



Utilization of Websites as a Public Communication Strategy in Disseminating Religious Moderation (Case Study: Indonesian Ministry of Religion)

Alma Muthia¹ Moeh. Iqbal Sultan¹ Das'ad Latief¹

¹ Departement Communication Science, Hasanuddin University, Makassar, Indonesia
almamuthia123@gmail.com

Abstract. Religious moderation is one of the important issues that the Ministry of Religious Affairs focuses on in maintaining interfaith harmony in Indonesia. To disseminate the values of religious moderation to the public, the Ministry of Religious Affairs utilises its official website as one of its public communication strategies. This research aims to explore and analyse the public communication gap in disseminating religious moderation through the use of the Ministry of Religious Affairs' website. The method used in this research is descriptive qualitative approach by conducting Gap Analysis. Data collection techniques through observation and content analysis of the official website of the Ministry of Religious Affairs. The results showed that improvements in certain aspects, such as more representative content and increased accessibility, could increase the effectiveness of the Ministry of Religious Affairs' website in socialising religious moderation. The strategic recommendations are expected to help address the identified gaps and increase the positive impact of efforts to socialise religious moderation through digital platforms.

Keywords: Website, Public Communication Strategys, Religion Moderation, Indonesian Ministry Of Religion.

1 Introduction

As information and communication technology becomes more advanced in the era of Indonesia is a country rich in religious, ethnic, cultural and racial diversity. This diversity should be a wealth and strength for the Indonesian nation, but in reality it is often a source of conflict and division. One of the main factors that cause inter-religious conflict in Indonesia is the inability to appreciate and respect existing religious differences. Each religion has different beliefs, understandings and teachings, which should be used as a guide to life for its adherents. However, there are some people who are exclusive, intolerant and fanatical towards their own religion, and consider their religion as the only true one and other religions as wrong and heretical. They also tend to impose their will and views on others of different religions, even in unethical ways, such as violence, discrimination, blasphemy, and burning places of worship.

Another factor that triggers inter-religious conflict in Indonesia is the existence of social, political and economic factors that have the dimension of inequality. Inter-religious conflicts are often triggered by competition and disputes related to group

interests, such as resources, territory, power and identity. Religion is then used as a tool to mobilise the masses, build solidarity, and justify actions that harm others.

One of the solutions in overcoming conflicts between diverse communities is religious moderation. Religious moderation is an interesting solution because it reflects the complex challenges of managing and communicating differences in religious beliefs and views in a diverse society. Religious moderation is an important foundation in creating a pluralistic and harmonious society within the framework of the Unity in Diversity state. Moreover, in this modern era, with the rapid development and advancement of technology, communication patterns are increasingly diverse and information dissemination is rapid. This has an impact on the flow of information generated, including intolerant attitudes and behaviour on divisive social media. This flood of information ultimately creates individuals and groups that are divided into poles of extremism that are not accustomed to differences in views and attitudes that are pluralistic [1].

Religious moderation is an attitude and behaviour that avoids extremism, fanaticism and intolerance in religion, and respects diversity and plurality in the life of the nation and state. Religious moderation reflects balance, tolerance, and justice in understanding and practising religious teachings. Religious moderation also shows an attitude of openness, respect, and cooperation with adherents of other religions in maintaining harmony and peace.

Religious moderation is one of the important issues that the Indonesian Ministry of Religious Affairs focuses on in maintaining interfaith harmony in Indonesia. To disseminate the values of religious moderation to the public, the Ministry of Religious Affairs utilises its official website as one of its public communication strategies. The official website of the Ministry of Religious Affairs [2] is an information and education media that presents various contents related to the activities, programmes, and policies of the Ministry of Religious Affairs, including those related to religious moderation.

Religious moderation must be understood contextually rather than textually, meaning that moderation in religion in Indonesia is not a moderated Indonesia, but a way of understanding religion that must be moderate because Indonesia has many cultures, cultures and customs [3].

Information and communication technology is increasingly advanced in the era of globalisation, the use of websites as a public communication strategy is becoming increasingly important. Websites not only serve as a means of information, but also as an effective tool in disseminating crucial issues, including religious moderation.

However, although many government institutions have utilised websites as a public communication tool, there are still challenges in socialising religious moderation evenly. Gaps in public communication can appear in various forms, ranging from the accessibility of information to the effectiveness of the messages delivered.

This study aims to explore and analyse the public communication gap in socialising religious moderation through the use of the Ministry of Religious Affairs' website. Thus, this research seeks to:

1. Identify the obstacles that may arise in the use of the website as a public communication tool for the socialisation of religious moderation.
2. Analyse the level of information accessibility and technological understanding of the community towards religious moderation messages delivered through the website.

3. Formulate strategic recommendations to improve the effectiveness of website utilisation as a public communication tool of the Ministry of Religious Affairs in socialising religious moderation.

2 Research Method

The method used in this research is a qualitative descriptive approach. According to Nazir [4], a qualitative approach is a research approach carried out by finding facts and interpreting them which aims to compile a precise, systematic, factual and accurate description of the facts, characteristics and relationships between the phenomena studied. Data collection techniques through observation and content analysis of the official website of the Indonesian Ministry of Religion.

This research analyses the gaps that occur in disseminating religious moderation through websites. According to Cangara [5], Gap Analysis aims to evaluate the difference between the current state or position of a situation, region, organisation and future conditions, then GA has an impact on the development of specific strategies and resource allocation to close the gap. In this case, the researcher identifies the extent to which the website of the Ministry of Religious Affairs of the Republic of Indonesia has fulfilled the needs of religious moderation dissemination, by reviewing the content of religious moderation to what extent the message of religious moderation is conveyed clearly and effectively through the official website of the Ministry of Religious Affairs of the Republic of Indonesia.

3 Result and Discussion

A website can be defined as a collection of pages that display textual data, image data or moving image data, animation data, sound, video and a combination of all of these, both static and dynamic, which form a link information system, a building where everyone is connected to each other's network. This is what makes the site the most appropriate, fast and accurate information system to use, because all the information described on the site page can be conveyed clearly and support each other. In addition, websites are part of internet technology, where technology is a system made by humans for certain purposes and purposes so that humans can support their work, improve results and save energy and resources [6].

Dissemination of religious moderation is one of the Ministry's efforts to ground religious moderation as an effort to create a tolerant and respectful society. Some of the efforts made by the Ministry include increasing religious literacy, involving Pancasila as a philosophical foundation in religion, as well as socialisation and the use of social media as a means of disseminating virtuous.

Dissemination according to KBBI is defined as a word that refers to the dissemination of ideas or ideas. In addition, further dissemination is also practised as an activity to disseminate information to a wider target audience by targeting certain groups of people with the aim of raising awareness and changing mindsets [7]. In this case, the Ministry of Religious Affairs acts as an institution in charge of religious affairs

and also acts as an institution that disseminates thoughts and ideas related to religious moderation.

The website of the Indonesian Ministry of Religious Affairs is the main means of disseminating information related to religious moderation. Through this platform, the Ministry of Religious Affairs can reach out to the public at large and provide a deeper understanding of the principles of religious moderation.

The Ministry of Religious Affairs website features a lot of religious moderation content ranging from socialisation activities from kindergarten to university level.

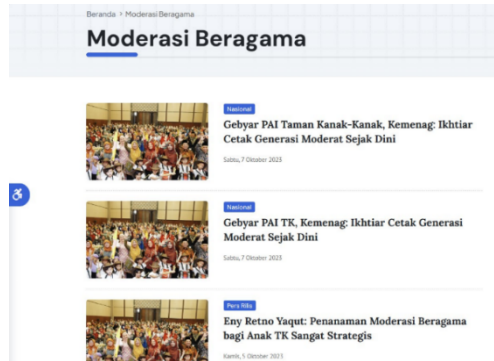


Fig. 1. Kindergarten PAI event, Ministry of Religious Affairs: An Effort to Raise a Moderate Generation from an Early Age, Source: kemenag.co.id.

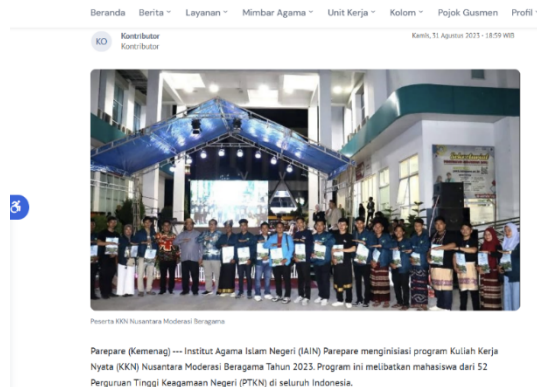


Fig. 2. 52 PTKN Students Hold KKN Nusantara Religious Moderation in Tana Toraja Source: kemenag.co.id.

Content is the main element in public communication, which serves to convey messages, information, and education to the public. The content related to religious moderation on the Ministry of Religious Affairs website can be grouped into four categories, namely news, articles, videos, and infographics. The most common type of content is news, which includes various activities, programmes, and policies of the

Ministry of Religious Affairs related to religious moderation, such as the launch of Presidential Regulation No. 58 of 2023 on Strengthening Religious Moderation, the establishment of the Joint Secretariat for Religious Moderation, the holding of the Asia Africa Latin America Religious Moderation Conference, and others. The least common type of content is infographics, which only consist of a few images that display data and facts about religious moderation, such as definitions, objectives, indicators, and benefits. The most common content format is text, accompanied by supporting images, audio or video. The most dominant source of content is internal, which comes from the Ministry of Religious Affairs itself, both from the centre and regions. The least common source of content is external, which comes from other parties related to religious moderation, such as religious leaders, academics, activists, media, and the community.

From the results of the content analysis, it can be seen that the website of the Ministry of Religious Affairs of the Republic of Indonesia is quite informative and educative in presenting content related to religious moderation, but it is still less representative and diverse in presenting content related to religious moderation. The existing contents tend to be formal, official, and monotonous, and do not feature the perspectives and experiences of other parties involved or affected by religious moderation. Therefore, it is necessary to add and improve the content related to religious moderation, such as:

- Presenting more varied and creative content, such as success stories, testimonies, opinions, interviews, podcasts, webinars, and others.
- Presenting content that is more interactive and participatory, such as quizzes, polls, forums, comments, and others.

Presenting more inclusive and pluralist content, such as showing the diversity of religions, cultures, and ethnicities in Indonesia, as well as showing cooperation and solidarity between religious communities in religious moderation.

Accessibility is a vital element in public communication, ensuring that websites can be accessed and used by everyone, without any barriers or difficulties. Accessibility related to religious moderation on the Ministry of Religious Affairs website can be seen from the aspects of devices, language, and speed. Devices are aspects related to the website's ability to be accessed and displayed properly on various types of devices, such as computers, laptops, tablets, and smartphones. Language is an aspect related to the website's ability to present content related to religious moderation in various languages, both national and regional languages. Speed is an aspect related to the website's ability to load and display content related to religious moderation quickly and smoothly, without any interruptions or errors.

From the results of the accessibility analysis, it can be seen that the Ministry of Religious Affairs website is still less accessible and inclusive in presenting accessibility related to religious moderation. Existing accessibility tends to be limited, inconsistent, and less attentive to user needs and preferences. Therefore, it is necessary to expand and improve accessibility related to religious moderation, such as:

- Presenting a more responsive and adaptive website, which can adjust the appearance and function of the website to the type and size of the device used by the user, as well as providing options to change font size, background colour, and contrast.

- Presenting a more multilingual and multicultural website, which can present content related to religious moderation in various languages, both national and regional languages, and respect and accommodate the cultural and ethnic diversity that exists in Indonesia.
- Presenting a faster and more stable website, which can load and display content related to religious moderation quickly and smoothly, without any interruptions or errors, as well as providing the option to download the content in a format that suits the needs and preferences of users.

GAP Analysis Results:

Availability of Religious Moderation Content:

- **Current Status:** Religious moderation content has been provided, but may not cover all aspects of community diversity.
- **Gap Analysis:** There are gaps in content coverage, leading to a lack of representation of religious moderation values for various social and cultural groups.
- **Strategic Recommendation:** Update and diversify the content by considering aspects of diversity that may have been overlooked. Involve stakeholders in the content development process to ensure more equitable representation.

Website Accessibility:

- **Current Status:** Website accessibility can be a challenge for some groups of people, especially those with limited internet access.
- **Gap Analysis:** Accessibility difficulties may limit the reach of religious moderation messages, leaving some communities without adequate access.
- **Strategic Recommendation:** Improve accessibility by providing lightweight versions of the website, and collaboration with internet service providers to improve connectivity in hard-to-reach areas.

Responsiveness to Community Feedback:

- **Current Status:** Responses to community feedback tend to be slow or lack transparency.
- **Gap Analysis:** Inadequate responses can reduce public trust and hinder the process of improvement or clarification.
- **Strategic Recommendation:** Implement a quick and transparent response mechanism and improve two-way communication. Provide a dedicated platform for the public to submit feedback and questions.

Public Participation in Website Interactions:

- **Current Status:** Community participation in interaction with religious moderation content is relatively low.
- **Gap Analysis:** The lack of community participation can hamper the effectiveness of the socialisation of religious moderation through the website.

- Strategic Recommendation: Encourage active community participation through interactive discussions through comment sections, quizzes, and online discussion forums. Facilitate a space for the community to share experiences and views.

Public Understanding of Religious Moderation Messages:

- Current Status: Public understanding of the message of religious moderation needs to be improved.
- Gap Analysis: Lack of awareness and understanding can reduce the impact of religious moderation socialisation.
- Strategic Recommendation: Provide informative educational materials, infographics and short videos to better explain the concept of religious moderation. Organise educational campaigns to raise public awareness.

The results show that improvements in certain aspects, such as more representative content and improved accessibility, can increase the effectiveness of the Ministry of Religious Affairs' website in socialising religious moderation. The strategic recommendations are expected to help address the identified gaps and increase the positive impact of efforts to socialise religious moderation through digital platforms.

4. Conclusion

In today's digital era, the use of websites as a strategic tool in socialising religious moderation by the Indonesian Ministry of Religious Affairs is becoming increasingly important. Efforts to socialise religious moderation through the website should be in line with the principles of moderation itself, reflecting tolerance, dialogue and inclusiveness. Through gap analysis, it can be identified that there are several gaps in the utilisation of the website, including lack of equitable representation, limited accessibility, and suboptimal response to feedback.

The ideal conditions of website utilisation include inclusivity, maximum accessibility, responsiveness to the community, and high understanding of the message of religious moderation. Challenges such as limited accessibility and uneven representation need to be addressed with creative solutions. Increased interactivity and community participation are opportunities to strengthen the impact of socialisation. Concrete efforts are needed, such as content diversification, increased accessibility, responsiveness to feedback, and active involvement of stakeholders, to increase the effectiveness of website utilisation in socialising religious moderation. In today's digital era, the use of websites as a strategic tool in socialising religious moderation by the Indonesian Ministry of Religious Affairs is becoming increasingly important. Efforts to socialise religious moderation through the website should be in line with the principles of moderation itself, reflecting tolerance, dialogue and inclusiveness. Through gap analysis, it can be identified that there are several gaps in the utilisation of the website, including lack of equitable representation, limited accessibility, and suboptimal response to feedback.

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It can be concluded that a holistic approach combining technical, communicative, and cultural aspects is needed to improve the effectiveness of website utilisation in socialising religious moderation by the Ministry of Religious Affairs. Proper implementation of strategic recommendations will play a key role in ensuring that the message of religious moderation reaches and is understood by all levels of Indonesian society equally.

This research is limited to discussing how the Ministry of Religious Affairs' website becomes an effective public communication tool for the community in disseminating religious moderation. Suggestions for future research are to evaluate the implementation of strategic recommendations by conducting follow-up research that focuses on evaluating the implementation of strategic recommendations proposed earlier, to assess their actual impact and determine their success.

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