

RELIGIOUS MODERATION: THE ROLE OF LOCAL JOURNALISM IN DECONSTRUCTING HARMONIC CYBER CULTURE

Mailin¹, Munawir², Muhammad Abrar Azizi³, Alwi Auvinen Juha⁴

^{1,2,3,4} Universitas Islam Negeri Sumatera Utara

¹mailin@uinsu.ac.id, ²munawir.m.ag@gmail.com, ³abrar.azizy@gmail.com,
⁴alwiauvinen29@gmail.com

ABSTRAK

Artikel ini bertujuan untuk menganalisis peran jurnalistik lokal dalam membangun budaya cyber yang harmonis melalui informasi hikayat moderasi beragama. Penertiban heterogenitas masih menjadi tantangan bagi bangsa Indonesia. Hal ini ditandai dengan banyaknya kasus-kasus yang mencerminkan sikap konservatif dan intoleran di tengah masyarakat. Idealnya, Indonesia memiliki hikayat moderasi beragama yang luhur seperti Pancasila, Bhinneka Tunggal Ika dan beberapa catatan perjuangan lainnya. Urgensi penelitian ini adalah menilik peran Waspada Online dalam mendidik masyarakat virtual melalui berita-berita hikayat moderasi beragama. Artikel ini menggunakan metode kualitatif dengan pendekatan studi kasus. Sumber data primer dalam artikel ini adalah empat berita pilihan di Waspada Online sedangkan data sekunder yang digunakan adalah buku, artikel ilmiah dan reportase. Data yang terkumpul akan dianalisis menggunakan teknik *critical discourse analysis* versi Teun A. Van Dijk. Kemudian dianalisis ulang menggunakan teknik Miles dan Huberman. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa Bhinneka Tunggal Ika yang menjadi semboyan bangsa Indonesia merupakan harta karun berbentuk hikayat persatuan. Nilai-nilai filosofis yang terkandung dalamnya mampu mengakomodasi kepentingan heterogenitas yang ada di Indonesia. Penulis juga mendapati bahwa dari beberapa berita pilihan, Waspada Online menaruh perhatian pada hikayat moderasi beragama yang ditandai dengan beberapa berita. Media lokal seperti Waspada Online memiliki beberapa tugas untuk menciptakan *harmonic cyber culture* di antaranya: 1) Pemberitaan Berimbang, 2) Penekanan pada Kesamaan Nilai, 3)Eksplorasi Praktik-Praktik Positif, 4) Wawancara dengan Tokoh-Tokoh Moderasi, 5) Kolaborasi dengan Komunitas Keagamaan, 6) Pendekatan Pendidikan dan Informasi dan 7) Pertukaran Pemikiran dan Dialog. Media lokal memegang peran sebagai pembentuk harmoni di tengah heterogenitas. Media lokal tidak hanya mencermati potensi konflik, namun juga bertanggung jawab menciptakan kecerdasan kolektif bagi masyarakat.

Kata kunci : Moderasi Beragama, Jurnalistik, *Cyber Culture*

ABSTRACT

This article aims to analyze the role of local journalism in building a harmonious cyber culture through religious moderation information. The regulation of heterogeneity is still a challenge for the Indonesian nation. This is marked by many cases that reflect conservative and intolerant attitudes in society. Ideally, Indonesia has noble religious moderation stories such as Pancasila, Bhinneka Tunggal Ika and several other records of struggle. The urgency of this research is to look at the role of Waspada Online in educating the virtual public through religious moderation stories. Artikel ini menggunakan metode kualitatif dengan pendekatan

studi kasus. Sumber data primerin this article are four selected news in Waspada Online while the secondary data used are books, scientific articles and reportage. The collected data will be analyzed using Teun A. Van Dijk's version of critical discourse analysis techniques. It was then reanalyzed using the Miles and Huberman technique. The results showed that Bhinneka Tunggal Ika which became the motto of the Indonesian nation was a treasure in the form of a story of unity. The philosophical values contained in it are able to accommodate the interests of heterogeneity that exist in Indonesia. The author also found that from several selected news, Waspada Online paid attention to the saga of religious moderation which was marked by several news. Local media such as Waspada Online have several tasks to create a harmonic cyber culture including: 1) Balanced News, 2) Emphasis on Common Values, 3) Exploration of Positive Practices, 4) Interviews with Moderation Figures, 5) Collaboration with Religious Communities, 6) Educational and Information Approaches and 7) Exchange of Ideas and Dialogue. Local media plays a role as a shaper of harmony in the midst of heterogeneity. Local media not only pay attention to potential conflicts, but also take responsibility for creating collective intelligence for the community.

Keywords: Religious Moderation, Journalism, Cyber Culture

INTRODUCTION

Regulating heterogeneity in Indonesia remains a central challenge. According to a survey by the Wahid Institute, the intolerance rate in 2021 reached 54%, an increase of 8% from the previous year (Media Indonesia, 2022). Even worse, in the virtual space, reports of religious violence have exceeded 3,000 cases (Kominfo, 2021).

The data presented above seem to illustrate that regulating heterogeneity in Indonesia faces a series of challenges (Dewi et al., 2023). Online interactions, which should be a field for exchanging ideas, are instead trapped in a network of cultural and religious conflicts. Diversity, which should enrich, is often used as a catalyst for disagreement. Social media, despite being designed to connect, frequently becomes a stage for unrest that deepens the gaps and tensions among individuals from diverse backgrounds.

When virtual spaces become arenas of cultural conflict, the biggest challenge is how to maintain productive dialog and build respectful understanding amidst such diversity (Sawy & Bögenhold, 2023; Zhang & Sung, 2023). Stereotypes, prejudices, and generalizations are easy to develop in digital environments, posing extra challenges in managing diversity and creating an inclusive atmosphere (Ahmed et al., 2021; Serrão, 2022). In addition, the echo chamber phenomenon on social media can reinforce narrow views and widen the gap (Cinelli et al., 2021).

Ideally, as a nation rich in cultural, religious and ethnic diversity, Indonesia celebrates and values heterogeneity as one of the main forces in the life of the nation. This diversity is considered a valuable asset that enriches history, tradition and national identity. As an ideal nation, Indonesia views heterogeneity not as a potential conflict, but rather as a stage of harmony that displays the beauty of a complementary mosaic of cultures and beliefs. When heterogeneity is positively valued, every element of society feels recognized, respected, and empowered to contribute to the development and progress of the nation (Hati et al., 2023).

Indonesia is a multicultural country with 300 ethnic groups (Mendrofa, 2021), 700 languages (Aji et al., 2022) and geographically separated by 17,001 islands. Therefore, to unite the pluralistic and heterogeneous Indonesian nation, the predecessors constructed the motto

"Bhinneka Tunggal Ika" (Mahaswa & Kim, 2023). Presumably, this motto became a mythical saga and moral force in uniting this heterogeneous nation.

The urgency of this research is to provide an essential contribution to analyze how local media, particularly Media Waspada Online, plays a key role in shaping diversity narratives and responding to the dynamics of cyber culture. By understanding the role of journalism in the deconstruction of a harmonious online culture, this research can provide critical insights to design more effective communication strategies, as well as enrich the discussion on religious moderation in the local media environment.

Bhinneka Tunggal Ika: A Chronicle of Indonesia's Religious Moderation

Along with the ever-evolving dynamics in the global order, Indonesia, as a country known for its cultural and religious diversity, has faced challenges in maintaining social harmony. In this context, the concept of *Bhinneka Tunggal Ika*, which translates as "Different but still one," emerged as a philosophical and cultural foundation underlying the spirit of religious moderation amid the nation's diversity (Apandie et al., 2022). This saga tells the story of Indonesia's long journey in nurturing diversity as a strength, not as a threat, and highlights the importance of religious moderation as the foundation of national unity (Harjatanaya & Hoon, 2020).

Bhinneka Tunggal Ika, embedded in Indonesia's national motto, is not just an empty phrase, but the main pillar for religious and social life in this country. This saga begins with the diversity of ethnicities, cultures and religions that dot the Indonesian archipelago. Since the beginning of its history, Indonesia has been a melting pot of traditions and beliefs, from Sabang to Merauke. However, within this diversity, a spirit of unity has played an important role. *Bhinneka Tunggal Ika* is not just words, but a way of life that is reflected in tolerance, mutual respect, and harmony among citizens (Riyanto et al., 2022; Tarmawan & Wantoro, 2019).

The role of religion in this saga is a central element. With the majority of Indonesia's population adhering to Islam, *Bhinneka Tunggal Ika* shows how Indonesian Islam is a mirror of moderation and tolerance. This is reflected in the various forms of Islam that coexist, from Islam Nusantara to local religious sects that blend with local wisdom (Schmidt, 2021). This saga provides a lesson that religious moderation is not a weakening of religious identity, but a spiritual wealth that places diversity as a point of strength.

In understanding the saga of *Bhinneka Tunggal Ika*, the story of interfaith tolerance becomes an inseparable narrative. In the midst of a society with diverse religions such as Islam, Christianity, Hinduism, Buddhism, and traditional beliefs, religious moderation becomes a bridge that connects different beliefs (Al-Mujtahid & Sazali, 2023). Religious rituals, holiday celebrations, and daily interactions between religious communities reflect the spirit of living together reflected in the national motto. This saga shows that Indonesia is not only a gathering place for major religions, but a laboratory of religious moderation that can serve as an example for the world.

However, this saga also faces tests and challenges. The emergence of radical and intolerant teachings poses a serious threat to the spirit of Unity in Diversity (Damayanti & Yunanto, 2022). The saga of religious moderation must continue to be revived and strengthened in the midst of globalization and polarization. Moderation-based education, interfaith dialog, and the development of interfaith cooperation are crucial steps to keep the spirit of *Bhinneka Tunggal Ika* relevant and dynamic.

The media also plays an important role in expressing and shaping the saga of religious moderation. The media has the power to strengthen or undermine the spirit of Unity in Diversity. Through balanced, inclusive and responsible reporting, local journalism can play a role in deconstructing a harmonious cyber culture and promoting religious moderation. CDA

as an analytical tool helps uncover the structure and narrative contained in the news, so that potential positive contributions or risks can be identified.

In formulating this saga, it is also necessary to look at the political and policy dimensions. The role of the government in encouraging religious moderation is essential. Policies that support interfaith harmony, protect religious rights and freedoms, and prioritize an inclusive approach in public policy are steps that support the *Bhinneka Tunggal Ika* saga. Strengthening institutions that focus on interfaith dialogue, protection of human rights, and understanding of diversity also needs to be prioritized (Reid, 2015).

The saga of religious moderation in Indonesia, reflected in the spirit of *Bhinneka Tunggal Ika*, is a moral and philosophical foundation that marks the long journey of this nation. This saga is not just a historical story, but a call to continue to strengthen the values of tolerance, harmony and diversity as a common strength. *Bhinneka Tunggal Ika*, as a saga of religious moderation, teaches that diversity is not a curse, but a gift that enriches and strengthens the foundation of the nation.

This article summarizes the essence of how local journalistic media has a crucial role in dismantling and reconstructing a digital culture that is harmonious with the values of religious moderation. The sharp discussion on this title can be described in four paragraphs that focus on key aspects.

Local journalism functions as an agent of deconstruction of Harmonic Cyber Culture by presenting news that examines, studies, and details aspects of digital culture that have the potential to damage religious harmony. Through careful reporting, local media question narratives that can lead to conflicts of diversity and redesign society's view of interfaith interactions in cyberspace (De Las Nieves Agesta, 2019).

In deconstructing Harmonic Cyber Culture, local journalism plays an active role in exploring intolerant or extreme content in the digital realm. By exposing various forms of disharmony and imbalance in the dissemination of religious information, local media help build awareness and shared responsibility in maintaining religious moderation in cyberspace (Igben & Ugbome, 2023).

The role of local media is not only limited to scrutinizing potential conflicts, but also involves active participation in spreading positive stories about religious moderation (Meier et al., 2022; Ritonga & Syahputra, 2019). By reporting on religious practices that promote tolerance, harmony and mutual understanding, local journalism serves as a counterweight to information that supports social harmony.

Local media serves as a tool to promote interfaith dialog and collaboration at the local level. By serving as a platform for open discussions, journalistic media helps build a platform for local communities to share thoughts, understand differences, and co-create a digital culture that supports religious moderation. Thus, local journalism does not merely criticize, but also proactively participates in shaping a more harmonious and inclusive digital cultural map (Rizki, 2022; Zeng & Chan, 2023).

The novelty of this research is the exclusive focus on the role of local journalism in the context of Religious Moderation Saga and Harmonic Cyber Culture Deconstruction. This research tries to deeply dissect the role of local media in shaping and influencing diversity narratives in cyberspace, especially in the context of religious moderation. By combining elements of journalism and diversity, this research makes a new contribution to understanding how local media can act as a catalyst in responding to and shaping a harmonious digital culture. By highlighting the complex interactions between religion and media, this research presents a fresh perspective and makes an important contribution to the development of local journalism paradigms in the evolving digital era.

CONCLUSION

This research illustrates the significant role of local journalism, especially through online media such as Waspada Online, in designing and deconstructing Harmonic Cyber Culture in line with the Saga of Religious Moderation. Through critical discourse analysis, it is revealed how this media contributes to shaping a moderate narrative of diversity, supporting the values of Pancasila, NKRI, and Bhinneka Tunggal Ika. Active involvement in moderating religious information in cyberspace shows the important role of local media as information and education policy makers in the midst of complex digital information flows. The implications of this research create a foundation to look further into how local journalism can play a strategic role in managing digital content to foster a better understanding of religious moderation in an increasingly connected cyber society.

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