MEDIA INFORMATION ON RELIGIOUS HARMONY: DIGITAL COMMUNICATION OF FKUB MEDAN CITY IN THE DEVELOPMENT AGENDA BASED ON SDGS 16

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Abstract
This study aims to analyze the digital communication strategy implemented by the Medan City Interfaith Harmony Forum (FKUB) in framing the narrative of interfaith harmony in the digital public space, as well as its contribution to achieving Sustainable Development Goal (SDGs) number 16. The approach used is qualitative with a case study type. Data were collected through non-participatory observation of FKUB social media content, visual and narrative documentation, and a study of institutional documents. Data analysis follows the Miles, Huberman, and Saldaña model, including the process of collecting, condensing, presenting, and verifying data through source triangulation. The results of the study show that FKUB Medan City not only plays a role as a social-religious mediation institution, but also as an active public communication actor in voicing the values of tolerance through information media. The content produced includes peace declarations, symbolic interfaith campaigns, and participation in youth activities. This strategy has proven relevant in supporting SDGs 16 indicators such as strengthening inclusive institutions, reducing violence, and expanding access to public information. The novelty in this study lies in the integration of the Project Cycle Management (PCM) approach to systematically map FKUB mediation strategies, which have not been widely touched upon in previous studies. This study recommends strengthening FKUB institutional capacity through digital training, integration of SDGs-based policies, and replication of social media-based harmony communication models in other regions.

Keywords: *FKUB, Digital Communication, Religious Harmony, SDGs 16, Mediatization*

INTRODUCTION

The Research and Development and Training Agency of the Ministry of Religious Affairs recorded significant achievements in strengthening interfaith harmony (KUB) in Indonesia through the KUB Index (IKUB) survey which is held periodically. In the last three years, the IKUB value has increased steadily, from 73.09 in 2022 to 76.02 in 2023, and then reached 76.47 in 2024 (Barjah, 2024) . This figure shows a positive direction towards systematic efforts to build a harmonious social order amidst the diversity of beliefs, identities, and cultures. This increase cannot be separated from the active role of the Ministry of Religious Affairs through various

programs to strengthen religious moderation that target various elements of society and state institutions.

However, this positive trend does not completely close the gap that still leaves the potential for friction between religious groups in a number of regions (Pratama & Harahap, 2024) . Several cases of intolerance still emerge in the social and digital spectrum, indicating that harmony has not been fully rooted in the daily practices of society (Fahrun Nisak et al., 2022; Rahmania, 2022; Subchi et al., 2022). The central government responded to this by encouraging coordination across ministries and institutions through the establishment of a Joint Secretariat (Sekber) and strengthening regulations based on the Presidential Regulation concerning Religious Moderation. This effort is a structural framework to strengthen synergy between parties in promoting moderate and inclusive religious attitudes.

The Interfaith Harmony Forum (FKUB) as a strategic entity in the region has a great responsibility in disseminating the values of moderation at the grassroots level (Humaizi et al., 2024) . The representative function of FKUB makes it a bridge between the state and society in maintaining social stability based on diversity. The existence of FKUB in big cities like Medan is important because high multicultural dynamics have the potential to give rise to identity sensitivity if not managed properly. This challenge requires FKUB to not only work in the structural realm, but also to actively and adaptively penetrate the public communication area.

Changes in the pattern of community communication that are increasingly shifting to the digital realm open up new space for the practice of disseminating values of harmony. Social media has become the main arena for the exchange of religious discourse, which on the one hand can strengthen the spirit of tolerance, but on the other hand is vulnerable to becoming a field of polarization if not handled wisely (Asrohah et al., 2025; Rustandi, 2022; Thaha et al., 2025; "The Latent Domains of Religious Moderation Attitudes and Intercultural Competencies Within the Contexts of Multireligious and Multicultural Societies," 2025) . FKUB as a representative institution needs to utilize digital media as a means of development communication that encourages social cohesion and strengthens national identity. This role is vital to reach the younger generation who are more familiar with technology than conventional forums.

Development communication conducted through social media allows for faster, broader, and more participatory message dissemination. Compared to traditional face-to-face communication approaches, social media provides interactive features that allow the public to be directly involved in the production and strengthening of harmony narratives (Farlina et al., 2025; Hadiyanto et al., 2024) . The visual, narrative, and viral power inherent in platforms such as Instagram, Facebook, and TikTok make them strategic tools in reaching a broad, cross-age, and cross-religious audience.

The global development agenda contained in the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), especially goal number 16, emphasizes the importance of building a peaceful, inclusive society with effective and accountable institutions. Indonesia as part of the global community is committed to implementing this agenda through national policies and local initiatives. The role of FKUB as a non-formal institution that functions to strengthen formal institutions in creating social cohesion is in line with the indicators of SDGs 16, such as reducing violence, increasing justice, and strengthening inclusive public participation (Wicaksono, 2023; Yusuf & Komarulzaman, 2022).

Optimizing the role of FKUB in the context of SDGs 16 requires a new approach that is able to answer the dynamics of digital society. The use of social media as a channel for development communication is a necessity in the era of openness of information and

democratization of communication. It is not enough to just have a cultural and institutional approach, but a mediatic strategy is needed that can package the values of tolerance into a message that can be accepted and internalized by the digital public.

FKUB Medan City plays a strategic role in maintaining social stability amidst the characteristics of a very plural and dynamic region. With high population mobility, ethnic diversity, and complexity of religious expression, Medan represents a miniature of Indonesia's diversity. This condition requires FKUB to not only be active in the realm of conventional dialogue, but also to be adaptive to changes in community communication patterns that are now shifting to the digital space.

The phenomenon of mediatization of religious harmony is an important marker of the transformation of the approach to religious communication in the digital era. FKUB is now required to be able to package the values of tolerance in communicative, persuasive, and participatory content, in accordance with the logic of social media interactions. The success of managing digital communication will allow messages of harmony to be spread more widely and relevantly, especially for the younger generation who are the dominant users of digital platforms.

RESEARCH METHOD

This study uses a qualitative approach with a case study type to examine in depth the digital communication strategy developed by the Medan City Interfaith Harmony Forum (FKUB) in supporting the achievement of the sustainable development agenda, especially SDGs 16 (Edmonds & Kennedy, 2020; Weyant, 2022) . This approach was chosen because it allows exploration of the meaning, social context, and mediative dynamics of FKUB's institutional activities in the digital space. This study focuses on the official social media accounts of FKUB Medan City, which are institutional representations in conveying the narrative of religious moderation in a multicultural and dynamic urban society.

Primary data sources come from digital content published by FKUB on the Instagram platform and official website, including visual uploads, caption narratives, hashtags, and user interactions such as comments and reactions. Secondary data sources are obtained from official FKUB documents, activity reports, mass media articles, and scientific literature relevant to the issues of religious moderation and development communication. Data collection was carried out through non-participatory observation of the activities of FKUB social media accounts over a certain period, accompanied by documentation techniques to systematically record content. This approach aims to identify the forms and patterns of communication used in building public awareness of the values of tolerance and harmony (Creswell & Creswell, 2022) .

Data were analyzed using the Miles, Huberman, and Saldaña model which includes four stages: data collection, data condensation, data presentation, and verification (Miles et al., 2020) . The analysis was carried out simultaneously from the beginning of the data collection process, with an emphasis on finding dominant themes and constructing digital narratives. Data presentation was arranged in the form of a matrix and visualization of the relationship between content elements, while verification was carried out through source triangulation, namely comparing social media data with official documents and scientific literature to ensure the consistency and credibility of the findings (Flick, 2022) . This approach allows for a complete understanding of how FKUB's digital communication plays a role as part of the development communication strategy within the SDGs 16 framework .

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

FKUB Mediatization: Projection of Interfaith Harmony in the Digital Era

In the digital era marked by the rapid flow of information and disruption of conventional communication patterns, the Interfaith Harmony Forum (FKUB) is required to not only be present as a social-religious mediation institution, but also as a public communication actor that is able to adapt to the dynamics of cyberspace. Mediatization is the key to this transformation, where the values of harmony, tolerance, and religious moderation are packaged in a digital narrative that is able to reach the wider community, especially the younger generation who live in the social media ecosystem. In this context, it is important to examine the form, content, and public response to digital content produced by FKUB, in order to see the extent to which this institution has succeeded in utilizing digital media as an instrument of development communication. The following presentation presents a tabulation of findings from observations of FKUB Medan City's social media content based on narrative categories, content subthemes, transcript quotes, and analytical findings produced:

Table 1. Findings of FKUB Medan City Digital Content

No.	Content	Findings	Projection of Interfaith Harmony
1	Collaboration of the Mayor of Medan with religious figures	FKUB actively establishes strategic cooperation with the government	Demonstrating synergy between state actors and civil society in building an inclusive and sustainable interfaith dialogue space.
2	FKUB Chairman's controversial statement regarding the Minister of Religion	FKUB's public communication is not always neutral; it can cause resistance.	Opening up space for open discourse, but risking breaking consensus if not ethically controlled
3	Declaration of Medan Rukun	FKUB uses declarative narrative to build a peaceful image	Building a symbol of shared harmony that strengthens the community's collective memory of the importance of living side by side.
4	FKUB's friendship with the Ministry of Religion and the Police	Strengthening institutional networks between state institutions and FKUB	Providing legitimacy and expanding the reach of FKUB as a mediator and catalyst for harmony at the local level.
5	Harmony Awareness Development throughout Medan City	FKUB reaches out to grassroots communities through educational activities	Demonstrate efforts to internalize the values of tolerance through a direct approach to local communities.
6	FKUB's participation in UIN SU student activities	FKUB establishes closeness with the younger generation and academics	Expanding the segmentation of harmony communication to millennials for the sustainability of tolerance values
7	Greetings for religious and national holidays	FKUB frames interfaith messages symbolically	Realizing a representation of tolerance in a digital visual form that is easily accepted by a multicultural digital society.
8	Inauguration speeches for officials, work meetings, and national commemorations	FKUB shows its position as an institution that is relevant to the dynamics of the state	Strengthening the public legitimacy and symbolic presence of FKUB in the national socio-political and cultural structure.

Source: Researcher Observations (2025)

The mediative strategy of the Medan City FKUB in building digital interfaith harmony is evident in various types of content published through its official social media. One of the main findings is the intense collaboration between the FKUB and local government actors, especially the Mayor of Medan. Content that shows closeness and cooperation in establishing houses of worship, for example, is not only a form of functional synergy, but also a symbol of cohesion between authorities in realizing an inclusive public space. This positions the FKUB as a strategic entity in development communication, especially in the realm of socio-religious policy.

However, the dynamics of FKUB's digital communication also present a more complex side. In one of the contents, the Chairperson of the Medan City FKUB issued a controversial statement against the Minister of Religion. This finding shows that the digital space managed by religious institutions is not always sterile from personal or political expression. Although it can be read as part of openness of discourse, this kind of communication also carries the risk of polarization, especially if the message is not delivered with high social sensitivity. This is an important note that harmonious communication is not only about the content of the message, but also about the ethics of inclusive and reflective public communication (Apandi et al., 2022).

FKUB also utilizes declarative moments such as "Medan Rukun" to build an image of an institution that is active in mainstreaming tolerance values. Declarative narratives packaged in joint activities with local governments become effective symbolic instruments in strengthening the collective memory of the community about the importance of peaceful coexistence. The use of event-based content such as this shows that FKUB does not only work in the realm of policy or normative appeals, but also through the creation of cultural momentum.

The silaturahmi activity with institutions such as the Ministry of Religious Affairs and the Belawan Police shows another dimension of FKUB's digital communication that is institutional in nature. The representation of this activity shows that FKUB is establishing connections with other state institutions to strengthen the function of mediation and prevention of religious-based conflicts. In mediative logic, the content of the silaturahmi is not only a documentation of activities, but also a visual statement about FKUB's capacity as a liaison between strategic actors in peaceful social development.

At the community level, FKUB also shows a strong intention in reaching the grassroots through the Harmony Awareness Development activity. This activity is routinely documented and shared on social media as part of the direct dissemination of tolerance values to the community. This activity indicates that FKUB does not only produce narratives from the top down, but also carries out participatory education-based communication work aimed at increasing social and religious literacy of residents.

Another significant finding is the involvement of FKUB in student activities, especially in the makrab event and leadership training involving the Department of Religious Studies at UIN North Sumatra. This participation reflects FKUB's efforts to expand its communication segmentation to the younger generation. This is important considering that the current digital space is dominated by young users. Therefore, the presence of FKUB in intellectual and cultural spaces for young people is a form of long-term strategy in grounding the values of moderation through relevant media.

The content that consistently appears is greetings for religious and national holidays. FKUB routinely conveys tolerant greetings on religious occasions such as Nyepi Day, Eid al-Fitr, Good Friday, and national days such as Kartini Day and the Supersemar Commemoration. This is an effective form of symbolic campaign, because it uses a visual format that is easy to understand, share, and accept in various levels of society. In the context of mediatization, this

kind of content strengthens FKUB's identity as an institution that is not only religiously neutral, but also actively promotes the value of diversity consistently in the digital public space.

FKUB also uses social media as a space to affirm support for the inauguration of government officials and commemorate national days. This content shows that FKUB does not stand outside the state arena, but actively aligns itself with the developing socio-political dynamics. This strategy shows that FKUB utilizes political moments to strengthen their symbolic position as a relevant institution in the structure of civil society and the state.

The projection of religious harmony in all of these contents shows that FKUB Medan City does not only rely on a normative or structural approach, but actively frames messages of harmony into a digital language that is in accordance with the logic of today's communication era. Visualization, personal narratives, use of figures, and public momentum are all part of the strategy to build a representation of harmony that is alive, dynamic, and open to the multiculturality of urban society such as Medan City.

Overall, these findings show that FKUB has begun to transform from a conventional institution into a media-aware development communication actor. However, this transformation still faces challenges, especially in maintaining message coherence, communication ethics, and genuine public engagement. Therefore, it is important for FKUB to continue to refine their digital communication practices so that they can become a model of a religious institution that is not only symbolic, but also substantive in realizing sustainable religious harmony in the digital era.

Development Agenda: Interfaith Harmony in SDGs Goal 16

The global development agenda contained in the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) places religious harmony as an inseparable part of efforts to create a peaceful, inclusive, and just society. In the context of SDGs 16, which specifically targets reducing violence, increasing trust in institutions, and participation in inclusive and representative decision-making, the work of the Religious Harmony Forum (FKUB) can be positioned as a local strategic instrument in responding to these global challenges. FKUB not only carries out socio-religious functions, but also contributes to the development of resilient and wide-reaching social institutions (Arifin et al., 2024; Qoumas et al., 2024). To see the extent to which the activities of the Medan City FKUB overlap with the indicators of SDGs 16, the following is a tabulation of the mapping of the role and contribution of FKUB within the framework of sustainable development goals:

No.	Activities of FKUB Medan City	SDGs Indicator 16	Contribution to Development
1	Collaboration with the Mayor and religious leaders for the establishment of places of worship	Inclusive, participatory and representative decision making	Promoting social inclusion and recognition of religious rights in local governance
2	Declaration of "Medan Harmonious"	Reduction of all forms of violence and violence-related deaths	Educating the public about the importance of living in peace and strengthening public commitment to tolerance.
3	Harmony Awareness Development throughout Medan City	Access to justice for all	Providing social and religious literacy at the community level to prevent conflict and strengthen peaceful resolution.

4	Visits to the Ministry of Religion, Police, and strategic institutions	Effective, accountable and transparent institutions	Strengthening inter-institutional partnerships in building public trust in government and religious institutions
5	Official greetings for religious and national holidays	Non-discriminatory laws and policies for sustainable development	Voicing the values of diversity and eliminating sectarian stigma in digital public spaces
6	Participation in interfaith student activities	Access to information and freedom of expression	Instilling the values of tolerance in the younger generation and expanding the space for interfaith dialogue among young intellectuals.
7	Digital documentation of activities and symbols of tolerance on social media	Transparent institutions & freedom of information	Using media as a tool for social accountability and widespread dissemination of peace values

The collaboration of the Medan City FKUB with the Mayor and religious leaders in the establishment of houses of worship is a real practice of inclusive and representative decision-making as stated in the SDGs 16 indicator. This collaboration is not merely administrative, but reflects a deliberative process between religious communities that contributes to participatory local governance. In the context of a city with a high level of diversity such as Medan, the involvement of religious leaders and the government in one forum marks the formation of an institutional dialogue mechanism that provides space for all voices, especially religious minorities, to be accommodated in the process of developing public spaces.

The "Medan Rukun" Declaration is a collective symbol of the commitment to peace at the city level and represents a contribution to SDGs indicator 16, namely reducing violence. Through this declaration, FKUB together with the government and the community convey a shared message about the importance of peace and tolerance amidst differences. This kind of narrative functions as a public education tool as well as a strategy for strengthening social capital, which is an important prerequisite for preventing identity-based conflicts at the local level.

The comprehensive harmony awareness coaching activities carried out in various sub-districts in Medan City reflect the contribution to the SDGs 16 indicator, which emphasizes the importance of access to justice for all. Through an educational and dialogical approach, FKUB is present as a bridge between the state and grassroots communities in internalizing the values of social justice and tolerance. This coaching also indirectly strengthens the community-based peaceful resolution mechanism, which is a form of restorative justice in the context of interfaith relations.

FKUB's institutional visits to institutions such as the Ministry of Religion and the Belawan Police strengthen the institutional dimension of harmony work. This is in line with SDGs indicator 16.6, which demands effective, accountable, and transparent institutions. This activity shows how FKUB plays a role as a liaison between institutions, strengthens public trust, and builds collaborative governance. This practice is important to ensure the sustainability of religious moderation policies within a mutually supportive institutional framework (Soejoeti et al., 2024).

The content of religious and national holiday greetings routinely uploaded by FKUB via social media reflects the commitment to SDGs indicator 16.b, which emphasizes the importance of non-discriminatory laws and policies. Through inclusive visual and narrative messages, FKUB not only celebrates diversity, but also maintains digital public space as a medium to eliminate

sectarian stigma. This strategy educates the public that differences in belief are not a reason for boundaries, but rather a social wealth that should be celebrated together.

FKUB's active participation in interfaith student activities, such as the UIN North Sumatra forum, shows its seriousness in reaching the younger generation. This contributes directly to the SDGs 16 indicator related to freedom of expression and access to information. The presence of FKUB in youth intellectual spaces not only expands the reach of the message of tolerance, but also ensures that the principle of religious moderation becomes part of the discourse of the next generation who are more egalitarian and open to diversity.

Digital documentation of FKUB activities and the dissemination of symbols of tolerance on social media are real forms of transparent institutional practices as well as media for disseminating peace values. This answers two indicators at once, namely SDGs 16.6 on institutional effectiveness and 16 on freedom of information. In the era of digital disruption, the use of social media is not only a tool for institutional promotion, but also a space for peaceful advocacy that is open, verified, and publicly accountable.

Overall, the contribution of FKUB Medan City to the SDGs 16 indicators shows that this institution has moved beyond its formal religious function to a role as a strategic social development actor. Through digital communication, collaborative approaches, and grassroots work, FKUB becomes an agent of transformation that connects local values with the global agenda. Thus, religious moderation becomes not only a cultural discourse, but also a concrete and measurable instrument for peace building.

CONCLUSION

This study concludes that FKUB Medan City plays a strategic role in building a narrative of interfaith harmony in the digital era through adaptive and participatory communication. By utilizing social media as a mediative space, FKUB has succeeded in reaching various levels of society and producing content that emphasizes tolerance, interfaith collaboration, and strengthening national values. FKUB's involvement in social, educational, and institutional partnership programs also shows real contributions to SDGs 16 indicators, making FKUB an important actor in efforts to build a peaceful and inclusive society.

In order to strengthen the effectiveness of FKUB's digital communication strategy in the future, it is recommended that this institution start implementing a program management approach based on Project Cycle Management (PCM) so that every digital activity can be designed, evaluated, and replicated systematically. The local government and the Ministry of Religion are also expected to provide institutional support in the form of digital content training, SDGs-based budget facilitation, and strengthening multi-party networks across regions. The limitations of this study lie in the focus of the analysis which only observed one FKUB account in one city. Therefore, further research is recommended to conduct comparative studies across regions and integrate analysis of public interaction and audience perceptions of the effectiveness of digital messages delivered by FKUB.

SUGGESTION

Based on the research findings, it is recommended that interfaith harmony initiatives such as those led by FKUB Medan City be continuously strengthened through structured digital communication strategies. Policymakers and religious leaders should prioritize capacity-building programs in social media management, digital ethics, and narrative framing to ensure

messages of tolerance are effectively delivered to diverse audiences. Collaborative networks between government institutions, religious organizations, and community leaders need to be further expanded to reinforce inclusivity and participatory decision-making. In addition, periodic evaluations using measurable SDGs 16 indicators should be implemented to assess the long-term impact of digital harmony campaigns, ensuring sustainability and adaptability to evolving social dynamics.

THANK YOU-NOTE

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