



THE ROLE OF TELEVISION MEDIA IN SHAPING PUBLIC PERCEPTION OF RELIGION

Vika Fransisca

English Literature, Insitutit Prima Bangsa, Indonesia

Corresponding email: vikafransisca1704@gmail.com

Abstract Analyzing the growth of media in the midst of people's lives gives a role in seeing the role of its presence for life itself. This is important to understand because the existence of the media and the embodiment of the world of communication in people's lives are two interrelated essences. The purpose of this research is how the role of television mass media in shaping public perception of religion. Furthermore, regarding the role of religious leaders using the media in influencing perceptions of religion. This study uses a quantitative approach with a descriptive survey method to identify and measure the influence of television media in shaping public perception of religion. This research obtained the results that in order to create a more varied and innovative religious broadcast package, so that it can invite the interest of viewers, it is necessary to pay attention to the principles of television broadcasting in Islam and several theories of mass communication related to television broadcasting. Islam through its holy book Al-Qur'an recommends that there are some of its adherents (such as television people) who call for goodness and amar ma'ruf nahi mungkar, in a gentle (persuasive), firm and correct way, and by giving lessons or advice (either by speech or behavior).

Keywords: *Media, Society, Religion*

1. Introduction

Media comes from the word *medium* which means intermediary. In the perspective of media communication, a tool or technology can be understood and also an institution (Ramli, 2015). In its development, media is divided into types, there are conventional media, namely media that were born in the era before the existence of internet technology and new media, namely media that were born after the existence of internet technology. The mass media means the wider community or the general public or the public. The role of the media in shaping public perception is very influential because the mass media has several functions, namely the information function, the social control function, the educational function, and the entertainment function (As, 2014).

Analyzing the growth of media in the midst of people's lives gives a role in seeing the role of its presence for life itself (Becker, 2023). This is important to understand because the existence of the media and the embodiment of the world of

communication in people's lives are two interrelated essences. Although the media touches more on the outer aspects and communication is in the deepest aspects, the two have an absoluteness that cannot be separated. Mass media has a very large influence in building a multicultural society because of its very potential role in raising public opinion as well as a forum for dialogue between levels of society (McCombs & Valenzuela, 2020). Related to the issue of cultural diversity (multiculturalism), the role of the mass media in Tatang Muttaqin's view is like a double-edged sword, playing a positive role as well as playing a role (Mas'udi, 2013).

The choice of topics to be discussed in the media will affect the public's perception of the topic. The media also plays a role as a medium to convey goodness, a da'wah tool to convey *amar makruf nahi munkar*, the media is a means of da'wah in inviting the community towards goodness and safety. Not only that, the media plays an important role in shaping public perception of religion. The role of the media in shaping public opinion on religion is so great, both in building a positive image and a negative image (Ritonga, 2018).

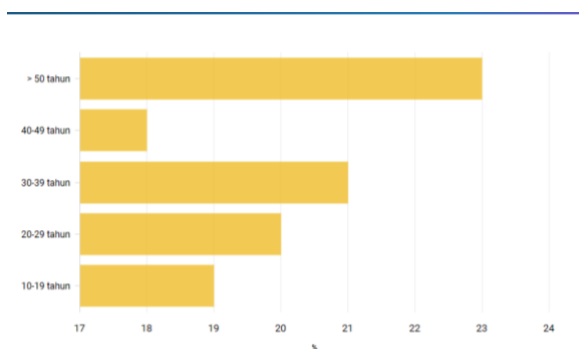


Figure 1: Data on Television Media Users in Indonesia by Age
Source: (Cindy Mutia Annur, 2022)

Based on figure 1, the results were obtained that the majority of TV users in Indonesia are 50 years old and above. The percentage reaches 23%. Then, in the age group of 40-49 years, the percentage of TV users in the country is 18%, the population aged 30-39 years is 21%, the age of 20-29 years is 20%, 10-19 years is 19% in terms of gender, the majority of TV users in Indonesia are women as much as 51%, while men are 49%.

The survey was conducted on 11,500 respondents of TV users aged 10 years and above. The survey was conducted in June-August 2022 in 11 major cities in Indonesia.

Based on this data, it is still relevant to discuss mass media such as TV in shaping public perceptions, especially about religion, which is still very strong. It is supported by the use of agenda setting and management theory used by television mass media.

The same thing is supported by research that has been carried out that mass media can have a positive effect and can also have a negative effect on society. The media cannot dictate to the public. But it is the public who chooses which media show

they want to see. Religion can be a filter in the reception of mass media messages to us.

Despite a lot of research on media and public perceptions, specific research on how television media shapes perceptions of religion is still limited. This research will fill in those gaps by focusing on television content and its impact. Many existing studies focus more on a particular religion or on a particular aspect of religion. This research can explore the comparison of how various religions are represented and accepted by society through television media.

The purpose of this research is how the role of television mass media in shaping public perception of religion. Furthermore, regarding the role of religious leaders using the media in influencing perceptions of religion.

2. Method

This study uses a quantitative approach with a descriptive survey method to identify and measure the influence of television media in shaping public perception of religion (Creswell, 2019). This type of research was chosen to allow researchers to obtain a broad and representative picture of the perceptions formed in society as a result of exposure to religious content on television. The quantitative approach allows for the collection of numerical data that can be analyzed statistically to provide objective and measurable conclusions (Sugiyono, 2016).

The population in this study is adults who watch television programs in Indonesia, focusing on those who watch programs that contain religious content. The research sample was determined based on these criteria, which was then narrowed down through the purposive sampling technique. This purposive sampling technique was chosen so that the samples obtained were in accordance with the purpose of the study, which is to target viewers who are often exposed to religious content on television. The number of samples taken is 300 respondents, which is expected to represent a population of television viewers with diverse characteristics and backgrounds.

The research instrument used was a structured questionnaire with the Likert scale, which was designed to measure the intensity of exposure to television content and respondents' perception of religion as influenced by television shows. The data collection technique is carried out through the distribution of questionnaires online, considering its efficiency and accessibility in reaching a wider sample. The data obtained will be analyzed using descriptive statistical analysis techniques and simple linear regression to determine the relationship between the variables of exposure to television content and public perception of religion. The results of this analysis will describe the patterns of influence that emerge and provide a basis for conclusions about the role of television in shaping religious perceptions in society.

3. Result & Discussion

The Role of Television Mass Media in Shaping Public Perception of Religion

Television is one of the mass media that plays a very important role in society, with the emergence of private television, most of which prioritize information and education programs, means that the competition for television broadcasting will be increasingly fierce until it leads to competition (Nurliana, 2020).

According to Mar'at Effendi, television programs in general affect the attitude of views, perceptions and feelings of the audience (Gantira, Ningsih, & Muna, 2023); (Ayuningtyas & Prihatiningsih, 2018). If there is something that causes the audience to be moved, fascinated or angry is not something special, one of the psychological effects of television is as if it hypnotizes the audience, where the audience is swept away in the atmosphere of a television show.

The first goal of the development of television media is that as a source of information is an inseparable need of human life, and is also one of the most effective persuasive communication tools, for which more serious attention is needed to these media. So it is very appropriate and a step forward if the media is also used as a means to broadcast Islamic teachings. Mass media such as television, radio, newspapers, and the internet are the best alternatives to Islamic da'wah media that have great potential (Nurliana, 2020).

Many televisions in the public have provided a huge opportunity to use them to achieve their desired goals (Lotz, 2014). The various programs he presents that are really varied have made television a media that is liked by every level of society. Television is a medium that can be used for the benefit of its managers, if it is directed to negative things, it will produce negative values and vice versa.

Television can be used as a da'wah medium in developing or instilling Islamic teachings. Television programs can be presented by paying attention to the urgency of Islamic values in society. However, of course, these programs should not lose their functions just because they are peppered with Islamic values. These programs must not lose their own elements that are attractive to the community. The concept is to combine the privileges of the program with Islamic da'wah.

The magnitude of the influence of audio-visual media in shaping public opinion and influencing their perception and behavior in the midst of society. Especially in the midst of the current rapid flow of information technology and globalization, where Islam and Muslims are cornered with various tests and trials (the effect of news inequality). Information war on the screen is inevitable, even Muslims today are a desperate group, if not to be said to be the party that almost lost the information war.

Therefore, in the midst of the onslaught of opinions that corner Islam and the Islamic da'wah movement, it is time for Muslims to have their own television station that serves to defend against misinformation about religious teachings and their followers. Even if it cannot realize an Islamic-based television station, at least Islamic

da'wah which is currently still being developed through television, is further improved by fixing all forms of shortcomings in order to attract viewers to watch it, so that it seems more varied and innovative. In other words, Islamic da'wah, which is currently still given space to be broadcast by television, is not just a supplement to the list of events or limited to mere formalities.

In order to create a more varied and innovative religious broadcast package, so that it can invite the interest of viewers, it is necessary to pay attention to the principles of television broadcasting in Islam and several theories of mass communication related to television broadcasting. Islam through its holy book Al-Qur'an recommends that there are some of its adherents (such as television personalities) who call for goodness and *amar ma'ruf nahi mungkar*, in a gentle (persuasive), firm and correct way, and by giving lessons or advice (either by speech or behavior).

It is indeed a very, very big loss, if television, which today has become a necessity and can no longer be separated from human life, cannot be used as a medium for Islamic da'wah.

Information in mass communication is quite important (Hovland & Lumsdaine, 2017); (Baran, Davis, & Striby, 2012). Information is a component of communication in general. At least when described, in the communication process there are at least three main elements, namely communicators, communicators and messages. This message is what we can then call information. Similarly, if we have discussed other forms of communication such as mass communication. There must also be a process of exchanging or delivering information, only involving a larger number of individuals. The first function of information in mass communication is to provide new knowledge in a wide scope. The scope of mass communication is usually general so that it will be easier to provide new knowledge effectively. Mass media is very influential in people's lives, just like mass media can form diversity in society. This happens because continuous news can cause a person to experience changes in terms of the value system, thoughts, human actions and people's daily lives.

The strength of the media in shaping religious perceptions can be analyzed from one of the major examples of events in 2001, namely the tragedy of the WTC building in the United States, which was reportedly initiated by the Muslim group al-Qaeda. Instantly the incident can form a bad perception of Muslims or Islam. According to Imam Shamsi Ali, an imam of a mosque from Indonesia who lives in New York City, that morning he was heading to his workplace at PTRI, the United Nations, and was among those who felt the impact, not physically, but in the form of insults. So powerful was the mass media at that time reporting Islam as a terrorist religion,

Another incident is that during the world cup event in Qatar it was also very felt, that how the media from Europe formed the perception of Islam. Western media such as the BBC London still report negative things about Muslims in Qatar. The SARA issue is linked to freedom to respect transgender, LGBT people are widely circulated,

even the German team kept its mouth shut during the photo session as a sign of protest against Qatar not allowing transgender people to enter the country that adheres to Islamic Sharia.

The definition of *framing* proposed by Entman is the definition that is most often referred to for research in [framing analysis](#). (Alex Sobur, 2017). Entman explained that *framing* his headlines involves selection and importance in making information more prominent and noticeable to the audience. Entman himself has developed a framing analysis model known as [Robert N. Entman's framing analysis model](#).

The Role of Religious Leaders Using Media in Shaping Perceptions of Religion

Religious leaders are people who do not get formal appointments as leaders, but because they have a number of superior qualities (Ali, 2017); (Blackaby & Blackaby, 2011); (Sanders, 2017), they reach a position as people who are able to influence the psychological and behavioral conditions of society. Therefore, religious leaders have become role models for the community and already have religious knowledge to easily give understanding to the community. Therefore, people who do not understand the religion are present to explain about the religion.

The role of religious leaders has meaning as an effort made by a religious figure to have a positive impact on people's lives, both individually and socially. The relationship between religious leaders and the community is in the patron-client relationship. Religious leaders are considered to be the center of authority derived from religious beliefs and have absolute authority over the interpretation of religious sources, so that in this kind of relationship the relationship is only formed on the basis of obedience. In addition, the relationship between religious leaders and the community is bound by religious emotions that are so close. The charismatic power possessed is increasingly binding the community. Likewise, the role of religious leaders who are considered as a source of solving their religious problems, further strengthens these relationships

Regarding the roles, functions and obligations of these religious figures; Umar Hasyim stated that there are six functions, roles and responsibilities of religious leaders as Islamic religious broadcasters, spiritual leaders, bearers of the mandate of Allah swt, ummah coaches, ummah guides, and truth enforcers. Thus, religious leaders occupy a very important position in society, especially as a bridge from the process of transmitting religious values/rules. Religious leaders are seen as figures who understand various issues of religious law, both related to worship and muamalat (Widiastuti, 2017)

1. Religious coaching carried out by religious leaders and community leaders in adolescents in Rantau Panjang Village has been successful, as can be seen from the change in behavior in adolescents.

2. Preach the values of piety that can improve the quality of the faith of ma'mum or his followers. For example, in programs carried out by TV One such as Tabligh Akbar, or in Indosiar and MNC are lectures "mamah dedeh". Furthermore, in every Ramadan, there is always a tausiyah broadcast from Q.H Quraisyhab and other TV programs.
3. Efforts made by religious leaders in order to develop religious tolerance are through dialogue between religious leaders and fostering followers of their respective religions. As done by one of the religious figures who is currently *being hyped* , Habib Ja'far. On several occasions, he often performs and conducts dialogues between religious people.
4. Always preach the steps in conveying the message of religious tolerance. Because of the fact that currently the thing that should be echoed apart from the Faith is to maintain the unity and unity of religious people and fulfill the rights and obligations as religious people in the state of Indonesia.

4. Conclusion

Based on the results of analysis from various references that discuss the role of television media in shaping public perception of religion To create a more varied and innovative religious broadcast package, so that it can invite the interest of viewers, it is necessary to pay attention to the principles of television broadcasting in Islam and several theories of mass communication related to television broadcasting. Islam through its holy book Al-Qur'an recommends that there are some of its adherents (such as television personalities) who call for goodness and amar ma'ruf nahi mungkar, in a gentle (persuasive), firm and correct way, and by giving lessons or advice (either by speech or behavior).

It is indeed a very, very great loss, if television, which today has become a necessity and can no longer be separated from human life, cannot be used as a medium for Islamic da'wah.

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