

Digital Religious Discourse and Audience Reception: Sentiment and Semantic Analysis of YouTube Comments

Aminullah^{a,1,*}, Muhammad Qadaruddin^{b,2}, Reynaldi^{c,3}

^{ab} State Islamic Institute of Pare Pare, 91131 Indonesia, ^cUniversity of Hasanuddin Makasar, 90245, Indonesia

¹ aminullah@iainpare.ac.id *² muhammadqadaruddinamsos@iainpare.ac.id; ³ reynalherman@gmail.com;

* Correspondence of the author

ARTICLE INFO

Article History:

Accepted: Dec 2025

Revised: Jan 2026

Approved: Feb 2026

Kata Kunci:

Wacana Keagamaan

Teori Resepsi

Analisis Sentimen

Modernisasi Agama

Majelis Digital

ABSTRACT

Abstrak: Evolusi pesat media digital, khususnya platform podcast, telah merevolusi cara publik menengahi dan menanggapi wacana agama yang sensitif tentang Tuhan, agama, dan iman. Studi ini mengkaji bagaimana podcast "Curhat Bang Denny Sumargo" memfasilitasi wacana publik tentang moderasi agama dan pemahaman antaragama, secara khusus berfokus pada episode "Tuhan Hanya Satu, Mengapa Agama Berbeda?" yang menampilkan Ustadz Khalid Basalamah. Menggunakan studi kasus kualitatif yang terintegrasi dengan metode ilmu sosial komputasi, penelitian ini menganalisis kumpulan data yang kuat dari 33.290 komentar YouTube menggunakan platform CommuAnalytic.org. Analisis menggunakan algoritma VADER dan TextBlob untuk klasifikasi sentimen, API Perspektif untuk pemetaan toksisitas, dan HDBSCAN untuk pengelompokan kesamaan semantik 3D, dievaluasi melalui lensa teoretis Teori Penerimaan Stuart Hall. Temuan mengungkapkan bahwa penerimaan publik didominasi oleh sentimen netral (51,05% hingga 75,38%) dan positif (22,22% hingga 42,64%), menunjukkan bahwa mayoritas audiens memproses masalah teologis sensitif secara reflektif dan kognitif daripada reaktif. Interaksi publik di bagian komentar ditemukan sangat beradab, ditandai dengan skor toksisitas umum rata-rata yang sangat rendah 0,10086, dengan resistensi oposisi dan komentar beracun tetap terisolasi secara semantik di pinggiran. Studi terdahulu belum secara komprehensif mengkaji bagaimana narasi teologis dinegosiasikan dalam podcast hiburan yang dipandu oleh figur non-otoritatif. Mengisi kesenjangan ini, penelitian ini berkontribusi mengintegrasikan ilmu sosial komputasional dan teori resepsi untuk membedah interaksi digital tersebut. Hasilnya menyimpulkan bahwa mayoritas audiens berada pada posisi Resepsi Negosiasi, membuktikan podcast hiburan dapat berfungsi sebagai ruang publik digital yang inklusif (majlis digital) untuk menekan polarisasi dan mendorong komunikasi yang beradab.

Abstract: *The rapid evolution of digital media, particularly podcast platforms, has revolutionized how the public mediates and responds to sensitive religious discourses concerning God, religion, and faith. This study examines how the "Curhat Bang Denny Sumargo" podcast facilitates public discourse on religious moderation and interfaith understanding, specifically focusing on the episode "God is Only One, Why Are Religions Different?" featuring Ustadz Khalid Basalamah. Employing a qualitative case study integrated with computational social science methods, this research analyzed a robust dataset of 33,290 YouTube comments using the CommuAnalytic.org platform. The analysis utilized VADER and TextBlob algorithms for sentiment classification, Perspective API for toxicity mapping, and HDBSCAN for 3D semantic similarity clustering, evaluated through the theoretical lens of Stuart Hall's Reception Theory. The findings revealed that public reception was dominated by neutral (51.05% to 75.38%) and positive (22.22% to 42.64%) sentiments, indicating that most audiences process sensitive theological issues reflectively and cognitively rather than reactively. Public interaction in the comment section was found to be highly civilized, marked by a very low average general toxicity*

Keywords:

Religious Discourse
Reception Theory
Sentiment Analysis
Religious Moderation
Digital Majlis

score of 0.10086, with oppositional resistance and toxic comments remaining semantically isolated at the periphery. Previous studies have not thoroughly examined how theological narratives are presented in entertainment podcasts hosted by non-authoritative figures. This research addresses this gap by integrating computational social science and reception theory to analyze these digital interactions. The study concludes that audience reception is predominantly negotiated, proving that such podcasts can serve as inclusive digital public spaces (digital majlis) that reduce polarization and foster civil communication.

I. Introduction

The rapid evolution of digital media, particularly the podcast platform, has revolutionized how the public mediates and responds to sensitive religious discourses concerning God, religion, and faith. In Indonesia, religious topics are not merely personal matters but are deeply social, intertwined with identity, moral authority, and the dynamics of interfaith relations (Wardana, 2026). Nabila and Yanti (2025), explained that communication strategies in their delivery in the digital era need to be considered, of course, by using various public speaking skills that can convince the audience and evidence of the delivery of messages given to the public.

In recent years, podcast content addressing spiritual and religious discourse has gained significant popularity by offering a relaxed, dialogical, yet reflectively deep conversational format. This contemporary phenomenon necessitates a systematic inquiry into the mechanisms by which such digital platforms shape public perception and engagement with complex theological concepts (Saftia & Wirman, 2025). In recent years, podcast content addressing spiritual and religious discourse has gained significant popularity by offering a relaxed, dialogical, yet reflectively deep conversational format. Specifically, this study examines how podcasts, such as "Curhat Bang Denny Sumargo," facilitate public discourse on religious moderation and interfaith understanding, particularly among younger generations who predominantly engage with digital content (Masrur et al., 2025; Nuhaa et al., 2023).

In this context, the Qur'an provides a principled guide on how religious communication should be carried out, namely by prioritizing wisdom, gentleness, and good dialogue. Allah says in QS. An-Nahl verse 125:

أَدْعُ إِلَى سَبِيلِ رَبِّكَ بِالْحُكْمَةِ وَالْمَوْعِظَةِ الْحَسَنَةِ وَجَادِلْهُمْ بِالَّتِي هِيَ أَحْسَنُ إِنَّ رَبَّكَ هُوَ أَعْلَمُ بِمَنْ ضَلَّ عَنْ سَبِيلِهِ ۗ وَهُوَ أَعْلَمُ
بِالْمُهْتَدِينَ ﴿١٢٥﴾

Meaning: "Call (people) to the way of your Lord with wisdom and good teaching and argue with them in a better way. Indeed, your Lord is the One who knows best who strays from His path, and He knows best who is guided."

The podcast has become a distinctive discursive arena that integrates personal narratives, existential reflections, and theological deliberations. This dynamic is especially prominent in the episode featuring Ustadz Khalid Basalamah, entitled "God is Only One, Why Are Religions Different?" The video has drawn substantial public engagement, as the speakers' claims about Islam as complete submission and the roles of preceding prophets sparked diverse responses from acclaim for religious openness to opposition and fierce debates in the comments section. These conditions demonstrate that digital spaces are no longer merely entertainment mediums but serve as arenas for opinion formation, value negotiation, and the reconstruction of religious meaning. The patterns of public interaction in this video underscore the necessity for in-depth research into how speakers' utterances are understood and responded to by digital audiences. The urgency of this research lies in understanding how discursive dynamics in podcasts potentially strengthen inclusivity or, conversely, trigger tensions through new narratives emerging from a digital generation.

Specifically, this study examines how podcasts, such as "Curhat Bang Denny Sumargo," facilitate public discourse on religious moderation and interfaith understanding, particularly among younger generations who predominantly engage with digital content (Masrur et al., 2025; Nuhaa et al., 2023). Previous research on digital communication and religious discourse has provided an important foundation, but most of it has still focused on the principle of politeness in conversation or the pragmatic aspects of speech separately (Adnjani et al., 2021; Ilhami, 2022). Studies such as affirming that digital interaction is highly dependent on the context of communication. However, the literature has not touched on the specifics of how religious narratives are negotiated within a popular podcast ecosystem that involves non-authoritative public figures as dialogue guides.

Fragmentation between micro-linguistic approaches (speech analysis) and macro-sociological approaches (monitoring public response). There is a lack of comprehensive analysis specifically examining how sensitive narratives like "God, religion, and faith" are constructed in a casual entertainment podcast format. This gap includes a deficiency in linking the structure of host-guest conversations with the emotional, cognitive, and ideological response patterns of the audience within an interactive and algorithmic space. This research offers a significant novelty by introducing an integrated approach to understanding the reproduction of sensitive issues in digital entertainment media. Another novelty lies in the exploration of Denny Sumargo's role as a non-authoritative actor who has the potential to reframe the issue of divinity beyond formal religious authority. This study examines how young audiences negotiate the authority when Ustadz Khalid Basalamah explains about the sharia and the differences in the laws of the previous prophets within the framework of the same religion from an Islamic perspective.

To address the gaps in the literature identified above and achieve the established objectives, this study formulates three main research questions. Firstly, this study will examine how audiences respond to religious narratives in entertainment podcasts, particularly when confronted with sensitive theological issues in a casual format. Secondly, when evaluated through the theoretical framework of Stuart Hall's encoding/decoding model, what is the dominant mode of reception among audiences when interacting with these narratives? Thirdly, it is necessary to determine whether this digital religious discourse serves to exacerbate ideological polarization or whether it facilitates rational deliberation among a pluralistic public. The present study aims to provide critical insights into the evolution of religious discourse and the capacity of non-authoritative digital platforms to facilitate civilized communication in an interconnected multicultural society. These insights will be provided through the answering of questions by means of computational social science methods. Ultimately, this research provides critical insights into the evolution of religious discourse and the development of inclusive, civilized communication in Indonesia's increasingly connected multicultural society

II. Method

A. Research Design and Approach

This study employs a qualitative case study design integrated with computational social science methods to explore the reception of religious messages in digital spaces (Arikunto, 2006; Fadli, 2021). The primary approach utilized is Social Network Analysis (SNA) and Big Data Analytics, which are directed toward identifying patterns of discourse, interaction, and public sentiment. To provide a robust theoretical framework for analyzing audience response, this research applies Stuart Hall's Reception Theory, which categorizes audience decoding into three positions: dominant-hegemonic, negotiated, and oppositional. This framework allows for a deep interpretative analysis of how the public internalizes or resists the theological narratives presented in the podcast

B. Data Sources

To ensure a comprehensive and multidimensional analysis, the data for this research are categorized into two primary types. The primary data consist of the core transcript from the Curhat Bang Denny Sumargo podcast episode, "God is Only One, Why Are Religions Different?", as well as a robust dataset of 33,290 YouTube comments extracted directly from the video using automated computational tools.

Complementing this, the secondary data include a wide array of scientific literature, previous studies on digital communication and interfaith interaction, and foundational theoretical texts regarding the mediatization of religion and media ecology. These secondary sources serve to support the contextualization of the findings and provide a rigorous academic framework for interpreting the patterns of public reception and discourse observed in the digital space.

C. Collection Technique and Analysis Data

The data collection was executed systematically using CommuAnalytic.org, a specialized computational research tool designed for social media data acquisition (Sulung & Muspawi, 2024). Data extraction process encompassed the duration of the conversation, collecting comments posted from the moment the video was first published in July 2023 until the final extraction point in early 2026. The broad timeframe enabled the study to capture both the initial surge in audience engagement and the long-term deliberative interactions that ensued. The process involved several rigorous stages, beginning with the identification of the specific YouTube URL as the research object, followed by the extraction of 33,290 comments, metadata, and timestamps via the YouTube Video Comments Collector module.

After collecting the raw dataset, which comprised 33,290 comments, a rigorous automated data cleaning process was carried out. This initial phase is crucial for ensuring the validity and reliability of the computer-assisted analysis. The cleaning protocol is an algorithmic process that systematically filters out noise from the dataset. This includes the removal of duplicate entries, automated bot text, spam messages, advertisements, and comments consisting solely of URLs or emojis that are unreadable without valid textual context.

The data analysis was conducted through an integrated tripartite analytical framework designed to map public reception comprehensively. Following the data cleaning process, an analysis was conducted to gauge public sentiment and identify strong opinions. This analysis was facilitated using the VADER and TextBlob algorithms. This was particularly evident when considering the 333 English-language comments that had been cleaned and examined from a total of 33,290 comments across all languages.

VADER is a tool that analyses social media posts to understand people's sentiments. Following the filtering of the predominantly Indonesian-language dataset by the platform's language recognition module, comments written in specific foreign languages were identified. The 333 comments in question are those that do not constitute spam and possess identifiable and measurable sentiment features. The 333 comments considered constitute a random sample from the entire English-language dataset. This dataset has been carefully cleaned. The fundamental reason for developing this process is to ensure that sentiment analysis is conducted exclusively on authentic and comprehensible human language, thereby excluding analysis of deceptive and illegible messages. First, Sentiment and Polarity Analysis was performed using VADER and TextBlob algorithms to classify audience reception into positive, neutral, and negative categories, serving as a quantitative proxy for the "decoding" process. Second, Civility and Toxicity Mapping was implemented using the Perspective API and Detoxify machine learning models to evaluate the quality of public interaction by identifying identity attacks, insults, and profanity. Finally, 3D Semantic Similarity Mapping utilized the HDBSCAN algorithm to cluster comments based on semantic proximity, effectively visualizing the "core discourse" of dominant themes and identifying "outliers" representing extreme or oppositional reception within the digital space.

D. Theoretical Framework Integration

Theory serves as the primary analytical bridge, transforming sentiment scores and semantic clusters from mere statistical data into meaningful indicators of the audience's cognitive and emotional engagement (Alhaji Reda & Rokne Jon, 2018). Within this framework, Dominant Reception is identified through a high frequency of positive sentiment and appreciative semantic clusters, reflecting an audience that aligns with the intended message of the podcast. Negotiated Reception is mapped via dominant neutral sentiments and central semantic clusters, which represent a majority audience engaged in reflective and inquiry-based interactions rather than outright

acceptance or rejection. Conversely, Oppositional Reception is traced through outliers in the 3D semantic map and high-toxicity scores, indicating instances of symbolic violence or a total rejection of the theological narratives presented (Hall, 2007; Rosa, 2016). By applying these categories, the study effectively decodes the complex landscape of public opinion in a structured and theoretically grounded manner.

III. Result and Discussion

A. Result

Building on the detailed methodology described earlier, this next section presents the findings from the computational analysis of the Curhat Bang Denny Sumargo podcast. These outcomes offer a data-based overview of the digital public's reception and engagement with the sensitive theological narratives explored, progressing from general interaction patterns to fine-grained details on sentiment, toxicity, and semantic clusters. By integrating these indicators, the study moves from technical data processing to an in-depth examination of message reception in Indonesia's multicultural digital space.



Fig. 1. Video Thumbnail "God Only One, Why Can Religion Be Different?!"

An analysis of 33,290 comments revealed a very dominant "initial exposure effect", with public engagement peaking significantly in the first three months post-publication of the video. The data showed a sharp spike in the number of comments and replies during the period, which subsequently experienced a drastic and steady decline in the following months. The key finding in this phase is that the reply rate is much higher than the main comment, which indicates that audiences are not only passively accepting content, but are actively engaged in chain discussions and debates between users in the digital realm, as shown in Fig 2 below.



Fig. 2. Data Processing Results from CommuAnalytic.org

A key finding from this graph is the dominance of replies during the early phase, which at certain points even exceeds the number of main comments. This shows that the audience not only responds to the podcast content but also interacts with each other, forming chain discussions and debates among users. The high ratio of replies to comments indicates the formation of a dialogic discursive space, rather than mere individual opinion expressions. In the context of theological issues, this

Table 1. Vader and Textblob Sentiment analysis use communalityc

Methods Analysis	Language	Count comment	Sentiment		
			Sentiment Negative	Sentiment Netral	Sentiment Positif
VADER	Inggris (EN)	333	21 (6,31%)	170 (51,05%)	142 (42,64%)
VADER	Portugis (PT)	40	0 (0,00%)	40 (100,00%)	0 (0,00%)
TextBlob	Inggris (EN)	333	8 (2,40%)	251 (75,38%)	74 (22,22%)
TextBlob	Prancis (FR)	36	0 (0,00%)	36 (100,00%)	0 (0,00%)
TextBlob	Jerman (DE)	385	88 (22,86%)	290 (75,32%)	7 (1,82%)

Sentiment analysis using VADER and TextBlob showed that the public response to the narrative "God is One, Why Religion Can Be Different" was moderate and dominated by neutral (51.05% to 75.38%) and positive (22.22% to 42.64%) sentiments. This dominance of neutral numbers indicates that most audiences process sensitive theological issues reflectively and cognitively, rather than reactively. Meanwhile, the high positive sentiment reflects the strong public appreciation for the message of inclusivity and interfaith dialogue built in the podcast. Despite the variation in acceptance by international audiences such as absolute neutrality in Portuguese and French-language commentary, and a slight appearance of negative sentiment in German the mainstream discourse has remained fraught with sharp emotional conflicts. Overall, the low level of negative sentiment (below 7%) proves that a personalized, non-dogmatic approach to communication is successful in reducing polarization, thus turning potential theological clashes into deliberative public discourse spaces.

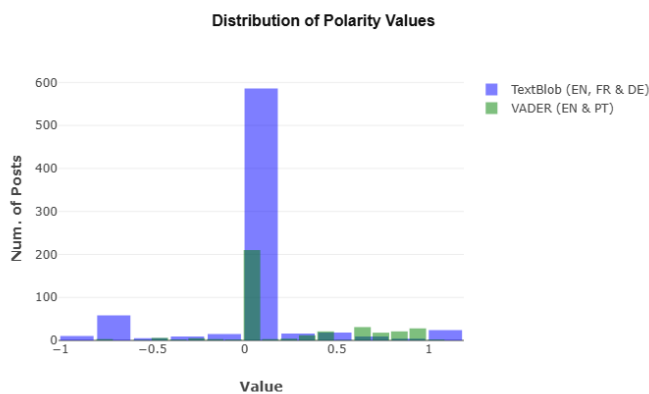


Fig. 5. Diagram Vader and TextBlob Sentiment Analysis Communalityc.org

Polarity distribution analysis using TextBlob and VADER algorithms confirmed that Denny Sumargo's Curhat Bang podcast comment space operated as a deliberative arena, not a conflict zone. A very high concentration of data at neutral point (0) indicates that most of the audience responds to the issue of divinity cognitively and reflectively, rather than emotionally reactive. On the other hand, the moderate spread of positive sentiment reflects public appreciation and support for the message of inclusivity, while the distribution of negative sentiment has proven to be very minimal and limited.

Overall, this absence of extreme emotional resistance proves that the podcast's dialogical and non-confrontational approach to communication has succeeded in reducing polarization, thus encouraging the public to discuss religious plurality rationally in line with the concept of mediated religion.

2) Toxicity Analysis

The monthly toxicity dynamics graph (July 2023 to early 2026) visualizes the stability of the quality of public interaction in response to the theological narrative on the podcast. Although the volume of audience engagement jumped dramatically in the early phase of publication (marked by a high percentage of uploads in July–August 2023), the overall toxicity rate was consistently at a

very low level, well below 0.2. More extreme metrics such as *severe toxicity* and threat even continued to be near zero with no meaningful fluctuations throughout the observation period. In the context of message reception, this temporal trend empirically proves that community interaction is built in a very civilized manner. The fact that discourse on sensitive religious issues does not trigger a sustained escalation of conflict or hate speech confirms that the dialogical message constructed by the speakers manages to resonate positively, locking the commentary space as a deliberative, stable, and free public arena from extreme polarization, sebagai mana yang diperlihatkan pada fig 6.

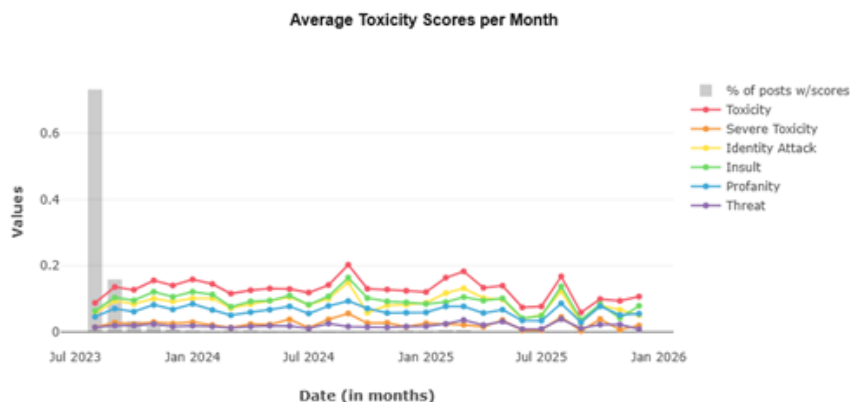


Fig. 6. Toxicity Analysis Result Chart using Communalitic.org

Based on the results of the Toxicity Score analysis using the Perspective API through the Communalitic platform, as many as 25,945 comment uploads (out of a total of ±30,000 comments) were successfully analyzed. Based on the results of the Toxicity Score analysis using the Perspective API through the Communalitic platform, as many as 25,945 comment uploads (out of a total of ±30,000 comments) were successfully analyzed. Uploads that don't contain text or use language that isn't supported by the Perspective API are excluded from analysis. The amount of data analyzed is very adequate to represent the dynamics of public interaction in religious discourse discussed in the video Curhat Bang Denny Sumargo. The following table shows the average toxicity scores for the various categories and the highest values found in the dataset:

Table 2. Toxicity Analysis in Video using communalitic.org

Toxicity Dimension	Analysis			Interpretant
	Rate Score	High Score	Jumlah Komentar Skor \geq 0,7	
General Toxicity	0,10086	0,90611	53	Low toxicity, minor verbal conflict
Severe Toxicity	0,01774	0,71339	1	Almost no extreme speech
Identity Attacks	0,06628	0,78959	2	Identity polarization is very limited
Insult	0,07460	0,83944	40	Sporadic, non-dominant irreverence
Harsh Words	0,05242	0,83264	5	The use of foul language is very minimal
Threats	0,01534	0,68668	0	No explicit threats found

The results of the analysis showed that the reception and public interaction in the comment room was very civilized with a very low average general toxicity score (0.10086). Of the total 25,945 comments evaluated, only 53 posts were identified as exceeding the toxic threshold (≥ 0.7), confirming that the potential for verbal conflict is well under control. The metric of extreme aggression was recorded almost insignificantly; Severe toxicity only has an average score of 0.01774, identity attacks 0.06628, and the threat category is at 0.01534 without a single comment

discourse within the digital sphere, effectively mapping the audience's cognitive and emotional reception.

Table 3. Summary of Main Empirical Findings

No	Analytical Dimension	Key Empirical Finding	Theoretical Interpretation (Reception Theory & Discourse)
1	Digital Engagement	High volume of interaction peaking in the first three months, characterized by a significantly higher ratio of replies to main comments.	Indicates a highly active, dialogical discursive space where meaning is continuously negotiated among users, rather than passive consumption.
2	Sentiment Analysis	Overwhelming dominance of Neutral (51.05% - 75.38%) and Positive (22.22% - 42.64%) sentiments across VADER and TextBlob; extremely low negative sentiment.	Confirms Negotiated Reception (reflective/cognitive processing) and Dominant-Hegemonic Reception (appreciation of inclusivity). Low emotional polarization.
3	Toxicity Levels	Very low average general toxicity score (0.10086), with only 53 out of 25,945 comments exceeding the severe toxicity threshold.	Proves the formation of a highly civilized (civil) digital environment. Demonstrates that sensitive theological narratives do not inherently trigger hate speech or symbolic violence.
4	Semantic Clustering	There is a dense and cohesive 'core discourse' that focuses on God's oneness and tolerance. Toxic or extreme religious truth claims are structurally isolated as peripheral outliers.	Oppositional Reception is effectively marginalized. The podcast functions successfully as an inclusive digital public sphere (digital majlis).

B. Discussion

Study showed that the public response to the narrative of "God, religion, and belief" in Denny Sumargo's Curhat Bang podcast was dominated by neutral and positive sentiments, with relatively low levels of toxicity. Sentiment analysis showed that most comments did not express extreme emotions, but were reflective, informative, and argumentative. This indicates that the religious discourse built through the podcast is moderately accepted by the public, even though the topics discussed have a high potential for ideological conflict (Chen et al., 2018; Senbel et al., 2022). Specifically, the predominance of neutral and positive sentiments, coupled with the semantic isolation of toxic comments, suggests a prevalent negotiated decoding by the audience, where the overarching message of interfaith understanding is accepted, albeit with individual interpretations and contextual nuances (Kushardiyanti et al., 2022).

The Dominant-Hegemonic Reception occurs when the audience takes the connoted meaning full and straight, decoding the message exactly as it was encoded by the podcast creators. In this study, this position is clearly reflected in the substantial volume of positive sentiments, which reached 42.64% (VADER) and 22.22% (TextBlob). Audiences operating within this framework fully align with the podcast's inclusive message. This complete acceptance is further evidenced by the dominant use of appreciative and spiritual emojis, such as the praying hands (🙏) and the heart (❤️). For these viewers, the narratives regarding the oneness of God, interfaith respect, and the boundaries of religious tolerance are accepted without contestation, validating the podcast's encoded ideology of religious civility (Nurhayati et al., 2022).

The most prominent decoding position observed in this public interaction is the Negotiated Reception, evidenced by the overwhelming dominance of neutral sentiments accounting for 51.05% to 75.38% of the total comments. In a negotiated position, the audience acknowledges the legitimacy of the overarching hegemonic definitions (e.g., the need for religious harmony) but makes their own ground rules based on personal faith and local conditions. The public does not

swallow the theological narrative whole; rather, they engage in a reflective and cognitive process to make sense of the pluralistic reality presented in the video (Sandyakala et al., 2019). He public does not swallow the theological narrative whole; rather, they engage in a reflective and cognitive process to make sense of the pluralistic reality presented in the video This type of decoding reflects a critical engagement where the audience accepts the general framework of interfaith dialogue while selectively adapting or modifying its application to their individual belief systems and experiences (Fauzi et al., 2022).

Conversely, the Oppositional Reception manifests through the limited but distinct presence of negative sentiments, high-toxicity scores, and semantic outliers. Although representing a very small minority—for instance, only 53 out of 25,945 comments exhibited a toxicity score ≥ 0.7 —this group decodes the podcast's narrative in a fundamentally contrary way. They perceive the inclusive interfaith dialogue not as a bridge for understanding, but as a threat to their exclusive religious "truth claims (Wang & Chen, 2021). This oppositional stance rejects the podcast's encoded message entirely, often interpreting calls for interfaith harmony as an undermining of their own doctrinal purity or as a syncretic dilution of distinct religious identities (Astari et al., 2023).

The podcast format, guided by a non-authoritative host, successfully operationalizes this principle. By stripping away dogmatic coercion and adopting a conversational approach (hikmah and mau'izhah hasanah), the theological messages delivered by the religious figure do not trigger emotional resistance, but rather invite intellectual and spiritual reflection from a pluralistic audience (Bob, 2025; Marjani, 2023). The findings of this study specifically the dominance of civil, negotiated reception and the significantly low levels of toxicity can be profoundly understood through the lens of Islamic communication ethics. In Islam, dialogue with individuals of different faiths is guided by the principle of *Mujadalah bil Lati Hiya Ahsan* (arguing or discussing in the best possible manner), as mandated in the Quran, Surah An-Nahl (16:125).

Finally, this study proves that popular podcasts function as inclusive digital majlis (gatherings). In the context of the mediatization of religion, digital da'wah (Islamic preaching) is no longer confined to the traditional pulpit. The relaxed, dialogical framing of sensitive issues allows the representation of Islam as *Rahmatan lil 'Alamin* (a mercy to the worlds) to resonate deeply within a multicultural society, transforming potential interfaith friction into a constructive, deliberative public sphere (Choirin et al., 2024). This shift underscores how contemporary media platforms can redefine traditional religious discourse, fostering environments where diverse perspectives on spirituality and belief systems can coexist and interact without necessarily leading to conflict (Setia & Rahim, 2024).

IV. Conclusion

This research comprehensively proves that digital media platforms, especially entertainment podcasts hosted by non-authoritative public figures, can function as a deliberative and inclusive public discourse space (digital council). Through a computational analysis of 33,290 comments on the episode "Curhat Bang Denny Sumargo", the findings showed the dominance of neutral sentiment (51.05% to 75.38%) and positive sentiment (22.22% to 42.64%). This indicates that most audiences process cognitive, reflective, and appreciative theological issues rather than being emotionally reactive.

According to Stuart Hall's Theory of Reception, audience interaction is most in the position of Negotiated Reception, where the public accepts the general idea of interreligious harmony, but still negotiates it based on their personal beliefs. The very low level of toxicity (mean 0.10086) and the semantically isolated oppositional comments confirm that a dialogical communication approach that avoids dogmatic coercion successfully reduces the potential for polarization and symbolic violence. Overall, this interaction in the digital space represents the evolution of da'wah in the era of religious mediatization, which allows the idea of Islam as *Rahmatan lil 'Alamin* to resonate deeply and be discussed civilly during a multicultural society.

Although the study is comprehensive, the reliance on computational analysis algorithms has limitations in capturing the nuances of local language or sarcasm, plus a single focus on the YouTube ecosystem that limits the generalization of findings, as well as a lack of qualitative exploration of the motivations of opposing audiences. To address this gap, researchers are further recommended to conduct cross-platform comparative studies to test the effects of different media algorithms, integrate qualitative netnography methods to explore the cultural meanings behind audience interactions, and examine the phenomenon of shifting religious authority by comparing public acceptance of theological narratives conveyed by formal religious figures versus non-authoritative public figures

References

- [1] Adnjani, D., Kurdaningsih, D. M., & Anwar, C. (2021). Pentingnya Komunikasi Efektif dengan Berbahasa Santun Berbasis Religi Terkait Informasi Wabah Virus di Media Online Abstrak. 3(1), 97–107.
- [2] Alhajj Reda, & Rokne Jon. (2018). Social Network Analysis. In *Encyclopedia of Social Network Analysis and Mining* (pp. 2665–2665). Springer New York. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-1-4939-7131-2_101152
- [3] Arikunto, S. (2006). *Prosedur Penelitian suatu Pendekatan dan Praktik* (1st ed.). Rineka Cipta.
- [4] Astari, R., Perawironegoro, D., Faturrahman, M. I., & Kistoro, H. C. A. (2023). Indonesian Muslim society 's reception of sensation language and invitation to polygamy on social media. *Jurnal Islam Dan Masyarakat Muslim Indonesia*, 13(2), 369–397. <https://doi.org/10.18326/ijims.v13i2.369-397>
- [5] Bob, R. (2025). From the pulpit to pluralism. In Routledge eBooks. informa. <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.4324/9781003036555-37>
- [6] Chen, R., Xin, Z., Xiao, Q., Xiao, R., Xiao, J., Zhang, B., Shen, H., & Lu, Z. (2018). The Digital Landscape of God: Narrative, Visuals and Viewer Engagement of Religious Videos on YouTube. *Proceedings of Make Sure to Enter the Correct Conference Title from Your Rights Confirmation Email (Conference Acronym 'XX)*, 1(1), 1–26.
- [7] Choirin, M., Dwijayanto, A., Yumna, L., & Muaz, Y. A. (2024). Nurturing Moderate Islam : Strategic Da'wah Communication in The Digital Era for Generation Z. *International Journal Ihya 'Ulum Al-Din*, 26(1), 108–118.
- [8] Fadli, M. R. (2021). Memahami desain metode penelitian kualitatif. *Humanika*, 21(1), 33–54. <https://doi.org/10.21831/hum.v21i1.38075>
- [9] Fauzi, E. P., Fasta, F., Nathan, R. J., & Won, S. (2022). Modern Muslimah In Media : A Study Of Reception Analysis In “ Saliha ” Program On Net Tv. *Aspiration*, 1(1), 137–165. <https://doi.org/10.56353/aspiration.v1i2.19>
- [10] Hall, S. (2007). Encoding and decoding in the television discourse. In *CCCS Selected Working Papers (Issue September)*, pp. 402–414). Routledge. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9780203357071-35>
- [11] Ilhami, H. (2022). Mukaddimah : Jurnal Studi Islam AGAMA DAN KOMUNITAS VIRTUAL : STUDI PERGESERAN ORIENTASI KEAGAMAAN DI ERA DIGITAL. 7(1).
- [12] Kushardiyanti, D., Khotimah, N. K., & Mutaqin, Z. (2022). Sentimen Percakapan Pengguna Twitter Pada Hashtag #Nonhalal Dalam Tipologi Eksklusivisme, Inklusivisme, Pluralisme Dan Toleransi Beragama. *Harmoni*, 21(2 SE-Articles), 236–249. <https://doi.org/10.32488/harmoni.v21i2.630>
- [13] Marjani, G. I. (2023). Overcoming Theological Dilemmas : Fostering Religious Moderation through the Resolution of Faith and Rationality. *Religious : Jurnal Studi Agama-Agama Dan Lintas Budaya*, 7249.
- [14] Masrur, M., Zulfa, I. N., Afna, I. M., & Kartika, N. (2025). Toleransi Digital dan Moderasi Beragama Generasi Z di Indonesia : Analisis Negosiasi Nilai di Ruang Publik Media Sosial. 05(02), 765–780.
- [15] Nabila, F., & Yanti, E. (2025). Communication Strategy of North Sumatra Addakwah Institution in Developing Dai and Daiyah Public Speaking Skills. 9(1), 1–9.
- [16] Nuhaa, S. U., Hamidah, N., Nasikhah, A. duritul, Madinah, A., & Jazuli, A. afandi. (2023). Pengembangan Dakwah Moderasi Beragama Melalui Media Podcast dan Media Sosial Berbasis Digital. *NAJWA Jurnal Pengabdian Dan Pemberdayaan Masyarakat*, 1(2), 77–90.
- [17] Nurhayati, C., Ihsan, A. B., & Shaka, M. F. (2022). The influence of social media on religious identity politics among Indonesian millennial generation. *Simulacra*, 5(2), 57–70.
- [18] Rosa, H. (2016). *Resonanz eine Soziologie der Weltbeziehung* (1st ed.). Suhrkamp.
- [19] Saftia, Z., & Wirman, W. (2025). The Influence of Indonesian Religious Youtuber in Socializing Interfaith Dialogue. *Bulletin of Indonesian Islamic Studies*, 4(1), 291–303. <https://doi.org/10.51214/biis.v4i1.1534>

- [20] Sandyakala, M. C., Aliyudin, M., & Sambas, S. (2019). Film sebagai Media Dakwah: Analisis Semiotika. *Prophetica : Scientific and Research Journal of Islamic Communication and Broadcasting*, 5(2), 133–154. <https://doi.org/10.15575/prophetica.v5i2.2215>
- [21] Senbel, S., Seigel, C., & Bryan, E. (2022). Religious Violence and Twitter: Networks of Knowledge, Empathy and Fascination. In *Religions* (Vol. 13, Issue 3, p. 245). <https://doi.org/10.3390/rel13030245>
- [22] Setia, P., & Rahim, R. A. A. (2024). The Nahdlatul Ulama's Contribution to Peacemaking in A Digital Era. *Hanifiya: Jurnal Studi Agama-Agama*, Vol 7, No 1 (2024): *Hanifiya: Jurnal Studi Agama-Agama*, 73–86.
- [23] Sulung, U., & Muspawi, M. (2024). Memahami Sumber Data Penelitian : Primer, Sekunder, Dan Tersier. *Edu Research*, 5(3 SE-Articles). <https://doi.org/10.47827/jer.v5i3.238>
- [24] Wang, Y., & Chen, W. (2021). Cross-cultural Communication Strategies Research of Socializing Apps During Internet Era BT - Proceedings of the 2021 5th International Seminar on Education, Management and Social Sciences (ISEMSS 2021). 454–460. <https://doi.org/10.2991/assehr.k.210806.084>
- [25] Wardana, A. (2026). Regulated religion , fading belief : how Indonesians ' religiosity has quietly changed , 2000 – 2020. January, 1–8. <https://doi.org/10.3389/fsoc.2025.1698036>