

Constructing Religious Tolerance in Indonesia's Digital Public Sphere: A Critical Discourse Analysis of the *Log In* Interfaith Podcast on YouTube

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Abstract

Purpose: This study investigates how religious tolerance is discursively constructed, mediated, and received in *Log In*, a prominent Indonesian interfaith podcast on YouTube. It examines the linguistic strategies through which tolerance is articulated, the representation of religious participants, and the ways audiences interpret interfaith narratives within Indonesia's digital public sphere. **Methodology:** The study employs Fairclough's three-dimensional Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA), complemented by Social Media Critical Discourse Studies and the mediatization of religion perspective. An intensive single-case design integrates three sources of digital data: an 11,826-word full-episode transcript, YouTube platform metadata, and 1,236 relevance-ranked top-level audience comments. The analysis combines lexical-frequency analysis, thematic coding, qualitative discourse analysis, and descriptive analysis of audience engagement. **Findings:** Religious tolerance is constructed through inclusive pronominalization, affective vocabulary, modal expressions that frame tolerance simultaneously as an achievable possibility and a moral responsibility, and humor that facilitates the negotiation of religious difference. The predominance of the inclusive pronoun *kita* ("we") constructs a collective interfaith subject, while uneven participant-reference frequencies reveal representational asymmetries beneath the podcast's egalitarian framing, although these frequencies should not be interpreted as direct measures of speaking time. Audience reception further demonstrates that nationalist validation generated the strongest aggregate engagement within the sampled comments, indicating that interfaith harmony is frequently interpreted through national identity rather than exclusively through theological or religious categories. The episode's closing multi-faith prayer also illustrates an emerging form of mediated interreligious practice conceptualized here as a digital interfaith ritual. **Implications:** The findings demonstrate that digital tolerance is not merely communicated through social media but co-produced through religious discourse, entertainment conventions, platform visibility, audience participation, and Indonesian nationalist narratives. They also highlight the need to consider representational inequality and platform-mediated visibility when evaluating apparently inclusive digital religious spaces. **Originality:** This study advances scholarship on digital religion, mediatization, and critical discourse by integrating transcript analysis, platform metadata, and audience reception into a single analytical framework. It provides evidence from a Muslim-majority, religiously plural society and shows how tolerance in the digital public sphere emerges through the intersection of linguistic inclusion, media logic, religious representation, and national belonging.

Keywords: Critical Discourse Analysis; Digital Religion; Interfaith Dialogue; Mediatization; Religious Tolerance; YouTube

INTRODUCTION

Indonesia is home to the world's largest Muslim population alongside substantial Protestant, Catholic, Hindu, Buddhist, and Confucian communities, making religious plurality a central feature of its social and political life (Hefner, 2021; Intan, 2023; Prasetyo & Halimatusa'diyah, 2024). This pluralist identity is institutionally associated with Pancasila and the constitutional recognition of six religions. Nevertheless, formal pluralism coexists with recurring interreligious tensions, including the marginalization of religious minorities and the circulation of intolerant religious discourse in the post-

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Received: May 12, 2025; Revised: November 26, 2025; Accepted: December 29, 2025

Reformasi era (Arifianto, 2020; Menchik, 2016; Mietzner & Muhtadi, 2018; Yahya & Susilo, 2024). Digital platforms have become increasingly important arenas in these processes because they enable competing religious narratives, identities, and authorities to circulate and interact publicly (Faizin, Fitri, Maylawati, Rizqullah, & Ramdhani, 2025; Kholili, Izudin, & Hakim, 2024). Consequently, understanding religious tolerance in contemporary Indonesia requires attention not only to institutional and theological relations but also to the digital environments in which interfaith meanings are produced, circulated, and negotiated.

YouTube is particularly significant because it combines audiovisual communication, entertainment conventions, audience participation, and platform-based distribution. Scholarship on digital religion has shown that digital media do more than disseminate religious content; they also reshape religious authority, identity, community, and intergroup encounters (Bunt, 2018; Campbell, 2012; Evolvi, 2022). Research on Muslims and social media similarly demonstrates that online environments have become important sites of identity formation and authority negotiation (Hashmi, Rashid, & Ahmad, 2021; Larsson & Willander, 2025). In Indonesia, religious actors have increasingly adapted their communicative practices to platform-specific media environments (Kholili et al., 2024). Within this context, Deddy Corbuzier's YouTube channel has hosted the *Log In* series, which brings representatives of different religious traditions into informal interfaith conversations. The episode examined in this study was uploaded on April 9, 2024, on the eve of Eid al-Fitr, and had accumulated approximately 8.7 million views, 246,952 likes, and 17,650 comments at the time the study's metadata were collected. Its substantial digital visibility makes it a relevant case for examining how interfaith tolerance is articulated and received within a popular Indonesian media setting.

Despite growing scholarship on religion and digital media, several gaps remain relevant to this case. First, studies of interfaith discourse in Indonesia have more often examined established political, broadcast, or journalistic contexts than contemporary video-podcast formats (Menchik, 2016; Mietzner & Muhtadi, 2020; Setianto, 2026). Larsson and Willander's (2025) systematic review of 359 studies on Muslims and social media between 2010 and 2022 also indicates that research has concentrated on established social-media practices and forms, leaving newer audiovisual conversational formats comparatively less examined. Second, Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) has been widely applied to political, religious, and media discourse (Fairclough, 2010; Van Dijk, 2001; Wodak & Meyer, 2015), while its combination with podcast transcripts, platform metadata, and audience comments remains underexplored. Recent developments in Social Media Critical Discourse Studies provide a basis for extending discourse analysis to participatory digital environments such as YouTube (Kopf, 2026). Third, the mediatization of religion theory has largely developed from Western contexts, creating opportunities to examine how media logic operates in a pluralist Muslim-majority society (Hjarvard, 2008, 2013, 2016; Lövheim, 2011). Fourth, audience engagement with interfaith digital content has received comparatively limited attention in Indonesian digital-religion research (Rane, 2022), despite growing evidence that digital platforms shape religious identity and belonging (Abanoz, 2022; Budiman, 2024; Haq & Kwok, 2024).

To address these gaps, this study conducts an intensive single-case analysis of a full interfaith podcast episode by integrating an 11,826-word transcript, YouTube metadata, and 1,236 sampled top-level audience comments. The theoretical framework assigns distinct analytical functions to three complementary perspectives. Fairclough's (2003, 2010) three-dimensional CDA provides the primary analytical architecture by examining discourse as text, discursive practice, and social practice three-dimensional Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA), which conceptualizes discourse as simultaneously a linguistic text, a discursive practice, and a social practice. At the textual level, it guides analysis of lexical,

grammatical, and rhetorical choices; at the discursive-practice level, it supports examination of production, representation, and audience engagement; and at the social-practice level, it connects these patterns with broader structures of Indonesian religious pluralism (Van Dijk, 2001; Wodak & Meyer, 2015). Social Media Critical Discourse Studies further helps adapt this architecture to participatory digital environments in which production and consumption are interconnected (Kopf, 2026) including attention to comparatively less visible voices and discursive absences (Slemon, 2025).

Within this framework, mediatization of religion theory explains how the podcast's religious discourse is shaped by media logic, including the informal conversational format, entertainment orientation, visibility practices, and platform-based circulation (Hjarvard, 2008, 2013, 2016). Rather than treating media as a neutral channel, this perspective considers how religious communication adapts to the conventions through which digital content becomes publicly accessible and meaningful. Recent work on digital media and religious community formation further supports this perspective (Muller & Friemel, 2024), while Indonesian research shows how religious actors negotiate platform-specific forms of communication (Kholili et al., 2024). Digital religion scholarship, in turn, provides the broader interpretive context for understanding how online and offline religious practices, institutional identities, popular culture, and personal engagement intersect (Campbell, 2012; Evolvi, 2022). Evolvi's (2022) concept of hypermediated religious spaces is particularly relevant to a podcast that brings institutional religious representatives into an informal, entertainment-oriented digital setting. Supplementary concepts concerning performativity, humor, liminality, and counter-discourse are used only as secondary interpretive lenses in the analysis rather than as co-equal theoretical frameworks.

These perspectives converge on the proposition that the interfaith podcast should be understood not simply as a channel transmitting pre-existing ideas of tolerance, but as a mediated discursive environment in which meanings of tolerance are produced, circulated, interpreted, and contested in relation to platform conventions and Indonesian national-religious contexts (Budiman, 2024; Menchik, 2016). Accordingly, this study asks: (RQ1) What linguistic and rhetorical strategies are employed in constructing tolerance narratives in the podcast? (RQ2) How do the production practices of the podcast and engagement within the sampled audience comments reflect patterns of representation and power among participating religious groups? (RQ3) How do tolerance narratives in the podcast relate to broader socio-political contexts of religious pluralism in contemporary Indonesia?

RESEARCH METHOD

This study employs a qualitative research design based on Fairclough's (2003, 2010) three-dimensional CDA framework, extended by the Social Media Critical Discourse Studies (SM-CDS) approaches outlined by Kopf (2026). A single-case intensive analysis approach was chosen over a comparative multi-episode analysis to achieve the depth of textual, discursive, and social analysis that CDA requires. As Yin (2018) argues, single-case designs are appropriate when the case represents a critical, revelatory, or extreme instance of the phenomenon under study. The analyzed episode fulfills this criterion by uniquely bringing together all six state-recognized religions in a single, unmediated conversational format, an unprecedented configuration in Indonesian interfaith media.

Three data sources were employed. First, the complete audio-visual episode (duration: 1 hour 41 minutes 6 seconds) uploaded to the YouTube channel 'Deddy Corbuzier' (video ID: 5ACmPpEPWks; published April 9, 2024) was transcribed in full using OpenAI Whisper (medium model, Indonesian language specification), yielding a corpus of 11,826 words across 2,949

segments. Second, video metadata was collected via the YouTube Data API v3 on April 10, 2026, capturing engagement statistics (8,741,572 views; 246,952 likes; 17,650 comments) and descriptive metadata. Third, audience comments were systematically retrieved using the YouTube Data API v3 (maxResults: 100; order: relevance), yielding 1,236 top-level comments and 509 replies, for a total of 1,745 comment records with a combined 148,727 likes. Comment analysis is theoretically grounded in the understanding that YouTube's comment section constitutes a site of audience reception, discourse reproduction, and counter-discourse production (Abanoz, 2022; Haq & Kwok, 2024).

The episode features six religious leaders: Habib Jafar (Islamic scholar and social media personality), Romo Aan (Catholic priest, Diocese of Bekasi), Pendeta Brian (Protestant pastor), Yan Mita (Hindu Balinese practitioner), Bante Dira (Buddhist monk), and Chris (Confucian community leader). The podcast is hosted by comedian and media personality Onadio Leonardo ('Natta') within the 'Log In' series on Deddy Corbuzier's channel. Participants were purposively selected by the production team for their recognized status within their respective communities and their prior engagement with public interfaith discourse.

Transcript analysis followed Fairclough's three-dimensional model. At the text dimension (Dimension 1), the corpus was subjected to lexical frequency analysis using Python (pandas, re, collections libraries), identifying 422 occurrences of 'agama' (religion), 66 of 'Indonesia', 51 of 'toleransi' (tolerance), and modal analysis revealing 254 instances of the inclusive pronoun 'kita' (we). Thematic coding mapped the corpus into seven analytical themes: tolerance definition (T1, 13 occurrences), plural coexistence (T2, 15), respect for difference (T3, 17), national identity (T4, 75), religious authority (T5, 155), informal dialogue (T6, 24), and platform mediatization (T7, 36). At the discursive practice dimension (Dimension 2), production analysis examined speaker distribution patterns and turn-taking structures; consumption analysis examined the 1,236 audience comments through thematic categorization and sentiment analysis. The analytical approach to comments draws on Abanoz's (2022) corpus linguistics methodology for YouTube comment analysis and Ul Haq and Kwok's (2024) framework for studying cross-cultural religious encounters on social media. At the social practice dimension (Dimension 3), findings were contextualized against the broader Indonesian socio-political landscape of religious pluralism, drawing on Mietzner and Muhtadi (2018) and Menchik (2016) for macro-level contextualization.

Comment analysis employed both quantitative (frequency counts, likes aggregation, sentiment classification) and qualitative (close reading of high-engagement comments) approaches. Sentiment analysis used keyword-based classification: 429 comments (34.7%) were classified as positive, 49 (4.0%) as negative, and 758 (61.3%) as neutral. Thematic categorization yielded eight comment categories mapped against the total comment count and aggregate likes.

Transcription accuracy was verified by cross-referencing the Whisper output with the audio across all 98 tolerance-relevant segments. Analytical validity was strengthened through data triangulation across three independent sources (transcript, comments, metadata). The researcher acknowledges a potential reflexivity concern: as an analyst embedded in the Indonesian socio-religious context, subjective interpretive frames inevitably inflect the analysis. This is addressed through transparent methodological documentation, as advocated by Slemon (Slemon, 2025) in her methodological reflections on CDA, and by attending equally to affirmative and counter-discursive data.

RESULTS

Text Analysis: Linguistic Construction of Tolerance

The textual analysis reveals that religious tolerance is constructed through a recurring combination of inclusive pronouns, affective vocabulary, modal expressions, national identity markers, and informal interactional devices. The explicit term *toleransi* (tolerance) appears 51 times in the corpus and is accompanied by semantically related expressions such as *kasih* (love/affection), *cinta* (love), *bersama* (together), and *saling* (mutual). Rather than relying on a single lexical marker, the episode therefore develops a broader semantic field in which tolerance is associated with collectivity, affection, possibility, obligation, and national belonging. Table 1 presents the principal lexical and modal patterns identified in the transcript.

Table 1. Lexical and Modal Frequency Analysis of Tolerance-Related Terms

Category	Term/Marker	Frequency	Analytical Function
Inclusive pronoun	<i>kita</i> (we-inclusive)	254	Collective subject construction
Inclusive pronoun	<i>kita semua</i> (all of us)	11	Intensified collectivization
Exclusive pronoun	<i>kami</i> (we-exclusive)	32	In-group delimitation
Tolerance lexicon	<i>toleransi</i> (tolerance)	51	Explicit value signifier
Affective lexicon	<i>kasih</i> (love/affection)	22	Emotional bonding
Affective lexicon	<i>cinta</i> (love)	20	Emotional bonding
National identity	Indonesia	66	Supra-religious unifier
Modal: possibility	<i>bisa</i> (can/possible)	79	Tolerance as achievable
Modal: obligation	<i>harus</i> (must/should)	55	Tolerance as moral duty
Informal discourse	Laughter markers	24	Depoliticization via humor
Platform reference	<i>Log In / login</i>	36	Mediatization awareness

The most prominent linguistic pattern in Table 1 is the predominance of the first-person plural inclusive pronoun *kita*, which occurs 254 times, compared with only 32 occurrences of the exclusive *kami*. In Indonesian, *kita* includes the interlocutor, whereas *kami* excludes them, making this distinction particularly relevant to the construction of social boundaries (Sneddon, 2003). The approximately 8:1 difference suggests that speakers consistently favor an inclusive form of collective identification. This study refers to this pattern as inclusive pronominalization, through which participants are repeatedly positioned within a shared interfaith “we.” The expression *kita semua* (all of us), which appears 11 times, further reinforces this collective positioning by explicitly extending inclusion across individual religious

affiliations. At the textual level, religious difference is therefore acknowledged without being allowed to constitute the dominant grammatical boundary between participants.

A second pattern concerns modality. The modal expression *bisa* (can/possible) occurs 79 times, while *harus* (must/should) appears 55 times. Their recurrent use produces two complementary representations of tolerance. Through *bisa*, harmonious interreligious relations are presented as possible and achievable; through *harus*, they are simultaneously framed as a normative responsibility. By contrast, explicitly prohibitive or religiously prescriptive expressions are comparatively rare: *tidak boleh* (not permitted) occurs only twice and *wajib* (religiously obligatory) once. The modal structure of the episode thus relies less on prohibition or doctrinal command than on a combination of possibility and moral persuasion. In Austin's (1975) terms, such expressions may also be read as performative insofar as statements about living together do not merely describe tolerance but participate in enacting the interfaith relationship being represented in the conversation.

The affective vocabulary supports this inclusive modal structure. The recurrence of *kasih* (22 occurrences) and *cinta* (20 occurrences), together with *bersama* and *saling*, associates interreligious relations with emotional proximity and reciprocity rather than with abstract doctrinal agreement. Significantly, "Indonesia" appears 66 times, exceeding the explicit frequency of *toleransi*. Within the textual corpus, national identity therefore emerges as an important supra-religious reference through which religious plurality can be articulated within a common social framework. This does not by itself establish how audiences interpret the relationship between nationalism and tolerance, but it shows that national belonging is already linguistically embedded in the episode's construction of interfaith coexistence.

Humor constitutes another recurrent interactional feature. Twenty-four segments contain identifiable laughter markers or informal banter, including exchanges concerning tattoos, religious practices, and minority status. These moments do not simply interrupt the discussion of tolerance; rather, they frequently occur when participants negotiate potentially sensitive differences. Humor lowers the interactional intensity of such moments and enables differences to be voiced without necessarily requiring theological resolution. Consistent with Billig's (2005) discussion of comic discourse, humor in the episode therefore functions as a resource for managing social awkwardness and maintaining affective solidarity across religious boundaries.

These textual patterns show that tolerance in the *Log In* podcast is constructed through a layered discursive repertoire rather than through the explicit vocabulary of tolerance alone. Inclusive pronominalization establishes a shared collective subject; affective terms humanize interreligious relations; modal expressions frame coexistence as both achievable and morally desirable; national references provide a broader framework of belonging; and humor facilitates the conversational management of difference. At the textual level of Fairclough's framework, the resulting discourse constructs tolerance primarily through relational inclusion and shared belonging rather than through theological convergence or prescriptive religious language.

Discursive Practice: Production and Consumption

At the level of discursive practice, the analysis shifts from the lexical and grammatical construction of tolerance to the conditions through which the discourse is produced, represented, circulated, and received. The *Log In* episode is particularly significant in this respect because its interfaith message is embedded in a deliberately constructed media event rather than in an unmediated encounter among religious actors. Six representatives of Indonesia's officially recognized religious traditions are brought together with a host in a single studio setting, creating

a visual impression of proximity, equality, and conversational openness. Their physical co-presence is itself part of the episode's representational logic: religious differences that are institutionally and theologically distinct are spatially reorganized within a shared media environment and presented to viewers as participants in a common conversation. At the same time, this apparent visual equality does not necessarily imply an equal distribution of discursive prominence. The organization of participants, the host's interventions, the circulation of specific religious references, and the subsequent engagement of YouTube audiences all help determine which actors, meanings, and interpretations become more visible than others. Accordingly, the analysis of discursive practice addresses two interconnected processes: production, concerning the representation and relative prominence of religious participants within the episode, and consumption, concerning how audiences reproduce, reinterpret, or contest its tolerance narratives through the YouTube comment section. Figure 1 provides the visual context of this mediated interfaith configuration, showing all six religious representatives and the host occupying the same studio space.



Figure 1. Screenshot of the 'Log In' episode thumbnail on Deddy Corbuzier's YouTube channel titled "LOE LIAT NIH LOGIN!! THIS IS INDONESIA, MAN!! 6 RELIGIOUS LEADERS BECOME ONE IN EID!! – JAFAR," featuring (from left to right) Habib Jafar (Islam), Bante Dira (Buddha), Yan Mita (Hindu), Chris (Confucian), Reverend Brian (Protestant), Father Aan (Catholic), and host Onadio Leonardo 'Natta' in the same studio space.

An analysis of the production practices reveals a significant asymmetry between the egalitarian narrative presented in the episode and the actual distribution of discursive space. Analysis of the frequency of references used as a proxy measure for speaking time and narrative centrality shows that Habib Jafar (Islam, 54 references) emerged as the most dominant voice, followed by Father Aan (Catholic, 29 references), Chris (Confucian, 28 references), and Bante Dira (Buddhist, 26 references), while Reverend Brian (Protestant, 12 references) and Yan Mita (Hindu, 7 references) were strikingly in the most marginalized positions. It should be noted that this analysis included all six religious representatives present in the episode, as ignoring any one participant risked reproducing the very silencing the study sought to criticize. This asymmetry is in line with CDA van Dijk's (2001) thesis on the reproduction of social inequality through discourse, as well as in line with Slemon's (2025) argument that the CDA should pay attention to the 'absence

and silence' of what is not spoken, and whose voices are structurally silenced as important as what is explicitly articulated. This asymmetry is further exacerbated by the context of the production: the episode airs during the month of Ramadan and is part of a content series associated with an Islamic social media personality (Habib Jafar), thus creating a structural bias towards the discursive framing of Islam, even though the surface content affirms equal respect for all religious traditions. Thus, Habib Jafar's dominance in the frequency of reference is not a coincidence but rather reflects a structural condition in which the host's religious identity shapes the discursive architecture of the episode as a whole.

The host's role is analytically crucial. Onadio Leonardo functions not as a neutral facilitator but as an active discourse architect, explicitly framing the episode's tolerance agenda from its opening moments: *'gue pengen mengawali dengan tidak menyebut hanya seolah-olah ada Islam dan non-Islam di Indonesia'* (I want to begin by not speaking as if Indonesia has only Islam and non-Islam). This meta-discursive framing the host announcing what the discourse will not do itself performs a specific ideological function: it naturalizes a more inclusive pluralist norm while acknowledging, and thereby foregrounding, the dominant binary it seeks to displace.

The episode's intertextual density is notable. Habib Jafar invokes the Medina Charter as a historical precedent for Islamic tolerance; Bante Dira references the Pali concept of universal compassion; Romo Aan draws on the Second Vatican Council's declaration on non-Christian religions. These cross-traditional textual references create what Fairclough (2003) terms 'intertextual chains': discursive threads that weave together distinct religious traditions into a common narrative of convergent values. Crucially, these references are invariably deployed to demonstrate inter-traditional consensus rather than theological divergence a selective intertextuality that privileges commonality over difference and is consistent with Corpuz's (2025) observation that grassroots interfaith dialogue tends toward social cohesion rather than deep theological engagement.

Consumption analysis of 1,236 primary audience comments (148,727 likes total) revealed eight different thematic acceptance patterns, the full distribution of which is presented in Table 2. These patterns are best understood not in isolation, but in relation to their respective differential engagement rates, i.e., the ratio between the number of aggregate likes and the frequency of comments that reveal how certain discursive orientations resonate disproportionately with a wider audience, beyond those who actively comment.

The most dominant pattern, both in terms of the frequency of comments and total engagement, was nationalist validation (326 comments; 95,871 likes; 64.5% of total engagement). Audiences in this category interpret and reproduce the content of the episodes through the framework of Indonesia's national pride, constructing Indonesia's religious plurality as a model for the world to emulate. The comments with the highest engagement in this category (9,771 likes) as seen in figure 2 articulate that orientation with prominent structural symmetry: *'Afghanistan harus belajar Islam di Indonesia. Eropa harus belajar Kristen/Katolik di Indonesia. China harus belajar Khonghucu di Indonesia. India harus belajar Hindu di Indonesia.'* Afghanistan must learn Islam in Indonesia. Europe must learn Christianity/Catholicism in Indonesia. China must learn Confucianism in Indonesia. India must study Hinduism in Indonesia. The dominance of this pattern in terms of frequency as well as *engagement* has important analytical significance: the word 'Indonesia' does not function simply as a geographical reference, but as a nationalist marker that is

full of pride and absorbs and transcends the discourse of tolerance itself. These findings confirm Menchik's (2016) argument that Indonesia's tolerance operates communally, not liberally-individually.



Figure 2. An example of audience comments that reflect nationalist validation, namely the affirmation of national pride in Indonesia's religious pluralism as a global model.

The second highest frequency pattern was tolerance appreciation (321 comments; 27,654 likes; 26.0% of the total comments), where the audience directly affirmed the value of tolerance and the significance of interfaith encounters in the episode. Although the frequency is almost equivalent to nationalist validation, the difference of only five comments this pattern results in significantly lower aggregate engagement (27,654 versus 95,871 likes), with an average per comment of 86 likes compared to 294 likes for nationalist validation. This gap suggests that although the discourse of tolerance as an explicit theme is broadly articulated in the ecology of commentary, it is precisely the nationalist framing of tolerance not tolerance as an intrinsic value that resonates most strongly with a wider audience. These findings empirically confirm the study's central argument that nationalist framing operates as a primary emotional infrastructure through which tolerance is given meaning in this digital public space.

The third pattern based on the frequency of comments is positive emotional response (168 comments; 36,409 likes; 13.6% of the total comments), which is characterized by expressions of admiration, affective responses in the form of tears, and national pride. Representative comments in this category include: '*nangis banget pas sesi do'a Yaa Allah, semoga kedamaian selalu Engkau anugerahkan kepada kami*' 'Prayers to God for Your Prayers, May You always give us peace' as seen in figure 3. This affective pattern reflects what Haq and Kwok (2024) identify as the role of digital platforms in producing felt interreligious encounters, in which mediated exposure to interreligious harmony results in real emotional responses that reinforce the audience's identity commitment.

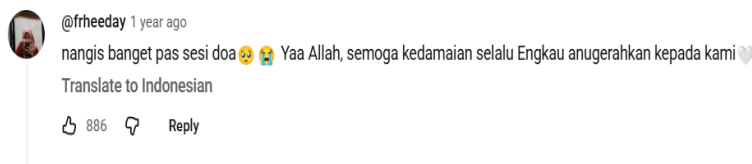


Figure 3. Audience comments that reflect a positive emotional response, are characterized by affective expressions such as tears, admiration, and pride in the experience of interreligious harmony.

The fourth pattern, the aspirational critique (154 comments; 50,738 likes; 12.5% of the total comments), stands out analytically precisely because of its disproportionately high engagement rate per comment: 50,738 aggregate likes from just 154 comments resulted in an average of 329 likes per comment is the second highest among all categories after references to religious figures. Audiences in this category advocate for a wider distribution of content, while calling for national television broadcasts, the addition of English subtitles, and international dissemination, as shown in figure 4. The high engagement per comment in this category reveals a latent but strongly approved audience demand for organically produced interfaith content, a finding with direct implications for media policy.

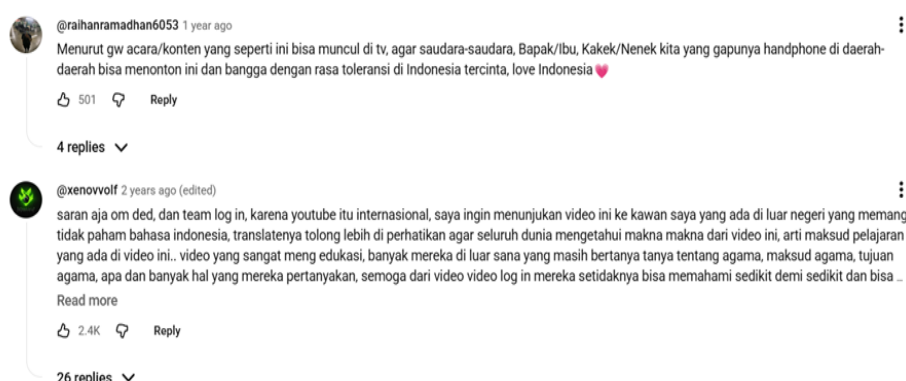


Figure 3. Audience comments that reflect aspirational criticism are in the form of an impulse to expand the distribution of content to a wider media as an effort to spread the discourse of tolerance globally.

The remaining four patterns complement the thematic ecology of the commentary. First, prayer and hope (137 comments; 14,272 likes; 11.1% of the total comments), which contains expressions of hope and prayers from the audience for the continuity of interreligious harmony in Indonesia. Second, references to religious figures (116 comments; 46,181 likes; 9.4% of total comments), which, despite their relatively low frequency, generated substantial aggregate engagement (31.1% of total likes) with an average of 398 likes per comment highest among all categories. This hints at the disproportionate discursive authority of religious figures in the ecology of commentary, particularly Habib Jafar, whose own comments on the video: *'Akhirnya, INDONESIA menjadi bintang tamu LOG IN Episode Terakhir.'* 'Finally, INDONESIA becomes the guest star of the Last Episode of LOG IN' garnered 29,452 comment likes with the most likes in the entire dataset, structurally strengthening the nationalist validation frame as seen in figure 4.

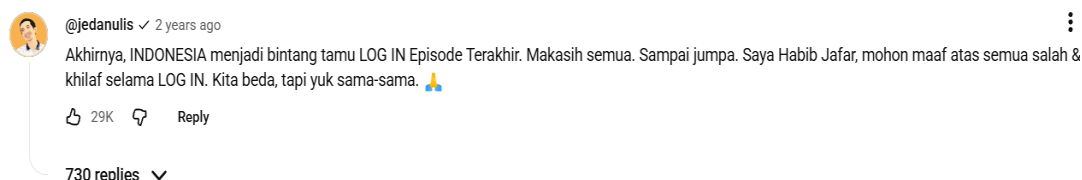


Figure 4. Religious figures' comments that show high discursive authority are characterized by a significant level of involvement (likes) and their role in strengthening the nationalist validation framework.

Third, concrete tolerance testimony (84 comments; 35,118 likes; 6.8% of the total comments), where the audience shares personal narratives about interfaith cooperation that is lived in real life. Representative testimonies include the stories of Catholic and Buddhist youth who helped prepare for Eid prayers in more than twenty mosques as seen in figure 5: *'Kami pemuda khatolik dan budha hari ini sampe nanti malam dapat arahan buat kerja bakti bantuin sodara muslim mempersiapkan untuk besok sholat led lebih dari 20 masjid.'* 'We Catholic and Buddhist youth today until tonight we get directions for community service work to help Muslim brothers prepare for tomorrow's Eid prayers in more than 20 mosques.' This pattern reflects what Abanoz (2022) identifies as the community-forming function of YouTube commentary for religious content, where audiences actively construct a shared interfaith identity through discursive participation, as well as confirming that podcasts' narratives of tolerance resonate with real-life social experiences.

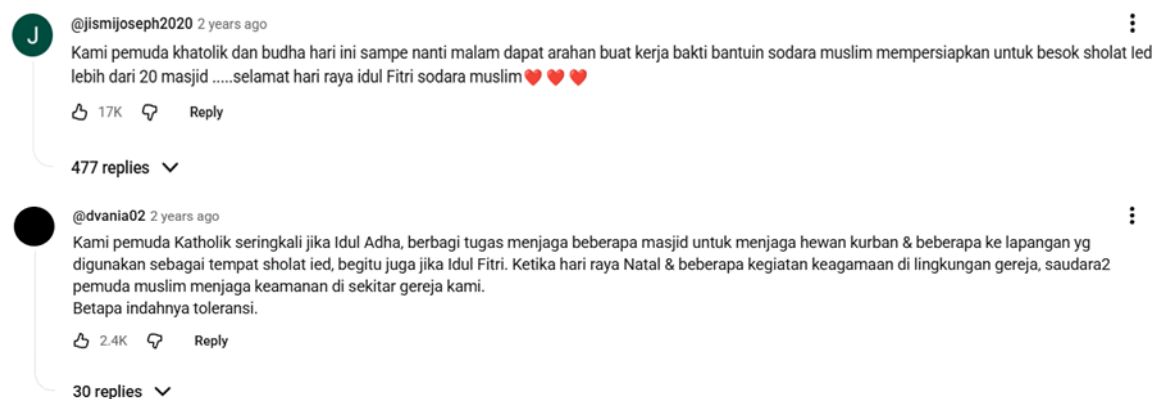


Figure 5. An example of audience comments that show a testimony of concrete tolerance through real experiences of interreligious cooperation as a form of confirmation of the narrative in the content.

Fourth, international comparisons (47 comments; 20,252 likes; 3.8% of the total comments), which is the pattern with the lowest frequency but which substantially replicates the 'Indonesia as a global model' frame of nationalist validation, presents an intensified variant in which Indonesia's pluralism advantage is explicitly compared to the specifically mentioned foreign countries.

Table 2. Thematic distribution of audience comments (n = 1,236; Total Likes = 148,727)

Theme	Number of Comments	% of Total Comments	Aggregate Likes	% of Total Likes	Average Likes per Comment
National identity affirmation	326	26.4%	95,871	64.5%	294
Appreciation of tolerance	321	26.0%	27,654	18.6%	86

Theme	Number of Comments	% of Total Comments	Aggregate Likes	% of Total Likes	Average Likes per Comment
Positive emotional response (admiration, emotion, pride)	168	13.6%	36,409	24.5%	217
Aspirational critique and suggestions	154	12.5%	50,738	34.1%	329
Prayers and hopes	137	11.1%	14,272	9.6%	104
References to religious figures	116	9.4%	46,181	31.1%	398
Concrete tolerance testimonies	84	6.8%	35,118	23.6%	418
International comparisons	47	3.8%	20,252	13.6%	431

Social Practice Tolerance in Socio-Political Context

The discursive construction of tolerance in this episode does not occur in a socio-political vacuum. The episode was broadcast on the eve of Eid al-Fitr 2024 during a period of heightened national attention to religious harmony following divisive political campaigns in the 2024 Indonesian general election, which saw religion mobilized as a major fault line. Scholarship documenting the polarization of religious issues in Indonesian social media (Faizin et al., 2025) confirms that digital platforms became contested spaces of conflicting religious narratives during this period. The timing is not incidental: the host explicitly acknowledges the Ramadan context within the podcast, and Habib Jafar's closing statement directly interprets the Eid celebration as an occasion for inter-religious *silaturahmi* (the Islamic concept of maintaining relational bonds), rhetorically expanding its meaning from intra-Muslim to inter-religious fellowship.

The episode's construction of national identity as the primary frame for tolerance reflects a broader discursive tradition in Indonesian public life that positions Pancasila and Bhinneka Tunggal Ika (the national motto meaning 'Unity in Diversity') as secular-nationalist solutions to religious pluralism (Cribb & Kahin, 2004; Hefner, 2000). Menchik's (2016) influential argument that Indonesian tolerance operates as 'communal' rather than 'liberal-individual' finds empirical support here: the word 'Indonesia' appearing 66 times in the transcript and 389 times in audience comments in both cases more frequently than 'toleransi' itself suggests that national identity serves as the primary discursive container through which tolerance is made legible and emotionally resonant to the audience. Tolerance, in this discourse, is Indonesian before it is religious. This finding is also consistent with Budiman's (2024) analysis of Indonesian digital media users who strategically employ religious tolerance as a tool for constructing national belonging and managing expectations from Indonesian followers.

The episode's closing ritual a simultaneous multi-faith prayer conducted by each participant according to their own tradition constitutes what this study identifies as a novel form of digital interfaith ritual. The host's deliberate choice not to announce 'doa selesai' (prayer concluded), explicitly justified by his refusal to impose authority over others' religious practice, performs what Turner (1969) would characterize as a 'liminal' moment: a threshold space in which ordinary social structures including the authority hierarchies of different religious traditions are temporarily suspended. That this ritual is mediated by YouTube and witnessed by an audience of millions transforms it from a private intersubjective encounter into a public spectacle of tolerance. As Corpuz (2025) observes in his analysis of grassroots interfaith movements, spiritual or experiential dialogue forms that foster shared practices across traditions can have transformative social effects even when they do not engage in deep theological exchange.

The counter-discourse present in the 49 negative comments (4.0% of total) is analytically significant precisely because of its marginality. These comments expressing skepticism about the sincerity of participants, questioning whether such pluralist values represent 'true' Islamic teaching, or noting the absence of certain religious minorities from the conversation, represent what Scott (1990) terms the 'hidden transcript': resistant voices that contest the dominant discourse's claim to universal validity. Their statistical marginality (4.0%) relative to the dominant positive reception (34.7%) reflects not necessarily their social prevalence but rather the affordances of the YouTube platform, which algorithmically amplifies high-engagement content while providing minimal structural support for dissenting voices. This algorithmic structuring of visibility and invisibility is precisely what Slemon (2025) warns against in her call for CDA researchers to attend to what discursive power renders 'nearly impossible' to express.

DISCUSSION

This study has generated three analytically inter-connected findings that together constitute a coherent account of how religious tolerance is discursively produced in the Indonesian digital public sphere. First, at the textual level, tolerance is not a pre-given value that the podcast transmits but a discursive achievement actively constructed through specific linguistic strategies: inclusive pronominalization, affective lexicalization, dual modal framing (tolerance as both possibility and obligation), and humor-mediated depoliticization. Second, at the level of discursive practice, an asymmetry exists between the episode's surface egalitarianism and the structural dominance of Islamic voices in actual speaking distribution an asymmetry shaped by production context, platform logic, and the broader socio-religious landscape. Third, and most significantly for broader theoretical implications, audience reception data reveals that nationalist framing is the primary emotional infrastructure through which tolerance acquires meaning: the 'nationalist validation' pattern commanding 64.5% of total audience engagement decisively outperforms 'tolerance appreciation' as an intrinsic theme. Taken together, these findings position tolerance not as a theological or liberal-individual value but as a communicatively produced, nationally inflected, and media-logically conditioned phenomenon.

The finding that inclusive pronominalization specifically the strategic dominance of *kita* (254 occurrences) over *kami* (32 occurrences) functions as the primary mechanism of collective subject construction is theoretically significant in multiple respects. The 8:1 ratio far exceeds what might be expected in naturalistic conversation, indicating a sustained and systematic discursive

orientation toward collective identity construction across religious boundaries. This finding resonates with and extends Menchik's (Menchik, 2016) influential argument that Indonesian tolerance operates communally rather than on liberal-individual premises: the grammatical politics of *kita* enact precisely the communal imaginary Menchik theorizes. More recently, Prasetyo and Halimatusa'diyah (Prasetyo & Halimatusa'diyah, 2024) empirically confirmed the primacy of social and relational rather than doctrinal dimensions of Muslim tolerance in Indonesia, a finding that the pronominal data in the present study illustrates at the micro-linguistic level. The inclusive 'we' does not erase religious difference but absorbs it into a shared social identity, producing what this study terms a discursive unity-in-difference that mirrors Pancasila ideology at the level of grammar.

The dual modal framing tolerance as *bisa* (possible, 79 occurrences) and *harus* (obligatory, 55 occurrences) constitutes a particularly sophisticated discursive architecture. Drawing on Austin's (1975) speech act theory, this study has argued that such modal construction is performative: the utterance of tolerance in this format enacts the social reality it purports to describe. This analysis finds theoretical support in Corpuz's (Corpuz, 2025) observation that grassroots interfaith dialogue forums tend to foreground experiential and aspirational registers over theological argument, precisely because the latter risks surfacing irresolvable difference. The relative absence of prohibitive modality (*tidak boleh*, 2 occurrences) and religiously prescriptive language (*wajib*, 1 occurrence) further confirms that the podcast strategically constructs tolerance as volitional commitment rather than doctrinal compliance a framing that maximizes potential appeal across diverse religious traditions while minimizing theological contestation.

The analytical treatment of humor as a 'depoliticization strategy' represents a theoretically original contribution. Prior research on humor in religious communication has tended to treat it either as peripheral entertainment or as a vehicle for in-group solidarity (Billig, 2005). The present study demonstrates, through 24 identified humor-containing segments distributed across all thematic categories, that humor functions systematically to manage potentially divisive theological differences by temporarily suspending their stakes. Larsson and Willander's (Larsson & Willander, 2025) scoping review of Muslims and social media identified social cohesion and boundary negotiation as central functions of digital religious communication, and this study provides micro-level empirical evidence of how humor operates as one mechanism through which such negotiation is accomplished without explicit theological compromise.

The asymmetry in speaker representation Habib Jafar (54 references) versus Yan Mita, the Hindu representative (7 references) constitutes the study's most politically consequential finding. It reveals a structural contradiction at the heart of the podcast's explicit pluralist agenda: an episode premised on equal representation of six religious traditions reproduces the hierarchies it purports to transcend. This finding is theoretically consistent with Van Dijk's (Van Dijk, 2001) CDA thesis on the reproduction of social inequality through discourse, and with Slemon's (Slemon, 2025) methodological call to attend equally to discursive absences and silences as to what is explicitly articulated. The structural marginalization of Hindu and Protestant voices in the episode additionally resonates with Mietzner and Muhtadi's (Mietzner & Muhtadi, 2020) critical analysis of Indonesian pluralism as politically performed rather than substantively practiced a 'myth of pluralism' produced through the very rhetorical gestures that claim to enact it. The timing of the episode on the eve of Eid al-Fitr and its production within a channel associated with an Islamic

social media personality further contextualizes this asymmetry as a structural rather than incidental condition.

The discovery that nationalist validation constitutes the dominant mode of audience reception commanding 64.5% of aggregate likes despite representing 26.4% of total comments is the study's most theoretically significant empirical finding and its most consequential contribution to the literature. The finding demonstrates that tolerance, in this digital public sphere, is emotionally legible primarily as a national identity performance rather than as an interfaith theological commitment. The most-engaged comment in the entire dataset (9,771 likes), with its symmetrical structure positioning Indonesia as the global teacher of each tradition's home country, does not perform tolerance as religious humility but as nationalist superiority. [Referensi baru] This empirically confirms and extends Menchik's (Menchik, 2016) communal tolerance thesis into the digital domain, while also resonating with Budiman's (Budiman, 2024) finding that Indonesian digital media users strategically deploy religious tolerance as a resource for constructing national belonging. Faizin et al. (Faizin et al., 2025) documented how the 2024 Indonesian election period saw digital platforms become contested arenas of religious-nationalist discourse, providing the socio-political context within which the nationalist valence of tolerance discourse in this episode must be situated.

The episode's closing multi-faith prayer constitutes a methodologically undertheorized form of digital religious practice that this study identifies as 'digital interfaith ritual.' Drawing on Turner's (Turner, 1969) liminal theory, the analysis demonstrates that the ritual creates a temporary threshold space in which ordinary religious hierarchies are suspended and that its mediation through YouTube transforms this private intersubjective moment into a public spectacle of tolerance witnessed by millions. Muller and Friemel (Muller & Friemel, 2024) have theorized how digital media usage dynamically reconfigures religious community formation, and the present study provides a concrete empirical instance of this reconfiguration at scale: the ritual does not simply document tolerance but produces it as a mediated social fact for a mass digital audience. This finding advances mediatization theory by demonstrating that media logic does not merely repackaging religious content but creates new forms of religious practice what Hjarvard (Hjarvard, 2016) identifies as 'banal religion' produced through popular media culture with potentially transformative social effects.

The counter-discursive dimension 49 negative comments (4.0%) expressing skepticism, theological objection, or concern about representational absence is analytically significant precisely in its marginality. Drawing on Scott's (Scott, 1990) concept of the 'hidden transcript,' this study interprets these comments not as aberrations but as structurally suppressed voices rendered nearly invisible by the YouTube algorithm's amplification of high-engagement content. Kholili et al. (Kholili et al., 2024) have documented how Indonesian digital platforms structurally favor content aligned with dominant social values, a finding that contextualizes the statistical marginality of counter-discourse as a product of platform affordances rather than genuine social consensus. This insight has direct implications for how scholars interpret the apparent popularity of tolerance content: what registers as dominant reception may reflect the cumulative effect of algorithmic curation rather than the actual distribution of social attitudes.

Situating the present study's contributions in relation to existing literature, several points of convergence and differentiation are notable. Convergence is evident with Abanoz's (Abanoz, 2022) finding that YouTube comment sections function as community-forming sites for religious content

audiences: the 'concrete tolerance testimony' pattern (84 comments; 418 average likes per comment) demonstrates precisely this function, with viewers constructing a shared interfaith identity by narrating real-life tolerance experiences. Differentiation from Rane's (Rane, 2022) study of interfaith actor reception is significant: whereas Rane focuses on how religious scholars receive new knowledge about other traditions, the present study reveals that mass digital audiences primarily receive interfaith content through the filter of nationalist identity rather than theological inquiry. Hashmi et al. (Hashmi et al., 2021) documented how Islam is represented across social media in ways that tend toward boundary maintenance, while the present study reveals how a specifically interfaith format can temporarily dissolve such boundaries through inclusive pronominalization and humor though the nationalist framing of audience reception suggests that this dissolution operates at the level of identity performance rather than theological transformation.

Several methodological strengths distinguish this study from prior work in the field. The integration of three independent data sources transcribed full-episode corpus, YouTube Data API metadata, and systematic audience comment analysis achieves a depth of triangulation rare in the digital religion literature. The use of Python-based lexical frequency analysis alongside qualitative close reading provides both breadth and interpretive nuance. The choice of an intensive single-case design, while limiting generalizability, enables the kind of layered three-dimensional analysis that Fairclough's framework requires and that multi-episode comparative designs typically preclude. The full-corpus approach (11,826 words; 1,236 comments) avoids the selection biases that afflict studies relying on purposive excerpt sampling. Finally, the study's integration of the SM-CDS framework (Kopf, 2026) represents a methodological advance in adapting CDA to digital, multimodal, and participatory media environments.

Several limitations must be acknowledged to inform appropriate interpretation of the findings. First, the single-case design, while analytically deep, limits the generalizability of findings. The episode analyzed is exceptional by design uniquely convening all six state-recognized religions in a single unmediated format and findings may not transfer to other interfaith podcast contexts with different participant configurations, production affordances, or broadcasting contexts. Comparative analysis across multiple episodes or channels would be required to assess the robustness and typicality of the patterns identified. Second, the use of frequency of named references as a proxy for speaking time is an operational approximation rather than a direct measure. A full turn-taking analysis using timing data would provide more precise evidence of discursive asymmetry. Third, sentiment classification of comments relied on keyword-based methods, which are necessarily imprecise for a corpus containing irony, colloquial language, and complex religious argumentation. The classification of 61.3% of comments as 'neutral' may reflect the limitations of the method rather than genuine communicative neutrality. Fourth, the analysis necessarily attends to the textual and semantic dimension of a multimodal event: the visual, sonic, and kinetic dimensions of the video camera angles, musical scoring, participant affect, spatial proxemics are underanalyzed. Fifth, as acknowledged in the method section, the researcher's embeddedness in the Indonesian socio-religious context introduces interpretive frames that cannot be fully neutralized, despite mitigation through transparent methodological documentation.

The theoretical implications of this study are significant for three bodies of scholarship. For mediatization of religion theory (Hjarvard, 2008, 2013, 2016), the study provides non-Western

empirical evidence that mediatization does not operate uniformly across cultural and political contexts: in a pluralist Muslim-majority democracy, media logic intersects with nationalist ideology to produce a distinctive variant of 'banal religion' in which tolerance is performed as national pride. This challenges the implicit Western-Christian bias of mediatization theory's empirical base and calls for geographically diversified theorization. For digital religion studies (Campbell, 2012; Evolvi, 2022), the study demonstrates that the 'hypermediated religious space' of the interfaith podcast is not simply a new venue for old religious practices but a generator of novel forms specifically, the 'digital interfaith ritual' that have no direct precedent in offline religious life and that may produce social effects distinct from those of face-to-face dialogue. For CDA (Fairclough, 2003, 2010; Van Dijk, 2001), the integration of audience comment analysis as a third-dimensional data source advances the methodology's capacity to analyze the full discursive circuit of production, distribution, and reception in digital media environments.

The practical implications are equally significant. For media practitioners and interfaith communication professionals, the finding that nationalist framing is the primary emotional vector through which tolerance resonates with mass digital audiences suggests that explicitly nationalist framings drawing on Pancasila, Bhinneka Tunggal Ika, and Indonesia's reputation as a global pluralism model may be the most effective communicative strategy for tolerance promotion in this context. The finding also implies, however, a risk: that tolerance framed primarily as national identity performance may be more fragile than tolerance grounded in theological conviction or lived relational encounter, and may collapse under conditions of heightened nationalist mobilization in which religious and national identities become conflated rather than mutually moderating. For platform governance, the algorithmic amplification of high-engagement content that renders counter-discourse statistically invisible raises regulatory questions about the construction of apparent consensus in digital public spheres. For educational policy, the high engagement of 'aspirational critique' comments (329 average likes) demanding wider distribution, subtitles, and international broadcast indicates an unmet public demand for organically produced interfaith content that formal institutions might productively support.

For future research, four directions emerge directly from the present study's findings and limitations. First, comparative multi-episode analysis across different channels, religious configurations, and temporal contexts would allow assessment of whether the patterns identified here particularly the primacy of nationalist framing are stable features of Indonesian interfaith digital discourse or contingent on the specific production conditions of this episode. Second, multimodal discourse analysis incorporating visual, sonic, and kinetic data would provide a more complete account of how tolerance is produced in the video podcast format, complementing the primarily textual analysis of this study. Third, audience reception studies employing interviews or surveys with viewers would allow the study of whether and how mediated exposure to interfaith content influences viewers' actual intergroup attitudes and behaviors a question that comment analysis alone cannot address. Fourth, cross-national comparative research applying the present study's analytical framework to interfaith podcast content from other Muslim-majority democracies Malaysia, Turkey, Senegal would allow assessment of the extent to which the nationalist valence of tolerance discourse is specific to Indonesia's Pancasila tradition or constitutes a more general pattern in non-Western digital religion.

CONCLUSION

The study demonstrates that tolerance is not a pre-given value transmitted through the podcast but a discursive achievement constructed through an interlocking set of linguistic and rhetorical mechanisms: the systematic deployment of inclusive pronominalization (*kita*, 254 occurrences), affective lexicalization (*kasih*, *cinta*, *bersama*), a dual modal architecture positioning tolerance as both achievable aspiration (*bisa*) and moral obligation (*harus*), and humor as a sustained depoliticization strategy. These mechanisms constitute the podcast's primary textual technology of tolerance production a technology that performs solidarity without requiring theological agreement. The analysis reveals a structural contradiction between the episode's surface pluralist egalitarianism and the actual distribution of discursive power. The 8:1 dominance of Habib Jafar's references over Yan Mita's, shaped by the episode's production context, broadcast timing, and platform associations, demonstrates that the discursive apparatus of tolerance operates within existing socio-religious hierarchies rather than outside them. Audience consumption patterns further reveal that the most emotionally resonant reception mode is nationalist validation (64.5% of aggregate engagement), confirming that the power relation governing tolerance discourse is primarily a relation between individual and nation, not between discrete religious traditions. The study demonstrates that tolerance narratives in this podcast are inseparable from Indonesia's broader socio-political landscape of nationalist ideology, post-Reformasi religious polarization, and Pancasila's constitutional pluralism. The discursive primacy of 'Indonesia' as a signifier appearing more frequently than 'toleransi' in both transcript and comments reveals that tolerance acquires its meaning and emotional force primarily as a national identity performance. This finding empirically confirms and extends Menchik's communal tolerance thesis into the digital domain and demonstrates its operation at the level of mass audience reception.

The study's theoretical contribution is threefold. It advances mediatization of religion theory by providing non-Western empirical evidence of how media logic intersects with nationalist ideology to co-produce a distinctively Indonesian form of digital religious tolerance. It extends digital religion scholarship by identifying the 'digital interfaith ritual' as a novel media-generated religious form with potentially transformative social effects. It advances CDA methodology by integrating audience comment analysis as a third-dimensional data source capable of revealing how discursive constructions are reproduced, amplified, and sometimes contested by digital publics.

Future research should extend the present study's single-case analysis through comparative multi-episode and cross-national designs, incorporate multimodal data to capture the full audio-visual complexity of the podcast format, and employ audience reception methods capable of tracking the actual attitudinal effects of mediated interfaith encounters. The broader agenda implied by this study is the development of a contextually grounded theory of digital tolerance one that takes seriously the nationalist, algorithmic, and platform-specific conditions under which interfaith harmony is produced, received, and potentially contested in non-Western digital public spheres.

Declaration of Generative AI in Scientific Writing: The author used ChatGPT to assist with grammar editing and improving text readability. The author assumes full responsibility for the content and substance of the entire manuscript.

Author Contribution Statement: M. H. P. is solely responsible for the entire research process and manuscript preparation, including conceptualization, methodology design, data collection, discourse analysis, original draft preparation, and final manuscript editing.

Funding Statement: This research received no specific grant from any funding agency in the public, commercial, or non-profit sectors.

Conflict of Interest Statement: The author declares no conflict of interest, whether financial or non-financial, regarding the conduct of this research or the publication of this article.

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