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ANALISIS *CONFIRMATION BIASED* TERHADAP KECENDERUNGAN INTOLERANSI AGAMA

Menurut Pengajar Perguruan Tinggi Berafiliasi Agama di Kota Yogyakarta

Abstrak

Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menganalisis peran Bias Konfirmasi dalam menentukan sikap dan perilaku intoleransi beragama menurut dosen universitas agama di Yogyakarta. Konsep Bias Konfirmasi merupakan salah satu pendekatan kontribusi *Neuroscience* yang dapat digunakan untuk memahami fenomena sosial seperti sikap dan perilaku intoleransi dalam konteks masyarakat dengan keberagaman agama. Melalui survei yang dilanjutkan dengan wawancara mendalam kepada informan, penelitian ini memberikan gambaran mengenai pandangan para informan dalam menciptakan sikap intoleransi beragama. Sikap penerimaan terhadap keberadaan agama yang berbeda menghilangkan bias konfirmasi terhadap berita konflik yang menggunakan identitas agama. Namun pada situasi tekanan kelompok, bias konfirmasi berkaitan dengan sesuatu yang tidak pernah ada dalam ingatan berpotensi menimbulkan sikap atau perilaku intoleran.

Keywords: bias konfirmasi, intoleransi agama, perguruan tinggi swasta berafiliasi agama.

CONFIRMATION BIAS ANALYSIS OF RELIGIOUS INTOLERANCE TRENDS

A Study of the Views of Lecturers at Religious-Based Universities in Yogyakarta

Abstract

This study aims to analyze the role of Confirmation Bias in determining the attitude and behavior of religious intolerance according to the lecturers of religiously affiliated universities in Yogyakarta. The concept

of Confirmation Bias is one of the approaches contributed by Neuroscience that can be used to understand social phenomena such as intolerant attitudes and behavior in the context of societies with religious diversity. Through a survey followed by in-depth interviews, this research provides an overview of the informants' views on creating attitudes of religious intolerance. An attitude of acceptance towards the existence of different religions eliminates confirmation bias towards conflict news that uses religious identities. However, in situations of group pressure, confirmation bias is related to something that has never been in memory which has the potential to give rise to intolerant attitudes or behavior.

Kata-kata kunci: confirmation bias, religious intolerance, religious affiliated universities.

INTRODUCTION

Indonesia is a country that bases its social dynamics and relations based on diversity. The word "kebhinekaan" (diversity) is the philosophy that dominates national and state life. Therefore, harmony and tolerance are two things that can be indicators of interfaith relations. As a country that was established as a national state, it takes a social device that ensures the fulfillment of the needs of the diverse people in it. Thus, tolerance is prominently the framework of the nation's diversity. Concerning information, the quality of tolerance may use mass media as one of the parameters. The various media products can be indicators used to observe the quality of tolerance. The International NGO Forum on Indonesian Development (INFID) in collaboration with the Jaringan Gusdurian conducted in-depth research, related to the correlation between the quality of tolerance and the social media life of its users. The research, which was conducted in 2016, involved 1,200 correspondents from six major cities in Indonesia: Bandung, Makassar, Pontianak, Surabaya, Surakarta, and Yogyakarta.

Respondents selected were on average 15–30 years old. This means, all correspondents are digital natives (Saroh 2017, 1).

The flow of information that runs in large and fast amounts requires a pattern of information management that is very challenging. This is because the reader is bombarded with information in many variants. This requires a good understanding of the process of human neurons in digesting, understanding, sorting, and then approving information. In the study of neuroscience or psychology, this is known as confirmation bias (bias konfirmasi). This confirmation bias needs to be examined in research related to tolerant or respectful behavior towards religious diversity. Confirmation bias plays a role in human understanding, sorting, and agreement of information. In this context, readers agree to an article based on "desire" or "belief" and not on data. This confirmation bias supports the acceptance of hoaxes or hate speech, which has been one of the obstacles to tolerance. Confirmation bias can be carried out by someone who has a higher educational background and is used to validating data or facts.

One example of confirmation bias is the case of Dimas Kanjeng Taat. He was considered a religious teacher and had supernatural powers. Therefore, it was not surprising that Dimas Kanjeng had many followers. A member of the Indonesian Muslim Intellectuals Association and won a Habibie scholarship, MDI. For MDI, despite being proven guilty of murder, Dimas Kanjeng is still a good teacher (Chandra 2016). Based on that example, the following research questions are posed in this study.

1. What are the informants' perceptions of the state, which is an important variable in the process of building Confirmation Bias through policies and handling of issues that use religious identities?

2. What are the potential factors for Confirmation Bias and what is the process for preventing it?

The findings analysis was carried out based on a compilation of primary data extracted through interviews with guided questions and a survey, which was delivered to informants before the interview. The research informants came from private religious-based universities in the Yogyakarta City area, namely the Islamic University of Indonesia (UII), Muhammadiyah University of Yogyakarta (UMY), Universitas Sanata Dharma (USD), and Universitas Kristen Duta Wacana (UKDW). The secondary data used is in the form of references and relevant online portal news articles regarding confirmation bias.

THE CONCEPT OF CONFIRMATION BIAS

1. Confirmation Bias Concept by Mari Fitzduff

In 2015, Mari Fitzduff wrote a monograph entitled "An Introduction of Neuroscience for Peacebuilders." In his monograph, Fitzduff explains that the tendency of confirmation bias is not limited to being determined by social processes that become the context of human learning as social beings, but also by human evolutionary adaptations. Fitzduff's three key ideas are (1) there are biological reasons why people tend to think and make decisions in ways that are not entirely socially determined; (2) humans are biologically predisposed to take in, process, and act on information in different ways depending on their genes; (3) educated people believe that rational thinking is always better in making decisions, but in reality this is not the case; emotions often play a much bigger role than reason. This is supported by research in neuroscience that humans think using two modes, reason, and emotion, in making rational decisions.

The way of thinking with reason comes from a part of the brain called the prefrontal cortex, while emotions come from the amygdala. Furthermore, the physical role in influencing decisions ranges from 40% to 53% (Fitzduff 2015, 8 and 11). This would explain that although the trend of confirmation bias may change, but it is arduous. In her observations of the riots in England, Fitzduff sees differences in the use of ways of thinking resulting in two groups, which tend to be called "liberal groups" and "traditionalist groups." The attitudes

and behavior that emerge towards political issues are caused by differences in ways of thinking, processing information, controlling emotions, the desire to be part of a group, the values and ideologies associated with it, ways of identifying "opponents", ways of seeing "facts", what is remembered and forgotten, the fears and anxieties of the "opponent", and their need for a leader (Fitzduff 2015, 9).

2. Analysis of the Concept of Confirmation Bias by Raymond Nickerson

Study on Confirmation Bias in Psychology was conducted by Raymond Nickerson. Confirmation Bias is the tendency to seek, interpret, support, and remember information by confirming or supporting previously held beliefs. There are 3 types of confirmation bias: (1) Information Seeking Bias, meaning someone who tests information unilaterally and looks for evidence that is consistent with the desire for information at that time; (2) Information Interpretation Bias, is when a person judge's statements that support his beliefs are more important than statements that contradict him; and (3) Information Recall Bias, is to remember evidence selectively to strengthen their expectations (selective recall). In other words, Confirmation Bias is the tendency to seek and select information that confirms personal beliefs and ignores evidence that contradicts their beliefs. The most extreme consequence of the role of confirmation bias is the prominent emotional involvement in defending their beliefs and opposing dissenting information (Nickerson, 1998,175; Knobloch-Westerwick et.al. 2017, 108).

3. Wittenberg's Tolerance Concept

In his book entitled "The Psychology of Tolerance: Conception and Development", Wittenberg (2019) explains about tolerance. This is what the author uses to examine the level of tolerance and the connection with the confirmation bias of the informants in this study. Wittenberg explains that tolerance has three dimensions, namely the dimension of justice, the dimension of empathy, and the dimension of fairness. The dimension of justice includes the behavioral aspect of treating others equally and fairly to groups or people who have different views on anything. The Empathy Dimension includes the aspect of attitude about respect for others and having a willingness to negotiate or sacrifice something for others. The dimension of fairness includes the cognitive or logical aspect as the basis for assumptions for judging different people or other groups. From these three aspects, Wittenberg divides the level of tolerance into 4 levels. The first level, Intolerant in the 3 dimensions above (belief, public speech, act). Level 2 is tolerant in one dimension only and intolerant in the other two dimensions. Level three is tolerant in 2 dimensions and intolerant in 1 dimension only. The fourth level is the level with the highest tolerance. At this level, a person has fulfilled the achievement in three dimensions in daily life. The tolerance level can be represented from the answers and how the informants answer in the research. To obtain data that is in the dimension of fairness, the questions are focused on the perception or belief that will cognitively come out to respond to the questions or images given. The Empathy dimension can be analyzed from the attitudes

of the informants in responding, while the justice dimension is analyzed from habituation or things (Wittenberg 2019, 28-29).

Utilizing the Confirmation Bias concept by Mari Fitzduff, which is the result of a study with the help of neuroscience, and then by Raymond Neckerson, as well as the concept of the dimensions of tolerance proposed by Rivka Wittenberg, this study will analyze the role of confirmation bias in determining attitudes in interfaith. Thus, the analysis of confirmation bias on the tendency of religious intolerance according to lecturers at religious-affiliated universities in the city of Yogyakarta will be carried out through research instruments and the process of extracting and analyzing the collected data. The dimension of reasonableness includes cognitive aspects or logic as the basis for assumptions to judge different people or other groups.

RESEARCH METHOD

This descriptive research uses quantitative and qualitative data to identify and analyze the data collected. The steps for collecting data and information were carried out by sending surveys to prospective informants. on the criteria for representation of gender, age, and universities affiliated with Islam, Catholicism, and Christianity in the City of Yogyakarta, and length of time as a lecturer at the university where they work. The background of their study programs was also determined based on the criteria of study programs on religion and non-religious study programs.

The survey was filled in by 80% (20) of 25 potential informants. Some informants stated that they were not willing to fill in but were willing to be involved in In-depth interviews. In-depth interviews are one of many qualitative research techniques used to collect data about the subjective experiences of participants. This method is suitable for use with a small number of informants because it uses a conversational format that often takes longer. This is inline with the purpose of in-depth interviews, to obtain detailed information that explains individual perspectives and perceived meanings about a particular topic, issue, or process (Rutledge and Hogg 2020, 1).

Of the 20 participants who completed the survey, 8 informants were selected for in-depth interviews. They were representatives of the private religious-based universities studied. Interviewers followed a semi-structured interview guide that attempted to uncover further details and explanations about the issues covered in the survey. All interviews were recorded and transcribed.

In-depth interviews were conducted using guided questions. For example, questions related to memories of encounters with individuals or groups from different religions and ethnicities. Based on this, topics related to information bias were explored through examples of articles accompanied by photos from online news channels. Online news channels as news sources are also categorized as (1) national reference online news channels, (2) online news channels affiliated with certain religious organizations, and (3) news channels owned by religious-based civil society organizations. In addition, some photos are also presented without captions but can provide perceptions of certain religious identities. The photos are categorized as journalistic photo

illustrations or feature writing illustrations. This approach was proposed by Dennis (2014, 398) because it helps the process of extracting sensitive information. Dennis (2014, 398) proposed this approach because it helps extract sensitive information. The interview begins when the informant voluntarily gives informed consent.

The survey contains questions aimed at collecting information about the collective memory of informants' encounters with individuals or other religious groups at the family, community, and national levels. The survey aims to obtain a general picture of informants' perceptions of state policies, whether they encourage interfaith relations or, conversely, strengthen individual or group identities based on religion and potentially cause prejudice and conflict between religious groups. This is inline with Ashustos Varshney's research (cited by Yudin 2018, 1) that a multi-religious state that facilitates the growth of interfaith relations will strengthen civic engagement in communities with religious diversity. In other words, the presence or absence of confirmation bias is also determined by the state's attitude towards inter-religious relationships. To manage descriptive research inference, King, Keohane, and Verba suggested data saturation for the questions posed to all sources so that they represent information to test assumptions, hypotheses (if any), and provide an overview (King, Keohane, and Verba 1994, 34).

RESEARCH FINDINGS

1. Perceptions of Interreligious Relations and State's Management

Data on perceptions of interreligious relations and the role of the state were collected through survey questions given to all research informants before the interviews were conducted. The survey serves as a kind of initial consideration of the readiness or unavailability of the informants to become informants for this research. Assumptions that can be built are that there are topics which are considered sensitive because they involve views about religion and may be an illustration of individual appearances in intra-religious and inter-religious relations or through perceptions or attitudes that will be displayed in response to religious issues that can be accessed through online media. For example, several potential informants from private universities affiliated with Christians and Muslims who were not willing to fill in or confirm their participation as informants.

The formulation of questions is based on the analogy given by Pruijt and Rubin that horizontal conflict, which in the context of this research is an act of tolerance or intolerance, is built from the perception and belief that the different interests and aspirations of each party cannot be obtained simultaneously (1994, 5). The survey shows that decisions regarding religious issues developing in society are independent decisions (44.4%) or vice versa because they follow the surrounding environment (55.5%). This data represents the first dimension of Wittenberg's concept of tolerance. The dimension of fairness is the

basis for a person to tolerate or not tolerate, which starts from the perception or formation of thoughts related to adherents of other religions.
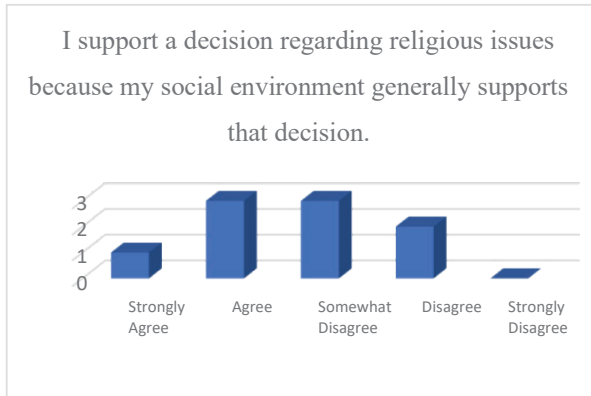

Figure 1. The Role of the Social Environment in Decisions on Religious Issues

This is confirmed by a balanced percentage between support for groups that have the same views on religion (44.4%) and support for groups that have different views on religion (55.5%) as shown later in Figures 2 and 3. These data show that 55.5% of correspondents have reached level three because they have reached the aspect of supporting attitudes towards people who have different religious views.
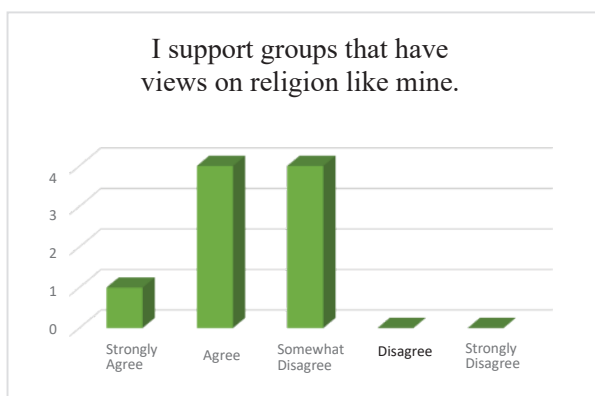

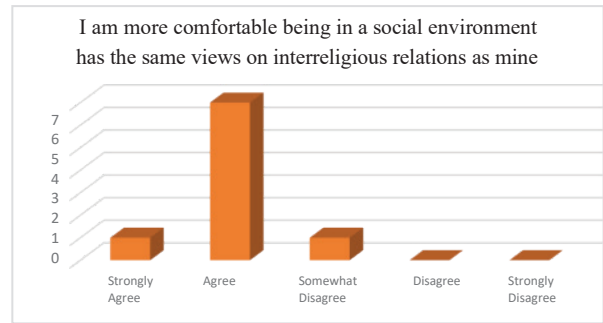**Figure 2.** The Tendency towards Shared Views on Religion Issues

Figure 3. Perceptions of Similar Views on Interreligious Relations

A survey that explores information about intrareligious relations as well as interreligious relations shows that informants both have the potential to experience confirmation bias and to avoid confirmation bias. Therefore, in-depth interviews test whether their views are built by life experiences from childhood to adulthood, intellectual experiences, and relationships that exist in the work environment, friendships, and family, as well as age and cultural factors that will play a role in whether confirmation bias exists. This survey also collected initial information about views on the role of the state in the issue of interreligious relations. The question about the role of the state was asked because the strategic role of the state through policies related to religion also forms people's perceptions, attitudes, and behavior in inter-religious relations, in the sense that it can strengthen tolerance or intolerance (Prayogo, Simamora, and Kusuma 2020, 28). Informants agree that religious freedom is guaranteed by the state (100%), including religious moderation programs aimed at preventing extremism in religion (100%), as shown in the following two figures bellows.
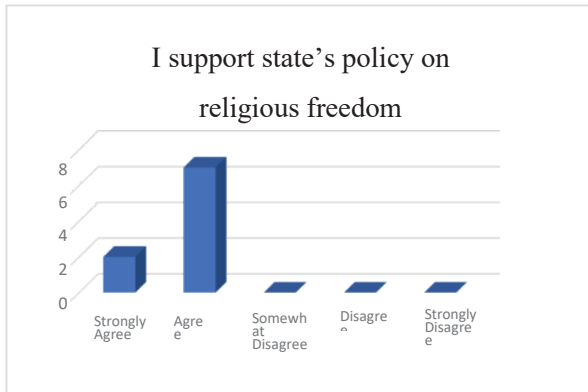
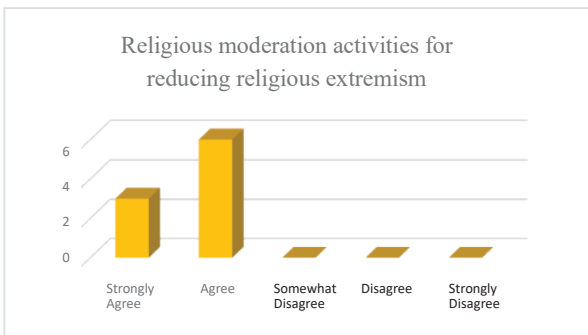**Figure 4.** **Perceptions of State's Policy on Religious Freedom**

Figure 5. **Perceptions of State's Programs in Religious Moderation**

According to informants, the state's religious moderation program is not seen as a threat as shown in the image above. However, the moderation program was also opposed by the Muslim community through responses in online media or social media (Arenggoasih dan Wijayanti (2020, 162-163).
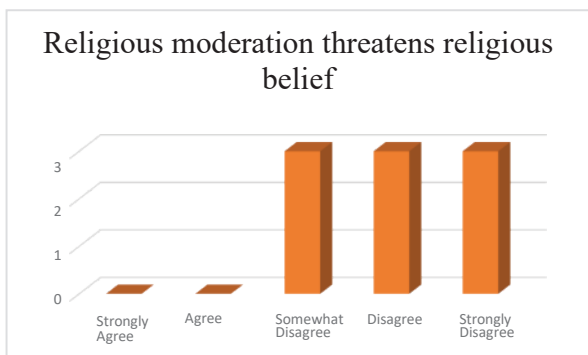

Figure 6. **Perception of Religious Moderation towards Religious Beliefs**

Meanwhile, 66.6% agreed that the state has used a state-just approach in handling issues involving religious identity, while 44.4% saw the opposite, as shown in the picture below. This difference in perception, also in exploring interviews, informs the level of coverage of events that occur in matters of religion. If the informant bases it on their current residence, this is a very unheard of problem that entails religion because the village is religiously homogeneous and considers the state to be fair.
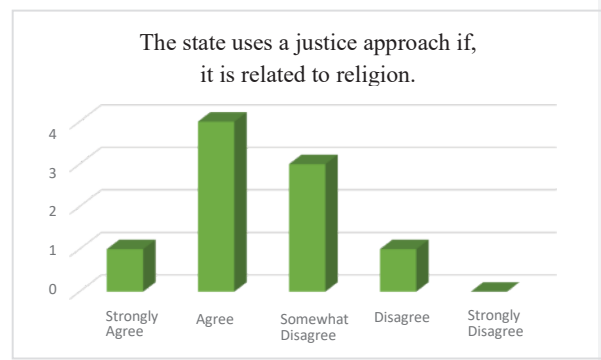

Figure 7. **Perception of the State's Attitude in Managing Religions Issues**

On the other hand, most informants who live in diverse environments see that the state is not fair enough in handling conflicts involving religious identity.

The theories that build social identities can be used to analyze interreligious relations, as explored by Fernandez and Coyle (2012), namely self-categorization. This concept explains that an individual's membership in an organization can be voluntary or determined by the boundaries between social categories identified as ingroup (us) and outgroup (them), which are maintained by highlighting similarities within one's own group and differences with different groups. This tendency to emphasize ingroup similarities and outgroup differences increases when

individuals categorize themselves as part of a valued group (Hogg, Terry, and White 1995, as cited by Fernandez and Coyle 2012, 4-5). Feelings of security can be built by the perception of state support for ingroup members when faced with outgroup members, who otherwise feel a lack of state support. In the context of this research, this is if the issue is using a religious identity in which they feel more emotionally involved

2. Potential for Confirmation Bias

In this study, habituation to access online news is an initial study to see confirmation bias that occurs. Of the 10 informants, there were variations in the habituation of online news access from two dimensions. This variation also runs in line with the tendency of potential confirmation bias. For the analysis of self-confirmation bias, there were two stages carried out by the informants. The first stage is the reading of news articles. Two news articles are used as references for this research as stimulants for informant responses. The second stage is the researcher presents two pictures without captions or captions to see the informants' responses.

In the first stage, two news articles became references in this study. The first news article was an article entitled "*Retoran Rendang Babi. Mohamadiyah Sumatra Barat: Menghina Budaya Minangkabau (*Pork Rendang Restaurant). Muhammadiyah West Sumatra: Disdains Minangkabau Culture. This article was taken from republica.co.id reports on the viral rendang pork case. This article informed that the finding of a Padang food stall serving rendang pork was responded to by the MUI of West Sumatra. The response considered that the rendang pork was an insult to Minangkabau culture, which is predominantly Islamic.

The second news is news entitled "Primary School in Tarakan Allegedly Discriminates Students Adhering to Jehovah's Witnesses." The news reported by vice.com is about discrimination cases experienced by elementary school students in Tarakan. Discrimination is motivated by the problem of religious identity of 3 students. The religious identity adopted by the three students is the Belief of Jehovah's Witnesses. The three student siblings ended up never going to class for three years in a row.

The responses of the informants regarding these two news articles are the main analytical material in this research, besides the responses to the photos. Responses to these two articles were classified in two ways. First, responses that showed the potential for confirmation bias, and secondly, responses that prioritized the objectivity of information processing. In the interviews that have been conducted, the results obtained are that several informants have the potential for confirmation bias. This is indicated by the statements that tend to be produced, which tend not to be examined objective data. The statement of one of the informants is as follows is an example,

> "For example, if I had a restaurant that served non-halal food, I would be okay with that, right? The important thing is to be informed that this is non-halal food. But because it went viral, the issue is that apart from halal and non-halal issues, it is also considered an insult to culture; maybe the name can be changed.".

That statement tends to have the potential for confirmation bias. Informants tend to agree that this restaurant insults Padang culture. He recommended that it would be better if the restaurant or food stall changed its name so as not to appear to insult Islam and Padang culture. Here there is a potential for confirmation bias because the informant has not been involved in the process of searching for data in responding to the news. Informants tend to respond with emotional involvement without seeing the core problem of the existing case. They do not select or describe the rendang pork problem in several dimensions so that it is possible to involve critical thinking in interpreting the news. This is also not surprising if we look at Raymond Nickerson's confirmation bias theory; these two informants fall into the category of confirmation bias in the second type, namely information interpretation bias. This type explains that information recipients tend to prioritize statements that support their wishes. In Wittenberg's tolerance level, this respondent is still at the first level. This is obtained from his response which shows no tolerance, both in terms of the justice dimension (behavior), empathy dimension (affective), and fairness dimension (reasonableness or cognitive perception).

Different responses came from informants from other campuses who were also affiliated with Islam, who responded to this news with different statements. RV (2022) states,

"I do not agree that rendang is brought into the realm of religion. So, in my opinion, food is not synonymous with one religion, so what's wrong with that? this becomes wrong when it is exploited by several people and associated with religious issues".

The same thing was also stated by N (2022) by stating,

"Well, yes, from a religious point of view, if we are preoccupied with issues like this, it will make it difficult for the movement of religion to be too small, it will seem like we are wasting energy."

For N, seeing news relating to food stalls, business discourse should be prioritized in it. So, the main thing is not involving religious emotions, but looking at it from the economic aspect of business alone is enough.

Both informants showed a tendency towards tolerant attitudes. The splitting between the theological and social domains in food indicated a higher level of tolerance. This attitude falls into level 3 of tolerance, according to Wittenberg. The four informants who came from Christian or Catholic affiliated campuses responded to the news regarding rendang pork as just an effort to go viral. There is no and does not require the involvement of religious elements in this matter. These four informants tend to see this news as an attempt to exaggerate the discourse. The four informants also focused on news writers, so there was no potential for confirmation bias due to differences in religious identity. In other words, of the six informants affiliated with the Islamic religion, two responses tended to have the potential for confirmation bias. The other four informants were able to see this news as something that had no essence, tending to only gather sensations. In other words, the informants' Islamic identity in responding to news directly related to their religion was not dominantly responded to emotionally. As many as 40% of informants chose not to be trapped by confirmation bias,

even though the news contained sentiments towards Islam.

An analysis of potential confirmation bias was also performed in response to the second article. Articles reporting on students who have the beliefs of Jehovah's Witnesses also intersect with informants who are Christians. This is due to the notion that Jehovah's witnesses are a part of Christianity. Therefore, this article can represent confirmation bias, especially for informants who have the same religious emotional closeness, Christians (Protestant or Kristen) or Catholics (Katolik).

> *"There must be communication that balances their rights which are then fulfilled. Even if I am not like that and because I also often follow, read issues about Muhammadiyah and so on, I feel that maybe SSY (Jehovah's Witness, researcher) as new belief, it has to be protected like that, right?"*

The four informants who are Christian and Catholic have the same perception. In processing the information, the four agreed that this was seen not from a religious perspective but from another fundamental matter, the issue of education. The four informants saw that in the issue of education, it does not need to interfere with private religious matters. Another interesting finding is that the four informants agreed that the news shows the vacancy of the state's role in protecting all its citizens without exception. In the case of Jehovah's Witnesses, for them the ideal is for the state to be present directly to protect and fulfill the rights of school children in Tarakan.

Another fascinating finding is that other sources are Muslims. All informants tend to see the problem in this second news article in the realm of education. An informant, NC (2022), even compares with the experience of other Muslim brothers who have teachings that are not allowed to respect the national flag. To him, this value was a small value that did not need to be magnified. It stays in the realm of education. Other informants also tend to share the same opinion and focus on criticism of the state, which tends to ignore and allow these acts of marginalization to be well maintained in Indonesia.

In this study, the analysis was continued by looking at the informants' responses to the images given. There are two pictures given. The first image is an image showing a parade of black women carrying musical instruments, and there is a cross on them. The women, who seemed to be in a convoy on foot, wore headscarves. The second picture is a picture of a group of monks from the border of Nepal and Tibet who are collecting the corpses of earthquake victims. This collection of corpses was put together in one area because a Buddhist mass burial rite would be carried out. These two pictures were given to all informants without including any caption or explanation of the pictures.

Like the response to reading the article, the response to the image is also divided into two, namely a response that has the potential for confirmation bias and a response that prioritizes objective things. The first response regarding this photo was the statement given by NM. NM (2022) responds to this image by stating,

> *"This is between religious traditions, religious sessions, if I see. It's not allowed, and it is problematic. So, concerning tolerance, we must stay away from those 3 things."*

From this statement, NM believes that this image represents the mixing of tradition and religion. According to him, this is unacceptable. SA (2022) immediately argued, "If you think this is the case with Muslims, it's very closed off, right?" SA immediately responded to this news with the proximity of his identity. AZ (2022) also said the same opinion,

> *"Yeah, I don't think wearing the hijab is appropriate. Muslim, but it seems that wearing the headscarf is not appropriate "... it's like being closed like that but wearing the hijab doesn't fit like that."*

These three informants represent the potential for confirmation bias. The responses of the three prioritize opinions that arise spontaneously and tend to involve personal beliefs directly in interpreting. This shows the potential for confirmation bias of the second type, the involvement of emotions in the meaning of information. This is different from other informants. Two informants conducted a question-and-answer method with the research team before giving a response. LP (2022) responds to this photo by asking for detailed pictures one by one, starting from the activities, participants, and the objects in the drawings. LS also did this. LS (2022) bases his opinion on conjectures packed with questions. In this case, LP and LS perform information filtering by asking the method. This tends to stimulate a much more objective perspective and avoid confirmation bias mechanisms.

PREVENTING TENDENCIES TOWARDS CONFIRMATION BIAS

Confirmation bias is a practice with a detrimental tendency. This is because the logical consequences of confirmation bias tend to lead recipients into disinformation traps. Hogg and Vaughan (2011) explained that confirmation bias is a person's tendency or intention to process information based on assumptions or preconceptions that were in their mind beforehand (Hogg and Vaughan, 2011). People who are subject to confirmation bias usually cannot process information based on objectivity and data processing beforehand. If it is related to current consumption behavior, it can be explained that consumption of information mediated by online media tends to be more numerous and more diverse. Therefore, the main problem today is not obtaining information, but managing information. Information management in online media also has a different character from print-based information consumption. Bessi (2016) explains that confirmation bias is currently also influenced by social media factors (Bessi, 2016, 319–324).

An echo chamber makes information management less simple than before. Subjects who do not intend to search for certain news can be exposed to "buzz" so that it is possible to unknowingly access the news. This is what opens the space for "hoaxes" and "disinformation" as a logical consequence. In the end, the echo chamber can outwit accuracy and be replaced with virality. Therefore, the probability of confirmation bias in online media is getting bigger.

A part from the Echo chamber, another problem in managing information from online media is an algorithm. The algorithm becomes the brain of the information that will determine the rate and duration of the virality of the information. Montag (2019, 27-34) notes that the internet has positioned its users as both consumers and producers. This is exacerbated by computational algorithms that help create individuals who are uncritical, authoritarian, exclusive, closed-minded, and ultimately form groups that feel superior to other groups. This is what opens the user trap to confirmation bias. In other words, confirmation bias has two obstacles, the thinking system and media literacy. The first obstacle is the thinking system. Critical thinking systems become a barrier or a prevention of confirmation bias. Critical thinkers tend to assume that all information needs to be considered and needs to be processed before concluding. Kutner (2016), explains that it takes critical thinking from internet users before sharing or liking information posts. Researchers from the French National Institute and Columbia University report that 59% of information on the internet that is re-shared on social media is shared without a process reading by the disseminator (Gabielkov et al., 2016, 5).

In this study, some informants used critical thinking in responding to the FGD questions. RW (2022) states that, "*If there's a certain trend that's exaggerated, I'd say, "Oh, this media isn't right.*" RW again shows his critical thinking when responding to Ethiopian Orthodox Christian images. RW focuses on detailed information from each existing image and symbol. He did this considering

that RW did not have a tool or hoax checker to see the accuracy of the image. Calmly, RW finally concluded that the picture had nothing to do with religious insults.Cognitive de-contextualization refers to the openness of views or thoughts for someone in responding to information. Therefore, this competency requires many perspectives before finding or concluding information. This was stated by a source from LP (2022) who stated,

> *"Those who can give several perspectives in one article, bro, so he can review from the point of view of a, b, c like that, so it's up to the reader, so don't insist that there is only one "truth" quote-unquote; yes, that is seen from the point of view; just look at this. But if he reviews it from various angles, it's also good to read like 'oh yeah, it turns out there are a lot of things that need to be seen'."*

This opinion is LP's response to criticizing the news carried out by online media. Statements related to various perspectives show that LP expects open ideas to also be the basis for journalists in reporting something. Both informants have quite good media literacy. Habituation in comparing information from various sources allows them to reconsider the meaning and conclusions of the information obtained. These two sources indicated that media literacy competence needs to be balanced or added with critical thinking skills. Both are key competencies for preventing confirmation bias.

Factors from the social environment that prevent confirmation bias mechanisms were explored through in-depth interviews with each informant. These factors include life experience at every level of the social

unit in which the informant is a member. Because of the history of religious education and interfaith meetings obtained at the family and extended family level, educational environment, and place of residence, as well as membership in a religious community or a community whose membership crosses religious or ethnic boundaries. Besides that, the perception of the state has built structural conditions through policies and responses related to religious life in Indonesia. In this way, an overview of the factors preventing the trend can be confirmed.

The exposure to religious diversity from the family level and the village environment was also told by the LS informant who grew up in a suburban village. He comes from a family of tempe sellers in the traditional market. Despite being born in a Catholic family,. Both of his parents did not teach religion biblically but rather daily actions, "*be good to others, be friends to everyone*" (LS 2022). Religious diversity in the village and marriages between residents of different religions are commonplace in the village environment. There are those whose parents are of different religions so that their children are also religious. There are even parents who share the same religion, but their children have different religions from their parents. According to LS, when she was a child, she did not understand her religious identity because she attended SD Inpres, which did not have a Catholic Religion teacher, and was only discovered later as a Catholic student.

> *"There was an identity crisis inside of me. I am Muslim or Catholic… I was not baptized since birth. So, it was only when I was preparing for Communion that I was registered for Catholic religious lessons. The foreign language lesson at the primary school was Arabic… I learned from an Islamic religion teacher who the Prophet Muhammad was. So, studying Islam is in grade 1 of elementary school, Catholicism is in grades 4 and 5 of elementary school, then my extended family is all Catholics. It was just an accident that I forgot I wasn't even baptized, so that was my first religious lesson."*

In the context of interreligious relations and the tendency towards confirmation bias, learning from the social environment appears to be a deterrent to confirmation. This is because the social environment provides openness or conversely, produces resistance to diversity which in turn facilitates confirmation bias. The choice of openness or resistance can be explained through the idea of Vittorio Lanternari (1963, 306-307) that a crisis in society will force individuals to choose between maintaining their traditional values which are felt to be inconsistent with the demands of the times or otherwise integrating themselves into a new pattern that is considered more capable of facing new challenges, especially if the new pattern shows superiority and flexibility. What is told by several informants in this section shows that the challenges posed by advances in information technology, which accelerate the rapid flow of various information that is concerned about the shaky religious values, are responded to by integrating religious values with advances in the technological era, for example, RV, who does not settle to become an Islamic religious educator only, but also to develop capacity by teaching digital marketing. Meanwhile, informant NN chose to focus on community education, especially

strengthening faith, as a response to the challenges of the times.

One important variable resulting from learning from the social environment is the attainment of levels in interreligious relations as produced by Paul Knitter's research (1995). According to Knitter, the level of interreligious relations among informants who could avoid confirmation bias tends to be those at the third and fourth category levels. The third level, Cooperation (mutuality), exists when individuals have developed a relationship style that initiates cooperation based on tolerance attitudes and behavior. Meanwhile, the fourth level, acceptance, is an ideal form in interreligious relations because it is an acceptance or inclusive relationship (Knitter 1995, 240-242). This will align with the concept of Confirmation Bias by Mari Fitzduff, which states that feeling safe and not being threatened when relating to groups with different identities is the key to preventing individuals from the tendency of confirmation bias. In the aspect of tolerance by Wittenberg, informants who are not trapped in confirmation bias are those who fall into category 3. This is because the cognitive and affective aspects have become capital for them. Informants who fall into this level will have the power to curate existing information. This has reached the dimension of empathy.

CONCLUSION

This study used a sample of lecturers at a private religious-based college in Yogyakarta. However, the issues of interfaith relations that motivated the choice of the topic of confirmation

bias through online news channels are a salient issue at the national level. The responses and views of lecturers on interfaith relations, where confirmation bias is one of the factors that play a role in the dynamics of interfaith relations, are the focus of this study.

In this study, 90% of potential informants tend to have type 3 confirmation bias, namely Recalling Information Bias. The emergence of this tendency is due to the lack of information that can be used to confirm the truth, so they use a memory selection mechanism. In other words, a person confirms the desire for the truth of information based on evidence that has been selected by their memory (selective recall) as something true according to their expectations. Confirmation Bias potential to occur when an individual receives a hoax photo without a caption. If individuals have adequate media literacy and do not feel threatened, Recall Confirmation Bias is common. This tendency was most dominantly caused by the informant's educational background and profession as a college teacher and the lack of feelings of threat.

These types of confirmation bias are also linear with the level of tolerance. Informants with a high level of bias represent a low level of tolerance. The dimension of tolerance lived by an informant is still limited to the reasonable dimension or only sees information on the surface and tends to be tendentious. This is quite different from the 4 informants from campuses affiliated with Christianity. These four respondents were not trapped in confirmation bias, thus indicating that they have adequate media literacy and a tolerance level of level four. In addition, their tolerance dimension reaches the justice dimension aspect because they place the truth

in the differences in religious perspectives. The development of information technology accelerates the flow of various information that threatens religious values; thus, it provides two choices of maintaining religious values in the old ways or integrating into a new order based on the existence of information technology. This research produces an illustration that there is a tendency to integrate religious values into the new order. Another factor that supports this integration is the social learning background, which produces a relatively ideal level of interreligious relations to create a sense of security that is the basis for preventing the tendency of confirmation bias.

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