the movie or spread negative opinions on social media. On the other hand, less religious viewers may not mind it so much and tend to enjoy it.

Age and maturity also determine how a person responds to horror movies. Children and teenagers tend to be more easily affected and frightened after watching a horror movie than adults. They may experience nightmares, paranoia, or even trauma. While adult audiences are generally more able to sort out reality and fiction from the movies they watch.

The social media factor provides easy access to movies through various platforms such as Netflix, Hotstar, WeTV, Iflix and so on, the current social media makes the impact of horror movies even more widespread. Netizens can easily watch and share responses, comments. This can affect the public's perception of the movie, which may lead to viral conversations or condemnation. Movie producers and audiences need to be wise in responding to this so as not to cause

controversy or negative impacts in society. The development of better quality movies can affect a person's mind, personality and emotions, especially children. High-quality images and sounds, such as violence and screaming, can leave a negative impact in their memory, both short and long term. This has the potential to affect a child's personality and emotional state, which can be a serious problem if left unchecked, as described in the relevant literature.

Although the film "Qibla" was finally released under the new title "Thaghut" on August 29, 2024, the boycott by netizens can be categorized as successful, as it managed to push for significant changes before the official launch. This finding shows that the opinions formed by netizens through social media have an effective power in influencing the decisions of the film industry, especially in supporting the boycott of films that are considered misleading. This reinforces the view that social media plays an important role as a tool to voice dissent and influence outcomes in the public sphere.

## CONCLUSION

This study shows that netizen opinions on the "Boycott Misleading Horror Films" action on Instagram social media vary widely. The majority of netizens support the boycott of horror films that use religious symbols, arguing that such films can mislead, damage faith, and cause fear in worship. On the other hand, there are groups of netizens who disagree with the boycott, especially against religious horror films such as "Siksa Neraka," which are considered a reminder to strengthen faith and vigilance in worship. Various

factors, such as culture, social environment, personality, level of religiosity, age, and maturity, influence netizens' views on horror movies that use religious symbols. Instagram, as a social media platform, plays an important role in spreading these opinions and shaping public perception, which can also be used as a tool to mobilize support or opposition to boycotts.

Filmmakers need to be cautious in the use of religious symbols in films, given the mixed reactions from society. Filmmakers need to consider the social and spiritual impact of the content they present, prioritizing a sense of responsibility towards the values that exist in society. Along with that, for social media users, people also need to be wiser in disseminating information and opinions on platforms such as Instagram. As a medium that can influence public opinion, Instagram has the potential to amplify or dampen social issues, including those related to religious content, so social media users have an important role in shaping a more constructive and responsible narrative.

This research contributes significantly to the understanding of the influence of social media in shaping public opinion towards entertainment media, especially horror films. In addition, this research opens up opportunities for further exploration of the impact of films containing religious symbols on people's social behavior and religiosity, as well as how social media can act as a tool to support or oppose a social movement. As a continuation of these findings, future research can explore the long-term impact of horror films that use religious symbols on the views and behaviors of their audiences. In addition,

further research could focus on evaluating the effectiveness of boycotts on other social media platforms and how they affect people's overall media consumption behavior.

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