Strengthening Moslem Society's in New Media to Improving Tolerance and Pluralism in Indonesia

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DOI: https://doi.org/10.30880/ahcs.2024.05.01.005

Article Info

Abstract

There are three studies in this research, namely the study of new media, encouraging the participation of the Moslem society in new media and promoting tolerance and pluralism through new media. This study is important considering that Indonesia is a pluralistic nation consisting of various tribes, nations, religions and beliefs, so that social and religious friction and conflict are very easy to happen. According to the Komnas HAM report for the 2020 period, there were 23 reports of violations of houses of worship in various regions of Indonesia and cases of massacres of Church congregations, Bala Keselamatan, Sigi Regency, Central Sulawesi followed by the burning of Church service posts. The cases are the background of the importance of promoting tolerance and pluralism in Indonesia. The society of Indonesia need to be encouraged to participate actively by conveying their ideas, opinions and thoughts on social media so that the values of tolerance and pluralism can be fostered. The theory used is community participation. This research is qualitative research using a library research approach. The results of this research; first, encouraging the continuous use of social media such as blogs, Facebook and Twitter as a new form of community participation in conveying ideas and thoughts about tolerance and pluralism. For example, the Instagram accounts @nugarislucu, @katholic_garis_lucu,@muhammadiyahgl,@buddhisgl,@protesgarislucu. Second, point is to provide rewards (reinforcement), namely users can provide positive comments, likes, or subscribe. With this response, users feel appreciated so they will repeat it again.

1. Introduction

Communication is the first activity since humans are born. As social beings, communication is an important element in human life because human nature is to live in society, interact and communicate with other humans. Communication is a process of conveying messages, information, ideas, emotions, skills and others through symbols that can cause effects in the form of behavior that carried out with certain media.

Media is a very important means in conveying messages (information) to the public. Media or communication channels have existed long before the birth of communication science [1]. In the past, before the mass communication period, the types of communication media used by the society were traditional communication media in the form of symbols, signal symbols, sounds (kentongan, kulukul), smoke, and others.

Apart from being a very important communication medium for conveying various information, such as natural disasters; floods, fires, deaths, and others, traditional media also function as educational media for the society [2]. At that time, communication media had a very important role in society because it was related to the safety and survival of the society itself and its environment. Therefore, the news or message conveyed is information about something that is real (fact), accurate, can be accounted for that is important and needed by the society. As stated by Prof. Charnley, that news is a report about facts that are considered important and really needed by the society [3].

The rapid advancement of information and communication technology has a significant influence on the development of communication media where traditional communication media have developed into mass media (newspapers, magazines, bulletins, radio and television). At the end of the 20th century, new media emerged, namely internet-based communication media known as digital media or online media. With this new media, everyone can report an event, produce and inform others [4].

Some of the advantages of the internet as the basis for new media are: there are no space and time limits, it has a global reach, it is easy, cheap and fast to access information. This ease, cheapness and speed of access make the internet a space for people to gather (virtually) and express ideas, opinions and criticism freely. Moreover, the internet has a speed that allows information to develop and spread widely in a relatively short time [5].

Since the beginning of the Indonesian Internet development in 1992 and starting commercial operations in 1994, internet users continue to grow from year to year [6]. In 1998, internet users in Indonesia were recorded at 500 thousand, but in 2017 internet users increased rapidly up to 100 million [7]. Until January 2022, according to the We Are Social report, internet users in Indonesia have reached 204.7 million people. From this data, it means that there are 73.7% of the Indonesian population who have used the internet [8]. If you look at the data above, it shows that the Indonesian people are already familiar with the internet. The most frequent use of the internet by the Indonesian people is to communicate via email (electronic mail) reaching 36%, while for social media activities and leisure both are at 21%. In addition, the internet is used for browsing (11%) and online business (3%). In accordance with the results of research conducted by the World Bank, internet users in Indonesia are identical to social media users, where more than 85% of internet users in Indonesia are users of social media such as Facebook, WhatsApp, Instagram [9]. While internet users according to age group, those aged over 25-34 years are 57.7% and ages 19-24 years are in the range of 17.13% [10]. Meanwhile, according to Databoks, social media users in the 25-34-year age group only reach 35.4% and the younger age group 19-24 are in the 30.3% range [11].

Seeing the intensity of the use of social media which is quite high, around 73.7% of the Indonesian population, shows that social media (facebook, WhatsApp, Instagram, twitter) is a very essential medium for communicating with each other, exchanging information, sharing ideas and thoughts between fellow social media users. When the use of social media is only for entertainment in the sense that it does not convey certain messages or goals such as tolerance, brotherhood, peace and other human values, it will only have an impact as entertainment without implications for something more useful. On the other hand, new media in social media platforms can be encouraged to make social changes.

In Indonesia, intense social media activity can have an impact on social movements and encourage political change [12]. Some examples of cases in Indonesia, where social media is able to become a social movement that influences public policy, such as the case of Baiq Nuril, an administrative employee at a secondary education institution in Mataram, West Nusa Tenggara who experienced sexual harassment by official in the educational institution but was accused of violating the ITE Law [13]. Previously, there was the case of Grandma Fatimah who was sued civilly by her children and children -in-law which also leaded to response from the social media society [14].

The results of research conducted by the Center for Global Civil Society Studies Fisip University of Indonesia in 2012, showed the involvement of social media users in promoting and discussing democratic issues, such as political participation, political education, overseeing the government, and other essential matters in democracy. From this study, it is clear that social media has impact on the formation of public opinion and has potential as a medium for a larger and broader civil society movement [15]. And on April 11, 2022, student demonstrations against the discourse of postponing the 2024 General Election and extending the presidential period in front of the DPR RI building and in regions throughout Indonesia were a real impact of the power of social media in the process of social and political change (Indonesia, 2022).

If you look at the significance of the role of social media in the process of social change, actually the people of Indonesia need to be encouraged to use their social media as a medium for disseminating other important issues such as the issue of tolerance and pluralism, which of course are important for the life of the Indonesian considering that Indonesia consists of various ethnic groups, races, religions and beliefs. How to encourage the participation of the Moslem society in Indonesia in promoting pluralism in Indonesia through new media? What form of reward can encourage the Moslem society to continue to promote tolerance and pluralism in Indonesia? This study tries to answer these questions.

2. Materials and Methods

There are relatively many studies on the role of new media (new media), such as studies on social media and its influence on social, cultural and political change among the younger generation [16]. The study of how new media has the potential as a medium for society participation in the new media era is described in Ritonga and Syahputra's research [17]. In this study, the researcher conveyed the strong influence of new media in encouraging social change through the participation of the internet society (netizens). Meanwhile, a study on new media that can become public media to participate in development has been carried out in Sidoarjo, East Java, Indonesia [18]. How the effectiveness of social media in the development of local governance has been studied in Thailand through a study entitled The Effectiveness of Social Media Use for Local Governance Development [19].

Lestari (2020) describes the opportunities and challenges of the Indonesian people to maintain the diversity of the Indonesian who are plural in terms of ethnicity, nation, religion and belief. Meanwhile a study on encouraging public participation through new media (social media) to convey information about public services has been carried out in Shanghai [21].

This study was a qualitative research using library research approach. Qualitative research is generally assumed to be research that is intuitive and systematic to help writers gain knowledge and understanding of the problem under study, by focusing on meaning and understanding. In this study, the data were obtained through a literature review which was then analyzed in depth to produce answers to research questions [22].

3. Results and Discussion

3.1 New Media and Moslem Society Participation

3.1.1 New media and Social Media

Information and communication technology is changing and developing very quickly. These changes and developments are accompanied by new innovations that are introduced to support existing technologies. The development of information and communication technology has also changed the system and culture of communication between humans. The presence of new media, which is convergent, has opened a communication space without being limited by space and time [23]. New media has changed the old media communication system or conventional media to internet-based communication. The new internet-based media is different from the old media (mass media) that existed before, such as; newspapers, magazines, radio and television. Newspapers were in the form of sheets of paper where to get information and news in the newspaper, one had to buy or subscribe. Since the emergence of the Internet, not only newspapers but letters, magazines, radio and television, have been presented via the internet only in one media platform (convergence).

The shift of mass media, which is one-way to new media with interactive characteristics, which is termed by McQuail as a communication revolution [24], is caused by the need for complex interactions, competition, politics and social and technological innovation [25]. According to him, the principle that causes metamorphosis is change, where a change is not something that can be anticipated or predicted [26]. The principal difference between mass media and new media is the nature of the communication, where mass communication is one-way, while new media communication is interactive (two-way). However, the presence of new media does not automatically turn off old media such as radio, television, films, magazines, newspapers and books, but the old media process and adapt in the form of new media. The Internet as a basis of new media has combined radio television, films, magazines, newspapers and books and spread them through 'press' technology.

Some of the advantages of the internet as the basis for new media are: there are no space and time limits, it has a global reach, and it is easy, cheap and fast to access information. This ease, cheapness and speed of access makes the internet a space for people to gather (virtually) and express ideas, opinions and criticism freely. Moreover, the internet has a speed that allows information to develop and spread widely in a relatively short time [5].

New media or online media is defined as a product of communication mediated by technology that is shared with digital computers [27], a media that use the internet, online media that are flexible, interactive and can function privately and publicly [28] (Mondry, 2009). 2008, p. 13). The main characteristics of new media according to Denis McQuail [24] are as follows; 1). Interconnectivity (mutual connectedness), 2). Access to individual audiences, either as recipients or senders of messages, 3). Interactivity, where new media users can communicate with each other quickly and easily, 4). Multiple uses as an open character and, 5). It is ubiquitous (everywhere) and does not depend on location.

Social media is a new type of media that is popularly used by people in everyday life. Social media uses social networking on the internet which includes, among others: blog, facebook, youtube, twitter, instagram, google plus, path. Social media is rapidly being adopted by the modern information society. Social media allows

them to build and express their personal and professional identities [29]. Through social media, communication is no longer limited by space and time barriers. Wherever and whenever, as long as the gadget or smartphone is connected to the internet network, communication can still be done.

Social media has positive impacts on its user society [30]. The positive impacts are; 1). the spread of information is fast, 2). it can interact at any time without being limited by distance and time, 3). its access is easy and cheap. Meanwhile, the negative impacts caused by social media are; 1). In social media, private problems become public problems, 2). Easy and cheap access causes everyone to be free to express their opinions and ideas on social media, therefore if someone is excessive in expressing their opinions and ideas, they can cause social conflict [31].

Table.1. Characteristics of social media, strengths and weaknesses according to Mcquail

items	characteristic features	Positive impact	Weaknesses
1	Interconnectivity	The dissemination of information is fast	Private problems can become public consumption
2	Access to audiences	Access is easy and cheap	Social conflict
3	Interactivity	The interaction is timeless	-
4	Diverse and open uses	Campaign for positive issues	-
5	Ubiquitous (unlimited area)	-	-

By understanding the impact of using social media, it is hoped that people can use social media wisely so that social conflict can be avoided.

3.1.2 Social Media and Moslem Society Participation

Indonesia is a country where the majority of the population is Moslem. Based on data from the Ministry of Home Affairs (Kemendagri), the total Moslem population in Indonesia is 237.53 million as of December 31, 2021. This number is equivalent to 86.9% of the country's population of 273.32 million people [32].

Meanwhile, Internet users in Indonesia until January 2022, have reached 204.7 million people, which means that 73.7% of Indonesia's population has used the internet [8] (Annur C. M., 2022). If you look at the Moslem population which reaches 237.53 million out of a total population of 373.32, while internet users in Indonesia in the same year were 204.7 million, it is no doubt that internet users in Indonesia are Moslem.

In this new media era, communication media that have used the internet provides a new offer for the public to express their aspirations, ideas, thoughts and criticisms of the government through social media (Roengtam, 2020). Social media platforms can be considered as an effective means of communication between government and citizens [33]. In Indonesia, intense social media activity can even have an impact on social movements and encourage political change [12].

Public participation is defined as the process where public concerns, needs, and values are incorporated into governance and government decision-making. It is a two-way communication and interaction, with the overall goal of better decisions being supported by the public [34]. We can see public participation in Indonesia in the Baiq Nuril case, the Grandma Fatimah case and the Prita case, where the public is very enthusiastic about following and responding to these cases through social media. Society participation was also seen in the 2019 elections which were motivated by the mass media which could no longer be trusted as providers of objective and independent information. Therefore, the public conveys their participation through social media, Twitter [12]. Increased society participation is found on social media. In this context, public participation is mediated through their activities on social media, because the mass media is considered to have neglected its control function over the government. Public participation is therefore very important in the new media era in the social and political context of life in a country like Indonesia.

Thus, society participation through the social media platform Twitter is very intense [12] and Facebook [35] and it has shown the role of social media as a public space for participation. This phenomenon can initiate public participation in other important issues such as tolerance and pluralism in Indonesia.

4. Tolerance and Pluralism in Indonesia

The Indonesian nation is a nation that has a plurality of tribes, races, ethnicities, religions and beliefs. The ethnic groups owned by Indonesia reach 1,340. They are spreaded in almost all parts of Indonesia. According to BPS data, half or 50% of the ethnic groups in the country are Javanese. While the rest are ethnic groups that inhabit the territory of Indonesia outside Java, such as the Makasar Bugis (3.68%), Batak 2.04%, Balinese 1.88%,

Acehnese 1.4%, and other ethnic groups [36]. Meanwhile, there are 6 religions and beliefs recognized by the Indonesian government, namely Islam, Protestant Christianity, Catholicism, Hinduism, Buddhism, and Confucianism.

Perhaps many people think that the plurality of Indonesia is a unique thing that requires a unique treatment as well. However, when explored further, there is hardly a nation that is truly homogeneous, single, without any elements of difference at all. When a society seeks to unite in these differences that unity can occur and be realized. So, actually pluralism is not a uniqueness of a particular society but is a reality and certainty (*sunatullah*).

Pluralism as sunatullah demands individual and group attitudes that reflect sincere acceptance in living side by side in differences. This sincere acceptance arises on the basis of the awareness that existing differences are God's grace to humans which will lead to interactions that will enrich cultural development through dynamic interactions and the exchange of varied and diverse cultures [37].

However, it seems that the attitude of acceptance of diversity and pluralism has not really realized in Indonesia. In fact, the recognition of plurality (pluralism) and acceptance of coexistence is still only on the surface (camouflage), it has not grown from actual religiosity. Therefore, individual or group behaviors that negate other religions or beliefs often appear. This attitude of intolerance still often appears on the surface, such as the behavior of intolerance that has gone viral on social media, namely a man kicking and throwing offerings (sesajen) on Mount Semeru, Lumajang, East Java. The offerings were made by the Sumbersari society, Rowokangkung District, who adhere to the belief [38].

Larger cases of intolerance have implications for the physical safety and lives of individuals and certain groups, such as the destruction of the Ahmadiyah congregation's house of worship by hundreds of people in Sintang, West Kalimantan in September 2021 [39]. The case that further undermines humanity is the massacre of four (4) members of the Bala Keselamatan Church, Sigi Regency, Central Sulawesi, followed by the burning of the church service post [40]. Meanwhile, the National Human Rights Commission (Komnas HAM) noted that in the 2017-2019 period there were 23 reports of violations of places of worship in various regions in Indonesia. According to the Chairman of Komnas HAM, Ahmad Taufan Damanik, the number of cases in the field that were not reported could be much higher than those reported to his institution [41].

If you look at these cases, it can be seen that the attitude of tolerance and pluralism in Indonesian society is still very concerning. If the perpetrators are Moslems, then these intolerance attitudes have slapped the face of the Moslem society as a whole because of their inability to show the face of Islam that as *rahmatan lilalamin*. Therefore, Indonesian people who are familiar with social media need to encourage their use of social media to promote tolerance and plurality in Indonesia like previous studies which showed the effectiveness of social media (twitter and facebook) as society participation in encouraging citizen journalism and in managing transportation. If positive reinforcement is carried out continuously, perhaps the realization of a peaceful, harmonious and mutual respect between ethnic groups and adherents of religions and beliefs in Indonesia will soon realize.

5. Strengthening the Participation of The Moslem Society in New Media in Improving Pluralism in Indonesia

Promoting tolerance and pluralism is not something new in Islamic teachings. In fact, Islam teaches and commands that the Moslem society be tolerant towards non-Moslems. This is clearly seen in al-Quran surah al-Kafirun, 6:

Meaning: "To you is your religion and to me is mine".

According to Quraish Shihab in Tafsir Al-Mishbah, when the Prophet Muhammad had emphasized that it was impossible for a meeting between the teachings of Islam and the beliefs of the polytheists to occur, then the Prophet Muhammad emphasized in social life that "for you" specifically "your religion" and you are free to practice your religion. Furthermore, "and for me" is also specifically "my religion" so I should be free to practice it too. In this interpretation, Quraish Shihab emphasizes something very much, namely the freedom to practice his religion and belief with the words "religion does not touch me in the slightest and vice versa, you will not be touched by it at all [42].

QS Al Baqarah 256 explains about the absence of a person's authority to force a religion or belief to others;

Meaning: "There is no compulsion in (adhering to) religion (Islam), in fact it is clear (difference) between the right path and the misguided path. Whoever disbelieves in Tagut and believes in Allah, then indeed, he has clung to a very strong rope that will not break. Allah is All-Hearing, All-Knowing."

From this verse and from the sincerity and respect of the Prophet for the beliefs of others, of course it must be a guide for the Moslem society to follow it. The Prophet gave guidance that tolerance is not just on the surface, but more deeply and sincerely to give freedom to realize religious values in people's lives by providing guarantees

that there will be no interference from other adherents. This is what is meant as pluralism. Pluralism is not a negative virtue, only to avoid fanalism, but must be interpreted and understood as the true link of diversity in the bonds of civility [37].

The position of tolerance and pluralism is clear in the Qur'an and the Prophet Muhammad SAW also pioneered this attitude. At this time, the Moslem society should follow what the Prophet has exemplified and promote it to the wider society as an effort to create a pluralist society.

When the Moslem society has not been able and accustomed to discussing issues that are considered difficult, it is because they are not used to it. Social Media can increase user participation, generate creativity and increase knowledge. This media is a place to accommodate ideas and thoughts that are developed. Encouraging the use of social media such as blogs, Facebook, and twitter continuously has become a new form of society participation in conveying ideas and thoughts about tolerance and pluralism. This encouragement is important because the values of tolerance and pluralism have not been widely discussed and responded by the internet society (netizens).

People can use preferred social media platforms to convey the values of tolerance and pluralism; Facebook, Instagram, YouTube, Linken and more. In accordance with operant conditioning theory whose principle is true learning or habituation in the context of encouraging Moslem communities in new media in promoting pluralism in Indonesia in accordance with the first point, Moslem communities are encouraged to get used to use preferred social media to discuss, convey ideas, and his views on tolerance and pluralism. By using the preferred media, whether it's Facebook, Instagram or Twitter, it is expected that the society will repeat it again and increase the intensity of their participation. Examples of Instagram accounts @nugarislucu, @komunitasCatholic Gari Lucu, @muhammadiyahgl who always echo the values of humanity, tolerance, pluralism in a light and funny way as the name implies. @nugarislucu has 829,000 followers, @katolik garis lucu has 64,700 followers and @muhammadiyahgl is followed by 31,400 followers. These accounts consistently voice tolerance and pluralism with indications that they are connected, discuss and take care of each other. It's just that their initiation in promoting their tolerance and pluralism has not been widely followed by other accounts.

Furthermore, the second point is to provide a reward (reinforcement). The reinforcement component consists of verbal reinforcement (words and sentences of praise) and non-verbal (gestural, touch, movement to approach students, activities, and symbols or signs). In the case of encouraging the Moslem society in new media in promoting tolerance and pluralism, a user can provide positive comments, liking or subscribing. With this response, users feel appreciated so they will repeat doing it again. This is called positive reinforcement.

6. Conclusion

The conclusions of this study are the presence of new media has various advantages; easy, cheap, fast and with a wide scope to become an alternative space for society participation. Social and religious conflicts in Indonesia are still relatively high, so it is necessary to promote tolerance and pluralism by using media favored by the public. To discuss issues that have not been discussed often, it is necessary to encourage society participation so that they are interested and continue to do it repeatedly so that tolerance and pluralism can be realized.

Acknowledgement

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