

Framing Religious Hoaxes: Logical, Religious, and Legal Perspectives in Indonesia

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Abstract: This study aims to analyse religious hoaxes on social media in Indonesia by examining their logical, religious, and legal dimensions. It highlights how these hoaxes, often framed through logical fallacies and spread via digital platforms, exacerbate social polarisation and interfaith tensions. The study used a descriptive qualitative approach, focusing on high-profile cases involving religious hoaxes during 2020–2021. The researchers collected data from social media posts, comments, and videos on platforms such as YouTube and Twitter, as well as from secondary sources, including news articles, legal documents, and religious texts. The findings reveal the strategic use of logical fallacies such as *ad hominem* and *argumentum ad populum*, the exploitation of sensitive religious issues, and the amplification of divisive narratives through digital platforms. These hoaxes significantly impact societal harmony, resulting in polarization, theological confusion, and heightened interfaith tensions. The study underscores the critical need to enhance media literacy, foster interfaith dialogue, and enforce digital content regulations. These strategies can mitigate the impact of religious hoaxes and promote a more informed, cohesive society. This research integrates logical, religious, and legal frameworks to analyse religious hoaxes comprehensively. Addressing the intersection of these perspectives offers a unique contribution to understanding and mitigating the societal impacts of digital misinformation.

Keywords: Digital ethics; framing theory; hoaxes; media literacy; religious polarisation.

Abstrak: Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menganalisis hoaks keagamaan di media sosial di Indonesia melalui tiga dimensi: logika, agama, dan hukum. Penelitian ini menyoroti bagaimana hoaks, yang sering kali dibingkai melalui kesesatan logika dan disebarluaskan melalui platform digital, memperburuk polarisasi sosial dan ketegangan antarumat beragama. Penelitian menggunakan pendekatan deskriptif kualitatif, dengan fokus pada kasus hoaks keagamaan terkenal selama tahun 2020–2021. Data dikumpulkan dari unggahan, komentar, dan video di media sosial seperti YouTube dan Twitter, serta sumber sekunder seperti artikel berita, dokumen hukum, dan teks agama. Temuan menunjukkan penggunaan strategis kesesatan logika seperti *ad hominem* dan *argumentum ad populum*, eksploitasi isu-isu keagamaan sensitif, dan amplifikasi narasi yang memecah belah melalui platform digital. Hoaks ini berdampak signifikan pada harmoni sosial, termasuk polarisasi, kebingungan teologis, dan peningkatan ketegangan antarumat beragama. Penelitian ini menekankan pentingnya meningkatkan literasi media, mendorong dialog antaragama, dan memperkuat regulasi konten digital. Strategi ini dapat mengurangi dampak hoaks keagamaan dan mempromosikan masyarakat yang lebih informatif dan kohesif. Penelitian ini mengintegrasikan kerangka logis, keagamaan, dan hukum untuk memberikan analisis holistik terhadap hoaks keagamaan. Dengan mengupas keterkaitan perspektif tersebut, penelitian ini memberikan kontribusi unik dalam memahami dan menangani dampak sosial dari misinformasi digital.

Kata Kunci: Etika digital; teori pembingkai; hoaks; literasi media; polarisasi agama.

1. Introduction

Media, especially in the form of news and information, is increasingly seen as the result of technological advances that provide an abundance of data from a particular event, crisis, or tragedy. However, instead of being a tool that provides clear, correct and accurate understanding, the media is often a source of division in society (Barezki, 2021). This phenomenon occurs when the media's presentation of an issue influences the interpretation of information.

Before the 20th century, when television had just begun broadcasting news and the internet was not yet used to disseminate information, print media and radio served as the main channels for conveying messages to the public. These media, although more limited, still served to provide information on political, economic, and conflict issues (Ismawani, Mani, & Aras, 2019). However, with the advent of new technologies, online media has drastically changed the nature of communication. Online media is now more practical, fast, cheap, flexible, and accessible so that it can reach a wider audience (Priporas, 2020).

In Indonesia, with the largest number of internet users in Southeast Asia and the fourth largest in the world after Brazil, the United States and India, hoaxes have become a serious challenge (Rustan, 2020). The government is trying to track and monitor the activities of internet users to control their behavior and anticipate their impact. One of the most obvious challenges is the spread of hoaxes, often intentionally or unintentionally, through social media (Kumar, West, & Leskovec, 2016). The term "hoax" refers to the act of hiding the truth by flooding the media with false information (Abdullah, 2021).

The phenomenon of spreading hoaxes has had a significant impact on society. Hoaxes often trigger provocative actions on social media, both at the national and international levels (Kurniawan, 2019). Until now, the impact caused by hoax information continues to increase dramatically (Zubair & Qadir, 2019). In the context of religion, social media is not only a means to disseminate religious knowledge but also a space for interaction between religious organizations. However, the presence of hoax information in religious issues has led to various cases, such as hate speech, blasphemy, intolerance, and even radicalism (Fakhrurroji, Rustandi, & Busro, 2020; Jauhari, Suryandaru, & Sugihartati, 2021).

Research on social media hoaxes has been of significant interest in various disciplines. Based on the literature review, there are three main categories of relevant previous research. First, research related to the impact of hoaxes on public health, focusing on the COVID-19 pandemic as the main case. Studies show that COVID-19-related hoaxes, such as false information about medication, vaccinations and government policies, have led to public confusion, resistance to vaccination and ineffective use of medicines (Dupuis, Chhor, & Ly, 2021; Kabha, Kamel, Elbahi, Hafiz, & Dafri, 2020; Rusli et al., 2021). This research highlights the serious health implications but fails to explore how similar hoaxes can impact social harmony, particularly in religious contexts.

Second, research on social, political and economic impacts highlights the role of hoaxes in fuelling anxiety, hatred and social provocation. People or groups often use hoaxes to manipulate public opinion, influence election outcomes, and destabilize economic markets (Kurniawan, 2019; Rasidin, Witro, Yanti, Purwaningsih, & Nurasih, 2020; Susanto, 2019). Although relevant, this study lacks an in-depth discussion of how hoaxes on religious issues can trigger inter-religious conflicts, such as cases of hate speech and blasphemy.

Third, in the category of hoax detection and mitigation strategies, studies have developed technologies such as machine learning, blockchain-based algorithms and artificial intelligence to detect fake news in real time (Faridi, Singh, Masood, & Salmony, 2023; Varshney & Vishwakarma, 2021). In addition, improving digital literacy is proposed as a key solution to empower people to be more critical of the information they consume (Malik, Abdillah, Saputra, Mappatoba, & Wahyuddin, 2023; Wijayanto, Widyawati, & Wicaksono, 2022). However, these approaches tend to be technical and have not integrated many normative values, such as religious views and moral values, in their analyses.

These studies, while significant, have some major limitations. Most studies are fragmentary and only focus on one dimension, such as health or politics, without linking them in a holistic analytical framework. In addition, the lack of a multi-perspective approach has led to a lack of exploration of how

logical, Scholars can use religious and legal dimensions together to analyze hoaxes. Finally, the religious context has not received sufficient attention, especially regarding how hoaxes can affect social harmony through logical, religious and legal values.

This study aims to analyze hoax information on social media within the framework of logic, religion and law in Indonesia to address the shortcomings of previous research that tends to be fragmentary and does not touch on religious issues in depth. This research offers a new contribution by combining these three perspectives to understand the impact of hoaxes on social and religious harmony, particularly in the context of hate speech and blasphemy. Specifically, this research seeks to identify patterns of hoaxes on religious issues, explore their impact on society, and provide logical, religious and legal-based recommendations for further mitigation and handling.

This research argues that the spread of hoaxes on religious issues on social media reflects logical fallacies in the delivery of information, violates religious moral values, and contradicts the existing legal framework, thus worsening social and religious harmony in society. In theory, the spread of hoaxes often involves *logical fallacies* such as *ad hominem*, *argumentum ad populum*, and *missing the point*, which affect the way people process information and form public opinion (Woods, 2004). In a religious context, people view hoaxes as violations of universal ethical teachings found in major religions, such as Islam (QS An-Nur: 11), Buddhism (Dhammapada verse 176), and Hinduism (*Tri Kaya Parisudha* teachings) (Muhammadin, Murtiningsih, & Yana, 2019). Meanwhile, from a legal perspective, spreading hoaxes violates Article 28, Paragraphs 1 and 2 and Article 45A of the Electronic Information and Transactions Law, which provides criminal sanctions for spreading hatred and false information.

2. Methods

This research uses a descriptive qualitative approach to analyze the framing of religious hoaxes circulating on social media during 2020-2021. The unit of analysis included posts on platforms such as Twitter, Instagram, and YouTube involving public figures like Sugi Nur Raharja and Yahya Waloni, as well as public responses to the content. Researchers collected primary data from documentation of social media posts, comments, and videos. They also gathered secondary data from news articles, legal documents such as the ITE Law, and relevant religious texts. The researchers chose this approach because it effectively explores the complex dimensions of logic, religion, and law, as well as their relevance in shaping public opinion and social harmony (Creswell & Creswell, 2020; Entman, 1993).

Data were analyzed using Entman's framing theory through four stages: issue identification, causal interpretation, moral evaluation, and solution recommendation. Data from social media content, legal documents and religious texts were coded and categorized to map patterns and trends in the framing of religious hoaxes. The researchers used qualitative descriptive techniques to interpret the relationship between the framing of hoaxes and their impact on society, particularly in the context of social harmony and religious issues. This approach aims to contribute to the literature by offering logic-based, religious and legal recommendations for mitigating religious hoaxes (Entman, 1993; Eriyanto, 2011).

3. Results

Logical Framing of Religious Hoaxes

This study found that hoax cases on religious issues often involve *logical fallacies* spread through social media platforms such as YouTube, Twitter, and Instagram. The three main cases that are the focus of this research are hate speech by Sugi Nur Raharja against Nahdlatul Ulama (NU), blasphemy by Muhammad Kace related to the interpretation of the Qur'an, and blasphemy by Yahya Waloni related to insulting the holy books of other religions.

The first case involved Sugi Nur Raharja, who, in a talk on his YouTube channel *MUNJIAT Channel* in 2019, described Nahdlatul Ulama (NU) as a 'public bus with a drunk driver.' This statement was a form of *ad hominem* attack, in which Sugi attacked NU's personality without offering substantive criticism. This statement triggered a widespread response, including from the Twitter account

@klekur028, which shared the video and criticized the content of Sugi's talk. This case reflects how individuals or groups use hoax-based content to attack certain groups without credible arguments (Bahari, 2021; CNN, 2021a; Qothafi, 2022).

The statement quickly spread through various social media platforms, including a post from Twitter account @klekur028 that shared a snippet of the video of the lecture. In its post, the account added criticism of Sugi Nur's statement, as well as a response from KH. Marzuki Mustamar, an NU figure, strongly rejected the claim. This content sparked widespread debate among the public, especially Nahdliyin, who felt offended by the allegations. Critics of NU undermined the organization's credibility and exacerbated societal polarization by spreading unsubstantiated hoax narratives. Further analysis identified Sugi Nur's statement as a form of *ad hominem* logical fallacy, where she attacked NU's personality without providing substantive criticism of the organization's policies or ideology. Such rhetoric undermines the values of healthy discussion and has great potential to trigger hatred and division among people with different views.

The second case is the Muhammad Kace case. From 2018 to 2021, Muhammad Kace, a controversial figure on social media, published a number of videos on his YouTube channel, *MuhammadKace*. One of the videos that provoked the most reaction was his lecture misinterpreting Surah Al-Ma'un. In the video, Kace provocatively states that 'people who pray will lose.' This statement is not only misleading but also demonstrates a fundamental misinterpretation of a Qur'anic verse, an example of the logical fallacy known as *missing the point*. Furthermore, Kace accused the Prophet Muhammad of being surrounded by jinn, a claim that has no logical basis or reference in Islamic teachings (Setiabudi, Mau, & Bahfiarti, 2022).

These controversial contents quickly spread and caused a huge uproar among Muslims. Through videos that are uploaded regularly, Kace uses a narrative that tends to provoke by providing interpretations that are not in accordance with recognized rules of interpretation. In one of the videos, he mentions that Prophet Muhammad was a follower of the jinn, a claim that violates Islamic teachings in substance and provokes public outrage.

The controversy culminated when various elements of the Muslim community began responding to Kace's statements, both through comments on social media and through news media channels. Strong reactions emerged from Islamic scholars and academics who considered that Kace was not only spreading disinformation but also undermining the common people's understanding of Islam. The narrative constructed by Kace not only shows a logical error in deducing the meaning of religious texts but also illustrates a provocative attempt to create controversy in the public sphere.

This case shows how a narrative based on an erroneous interpretation can trigger social unrest. Theoretically, this kind of misinterpretation falls into the category of *missing the point*, where the arguments presented fail to capture the true substance of the referenced text. This not only confuses ordinary people but also has the potential to worsen inter-religious harmony. The video content, although viral, is considered dangerous because it utilizes digital platforms to spread unsubstantiated disinformation and tends to be divisive.

In 2021, Yahya Waloni, a former pastor who converted to Islam in 2006, came into the public spotlight for his controversial statements regarding Christianity. In one of his video lectures uploaded on IRMA AN-NUR's YouTube channel, Yahya openly stated that "the Christian holy book is not the Bible." The speaker used pejorative terms to denigrate Christian theologians, triggering strong reactions from various parties, including Christians and interfaith groups (Nurfaini, 2023).

Yahya Waloni's statement is a form of one-sided truth claim that is not supported by substantive evidence. The rhetoric he used can be categorized as *argumentum ad populum*, where arguments are built on emotion and popularity, not on the basis of analysis or evidence that can be accounted for. In the video, Yahya criticizes Christianity using a provocative narrative that is full of SARA (ethnicity, religion, race and intergroup) elements. He specifically directs his criticism at Christian theological doctrines, claiming that they are 'misleading.'

Table 1 provides an overview of three significant cases of religious hoaxes in Indonesia. It outlines the hoax content, the platforms where the content was disseminated, the timeline, the logical fallacies

identified, and their social implications. The cases underscore the detrimental effects of logical fallacies in shaping divisive narratives within society.

Table 1. Logical Framing of Religious Hoaxes in Indonesia

Case	Hoax Content	Platform	Year	Logical Fallacy	Implication
Sugi Nur Raharja	Described Nahdlatul Ulama (NU) as a “public bus with a drunk driver,” attacking NU’s personality.	YouTube (MUNJIAT Channel), Twitter	2019	<i>Ad Hominem</i>	Exacerbates societal polarisation through unsubstantial attacks on NU.
Muhammad Kace	Misinterpreted Surah Al-Ma’un by claiming “those who pray will lose”; accused Prophet Muhammad of being surrounded by jinn.	YouTube (MuhammadKece Channel)	2018–2021	<i>Missing the Point</i>	Causes controversy among Muslims with misleading and provocative interpretations of religious texts.
Yahya Waloni	Claimed “the Christian holy book is not the Bible” and used pejorative terms for Christian theologians.	YouTube (IRMA AN-NUR Channel)	2021	<i>Argumentum ad Populum</i>	Spreads provocative narratives that aggravate interfaith relations.

Table 1 shows three cases of religious hoaxes in Indonesia involving public figures and spread through digital platforms such as YouTube and Twitter. The first case is Sugi Nur Raharja's statement in 2019, which referred to Nahdlatul Ulama (NU) as a ‘public bus with a drunk driver.’ This statement was a personal attack on NU (*ad hominem*) without providing substantial criticism, which then exacerbated polarisation in society.

The second case is a hoax spread by Muhammad Kace through his YouTube channel between 2018 and 2021. In one of his videos, he misinterpreted Surah Al-Ma'un by saying that ‘those who pray will lose’ and accused the Prophet Muhammad of being surrounded by jinn. This misinterpretation reflects the missing-the-point type of logic, which has the potential to mislead and trigger negative reactions among Muslims.

The third case involves Yahya Waloni, a former pastor who, in 2021, claimed that ‘Christian scripture is not the Bible’ and used pejorative terms to denigrate Christian theologians. His statements relied on emotion and popularity (*argumentum ad populum*) without a strong basis in evidence, thus muddying interfaith relations and fuelling interfaith controversy.

These three cases show a common pattern of using logical fallacies in spreading religious hoaxes, which results in social polarization, misinterpretation of religious teachings, and damage to interfaith harmony.

The data reveals several recurring patterns in the dissemination of religious hoaxes in Indonesia. First, the use of logical fallacies—such as *ad hominem*, missing the point, and *argumentum ad populum*—is a consistent tactic employed by individuals spreading hoaxes. These fallacies serve to provoke emotional reactions rather than stimulate critical discussion. Second, digital platforms like YouTube and Twitter are key mediums for amplifying these hoaxes, enabling the rapid spread of divisive

narratives to a wide audience. Third, the content of the hoaxes often targets sensitive religious issues, such as scripture interpretation and interfaith relations, which inherently have a high potential to incite social unrest. Finally, these hoaxes not only undermine societal harmony but also erode trust within and between religious communities by fostering polarisation and misunderstanding. Based on these patterns, it can be concluded that the strategic misuse of digital platforms and logical fallacies significantly contributes to the amplification and impact of religious hoaxes in Indonesia.

The findings underscore the significant role of logical fallacies and digital platforms in shaping and amplifying religious hoaxes, which profoundly impact societal harmony and interfaith relations. Strategic use of logical fallacies, such as *ad hominem*, missing the point, and *argumentum ad populum*, provokes emotional reactions and fosters polarization, often exacerbating tensions within and between religious communities. Digital platforms, such as YouTube and Twitter, serve as powerful amplifiers of these narratives, enabling widespread dissemination to audiences with varying levels of digital literacy.

Research shows that religious bias negatively impacts trust in religious others but can be moderated by digital media usage, underscoring the dual role of these platforms as both mitigators and exacerbators of tension (Masood, Xiang, Skoric, & Ahmed, 2022). Furthermore, misinformation, particularly in crisis contexts like the COVID-19 pandemic, triggers psychological responses such as fear, anger, and distress, reinforcing divisions and undermining societal cohesion (Wani, Agarwal, & Bours, 2021). Logical fallacies within these hoaxes create "us versus them" dynamics, deepening social segregation and fostering discriminatory practices, as evidenced in digital collectivities on social networking sites in India (Bhatia, 2021).

Blind trust in familiar sources of information within religious communities further compounds the issue, making individuals more susceptible to misinformation and eroding trust within diverse populations (Khader et al., 2020). Promoting analytic thinking and critical evaluation of information is crucial in mitigating these effects, as deliberative reasoning has been shown to reduce susceptibility to misinformation and restore trust (Pennycook, 2023).

These insights highlight the intricate interplay between logical fallacies, digital misinformation, and social dynamics in religious contexts. Addressing this phenomenon requires a comprehensive approach, integrating media literacy education, fostering interfaith dialogue, and encouraging critical thinking to build resilience against the divisive impacts of misinformation. This study contributes to the broader discourse on digital misinformation by offering a framework to understand how logical fallacies in religious contexts exacerbate social tensions and erode trust within diverse communities.

Religious Framing of Hoaxes

The analysis of religious hoaxes involving Sugi Nur Raharja, Muhammad Kace, and Yahya Waloni is contextualized using Entman's framing theory (Entman, 1993). This framework explores how specific issues are selected, highlighted, and framed to shape public perceptions and reactions. Table 2, the findings are structured according to the dimensions of Entman framing.

Table 2. Dimensions of Entman Framing

Case	Issue Selection	Aspect Highlight
Sugi Nur Raharja	Criticism of Nahdlatul Ulama (NU) is framed through offensive metaphors.	NU is framed as weak and mismanaged, described metaphorically as "a public bus with a drunk driver."
Muhammad Kace	Misinterpretation of Qur'anic teachings and theological assertions.	Misleading claims such as "those who pray will lose" and accusations against Prophet Muhammad being surrounded by jinn.
Yahya Waloni	Denigration of Christian doctrine and theologians.	Claims like "the Christian holy book is not the Bible" coupled with pejorative language targeting Christian theologians.

The framing dimensions in Table 2 provide an overview of how each case strategically selects and highlights specific issues to shape public narratives. For instance, Sugi Nur Raharja's metaphor of NU as "a public bus with a drunk driver" reflects an offensive framing intended to undermine NU's organizational credibility. Similarly, Muhammad Kace leverages theological misinterpretation, such as claiming "those who pray will lose," to provoke controversy and sow confusion within the Muslim community. Yahya Waloni's framing, on the other hand, focuses on denigrating Christian doctrine through claims like "the Christian holy book is not the Bible," combining pejorative language and populist appeals to heighten interfaith tensions.

Expanding on these framing techniques, Table 3 delves deeper into the core elements of Entman's framing conception, illustrating how each case identifies problems, interprets their causes, evaluates them morally, and proposes solutions. This layered analysis highlights not only the strategic narratives employed but also the broader implications for societal and interfaith harmony.

Table 3. Entman Framing Conception

Case	Problem Identification	Causal Interpretation	Moral Evaluation	Recommendation
Sugi Nur Raharja	Hate speech targeting NU's reputation and leadership.	Driven by personal dissatisfaction with NU's perceived political alignment.	Sugi's statements are framed as unethical attacks on a religious organization and as polarising public discourse.	Strengthen public awareness of digital ethics and enforce laws on hate speech to prevent divisive narratives.
Muhammad Kace	Dissemination of theological misinformation and blasphemy.	Motivated by a desire to provoke controversy and gain popularity through provocative religious content.	Kace's content is portrayed as harmful to religious understanding and disruptive to communal harmony.	Enhance religious literacy among audiences and penalize misuse of digital platforms for spreading misinformation.
Yahya Waloni	Framing interfaith tensions through populist rhetoric and truth claims.	Yahya's personal religious journey was utilized as a platform to delegitimize Christian theology.	Yahya's approach is deemed divisive, undermining interfaith dialogue and mutual respect.	Promote interfaith dialogue and ensure digital content adheres to ethical standards to prevent interreligious discord.

The case of Sugi Nur Raharja highlights the issue of hate speech, where NU was framed metaphorically as "a public bus with a drunk driver." This offensive imagery was amplified via the MUNJIAT YouTube Channel and social media platforms, eliciting strong reactions from NU leaders, including KH. Marzuki Mustamar. The framing employed ad hominem attacks to delegitimize NU's credibility, creating a polarising narrative among religious groups.

The case of Muhammad Kace involves theological misinformation, such as the claim that "those who pray will lose," paired with unfounded accusations against Prophet Muhammad. These statements, uploaded on his YouTube channel, demonstrate the use of *missing-the-point* logical fallacies. The dissemination of such content sparked significant backlash within the Muslim community, particularly among religious scholars who criticized its potential to mislead audiences and incite religious misunderstandings.

The case of Yahya Waloni focuses on the denigration of Christian doctrine, with statements such as "the Christian holy book is not the Bible" delivered via the IRMA AN-NUR YouTube Channel. Yahya's framing strategy relied on *argumentum and populum* to provoke emotional responses and reinforce divisive interfaith tensions. His rhetoric drew criticism from interfaith advocates, highlighting the detrimental impact of populist appeals in religious discourse.

These cases illustrate how framing strategies exploit sensitive religious issues, leveraging logical fallacies to create emotionally charged narratives. Through Entman's framework, the interconnectedness of issue selection, aspect highlighting, problem identification, and moral evaluation becomes evident in shaping public opinion and provoking social unrest. Recommendations include enhancing digital literacy, fostering interfaith dialogue, and enforcing legal measures to combat the spread of religious hoaxes.

The analysis of religious hoaxes involving Sugi Nur Raharja, Muhammad Kace, and Yahya Waloni demonstrates how framing strategies are used to manipulate public perceptions by focusing on sensitive religious issues. Each case highlights specific tactics: Sugi Nur's offensive metaphor of NU as "a public bus with a drunk driver" aimed to undermine NU's credibility; Kace's misleading theological claims, such as "those who pray will lose," created confusion within the Muslim community; and Yahya's denigration of Christian doctrine, claiming "the Christian holy book is not the Bible," sought to provoke interfaith tensions. These narratives, amplified through digital platforms like YouTube, relied on logical fallacies to evoke emotional reactions and polarise communities. By examining these cases, it becomes clear that deliberate framing can distort understanding and incite social unrest, underscoring the importance of promoting digital literacy, fostering dialogue, and enforcing regulations to counteract such misinformation.

The analysis of religious hoaxes involving Sugi Nur Raharja, Muhammad Kace, and Yahya Waloni reveals distinct patterns that highlight the deliberate framing strategies employed to manipulate public perception. First, these cases exploit sensitive religious issues to provoke emotional responses from their audiences. Sugi Nur's attack on Nahdlatul Ulama (NU) as "a public bus with a drunk driver" challenges the credibility of a prominent religious organization, while Muhammad Kace misinterprets Qur'anic verses to create theological confusion, and Yahya Waloni undermines Christian doctrine by claiming that "the Christian holy book is not the Bible." The deliberate targeting of foundational religious beliefs ensures heightened public resonance and controversy.

Second, all three cases employ logical fallacies to construct their narratives. Sugi Nur relies on ad hominem attacks to delegitimize NU without offering substantive arguments, while Kace utilizes a missing-the-point fallacy to distort Qur'anic teachings, misleading audiences into theological misinterpretation. Yahya adopts an argumentum ad populum approach, leveraging emotional and populist rhetoric to strengthen divisive interfaith narratives. These fallacies serve to divert attention from rational discourse, fostering misinformation and polarisation.

Third, digital platforms such as YouTube and social media are pivotal in amplifying these hoaxes. The viral dissemination of Sugi's metaphor, Kace's provocative theological claims, and Yahya's contentious rhetoric underscores the role of digital tools in spreading divisive narratives. The accessibility and reach of these platforms allow misinformation to penetrate various societal layers, particularly among audiences with limited media literacy.

The cases illustrate a clear trend of polarisation and tension provocation. Sugi's remarks exacerbated internal divisions within the Muslim community, while Kace's misinterpretations furthered misunderstandings of Islamic teachings, especially among less literate audiences. Yahya's rhetoric heightened interfaith tensions, undermining efforts toward dialogue and mutual respect.

These recurring patterns demonstrate that individuals or groups intentionally frame religious hoaxes to exploit emotionally charged issues, leverage logical fallacies, and maximize their reach through digital platforms. This framing not only distorts public understanding but also incites social polarization, highlighting the urgent need for digital literacy education, interfaith initiatives, and stricter online content regulation to mitigate the spread and impact of such hoaxes.

The findings reveal significant implications for understanding how framing strategies in religious hoaxes manipulate public perception and incite social unrest. By targeting sensitive religious issues, these hoaxes exploit emotional responses and amplify societal divisions. The deliberate use of logical fallacies—ad hominem, missing the point, and argumentum ad populum—not only distorts rational discourse but also fosters misinformation, which is particularly harmful in diverse and pluralistic societies like Indonesia. This underscores the critical role of digital platforms in amplifying such

narratives, demonstrating how accessible and unregulated spaces can become breeding grounds for divisive content.

These findings contribute to the broader understanding of the dynamics of digital misinformation, particularly in religious contexts, by illustrating how strategic framing manipulates societal vulnerabilities. The data highlights the interconnectedness of media literacy, emotional rhetoric, and the impact of unfiltered digital content, which together exacerbate communal tensions. Furthermore, these cases exemplify how religious hoaxes are not isolated incidents but part of a larger phenomenon where religious sensitivities are weaponized for personal, ideological, or financial gain.

From a theoretical perspective, the application of Entman's framing theory provides a structured lens to dissect the mechanics of hoaxes, showing how the selection and highlighting of issues shape public opinion and influence behavioral responses. Practically, this study underscores the urgent need for interventions, including enhancing public awareness of digital ethics, promoting interfaith dialogue to counter divisive narratives, and implementing stricter regulations on digital content to mitigate the spread of misinformation. These efforts are essential to fostering a more informed and harmonious society resilient to the disruptive effects of religious hoaxes.

The findings reveal significant implications for understanding how framing strategies in religious hoaxes manipulate public perception and incite social unrest. By targeting sensitive religious issues, these hoaxes exploit emotional responses and amplify societal divisions, particularly in diverse societies like Indonesia. Digital platforms, due to their accessible and unregulated nature, play a critical role in amplifying these narratives. Research has demonstrated that social media fosters the rapid spread of misinformation, hate speech, and extremist content, creating alternative realities that distort public understanding and harm democratic processes (Fernández-Muñoz, Rubio-Moraga, & Álvarez-Rivas, 2022; Filibeli, 2020).

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These findings deepen the understanding of the dynamics of digital misinformation, especially within religious contexts, by illustrating how strategic framing exploits societal vulnerabilities for personal, ideological, or financial gain. Religious hoaxes are not isolated phenomena; they are part of a broader socio-political dynamic where religious sensitivities are weaponized to influence public perception and achieve various ends. Political hoaxes, particularly in the post-truth era, often manipulate religious sentiments to influence electoral outcomes, leveraging identity politics and societal divisions to foster distrust in political institutions and the media (Agustina, Ali, Octavianne, & Jamal, 2023). Similarly, the use of false terrorism threats demonstrates how ideological actors exploit societal fears through religious framing to impose significant psychological and resource-related costs (Tishler, 2018).

Historical and contemporary religious scandals also highlight how figures exploit their religious authority for personal gains, such as financial misconduct or criminal activities, contributing to public skepticism and media sensationalism (Buddenbaum, 2009). The spread of conspiracy theories intertwined with religious beliefs further demonstrates how religious sensitivities are harnessed to propagate false narratives, skewing ethical beliefs and fostering societal polarisation (Arli, 2022). Moreover, the use of religious ideology in violent acts, including terrorism, underscores the potency of framing religious sentiments to justify radical objectives, particularly through transnational networks and suicide terrorism (Dawson, 2024).

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to counter divisive narratives, and implementing stricter regulations on digital content to mitigate the spread of misinformation. These efforts are essential to fostering a more informed and harmonious society resilient to the disruptive effects of religious hoaxes.

Legal Framing of Hoaxes

The legal implications of religious hoaxes involving Sugi Nur Raharja, Muhammad Kace, and Yahya Waloni can be contextualized through the Indonesian Information and Electronic Transactions (ITE) Law. These cases demonstrate clear violations of specific legal provisions, particularly Articles 28 and 45A of the ITE Law, which govern hate speech and the dissemination of false information that incites hostility based on ethnicity, religion, race, and intergroup (SARA) elements.

Article 28 (2) of the ITE Law prohibits the dissemination of electronic information or documents that intentionally incite hatred or hostility against individuals or groups based on SARA elements. In the case of Sugi Nur Raharja, his statement comparing Nahdlatul Ulama (NU) to "a public bus with a drunk driver," disseminated through his MUNJIAT YouTube Channel, constitutes a violation of this provision. His ad hominem remarks targeted NU as an organization and its members, inciting public outrage and polarising the Muslim community. This aligns with the legal criteria for hate speech as defined by the ITE Law, which aims to prevent the misuse of digital platforms for spreading divisive content (Sari, Rani, & Tabrani, 2020).

Article 45A (2) of the ITE Law penalizes the dissemination of false information that causes public unrest or incites social disorder. The case of Muhammad Kace exemplifies this violation. Kace's claims, such as the misinterpretation of Surah Al-Ma'un and accusations against Prophet Muhammad, were broadcasted through his YouTube channel, misleading audiences and provoking significant backlash within the Muslim community. These actions fall under the scope of blasphemy and misinformation, as the false theological claims have the potential to disrupt societal harmony and fuel religious tensions (CNN, 2021).

Yahya Waloni's rhetoric, wherein he claimed that "the Christian holy book is not the Bible," also demonstrates a violation of both Articles 28 (2) and 45A (2). His inflammatory remarks, delivered via the IRMA AN-NUR YouTube Channel, incited interfaith hostility and challenged the credibility of another religion's sacred texts. By using pejorative language and populist rhetoric, Yahya's statements fit the legal definition of content that spreads hate and misinformation with the potential to disrupt public order and interreligious harmony (Nurfaini, 2023).

These cases highlight the deliberate use of digital platforms to disseminate content that violates legal provisions aimed at maintaining social harmony. The ITE Law explicitly prohibits the use of electronic media to incite hostility or spread falsehoods. In all three cases, the individuals utilized emotional and provocative rhetoric to gain attention, thereby amplifying their narratives and causing widespread social unrest. The penalties under the ITE Law include imprisonment for up to six years and fines of up to one billion rupiah, underscoring the seriousness of these offenses in the context of Indonesian law (Hadi, Nugroho, Muntakhib, & Choeroni, 2020).

These findings demonstrate the crucial role of legal frameworks in addressing the spread of religious hoaxes. By framing these actions within the context of the ITE Law, it becomes evident that the intentional dissemination of hate speech and misinformation poses significant threats to societal cohesion. Thus, enforcing these legal provisions is imperative to mitigate the impact of divisive narratives on Indonesia's pluralistic society.

To clarify the legal violations in religious hoax cases involving Sugi Nur Raharja, Muhammad Kace, and Yahya Waloni, Table 4 presents the details of offenses under Articles 28 (2) and 45A (2) of the Indonesian ITE Law.

Table 4. Legal Violations in Religious Hoax Cases under the ITE Law

Case	Violation of ITE Law	Details of Violation	Platform	Impact
Sugi Nur Raharja	Article 28(2)	Comparing NU to "a public bus with a drunk driver" inciting hate speech based on SARA elements.	YouTube (MUNJIAT Channel)	Polarisation within NU and strong reactions from NU figures such as KH. Marzuki Mustamar.
Muhammad Kace	Article 45A(2)	Spreading false theological claims, such as "those who pray will lose," and accusing Prophet Muhammad of being surrounded by jinn.	YouTube (MuhammadKece Channel)	Theological confusion within the Muslim community and social unrest due to misleading interpretations.
Yahya Waloni	Articles 28(2) and 45A(2)	Claiming "the Christian holy book is not the Bible" with derogatory and provocative language.	YouTube (IRMA AN-NUR Channel)	Heightened interfaith tensions and protests from interfaith groups.

Table 4 provides a comprehensive overview of the legal violations committed by three individuals spreading religious hoaxes, namely Sugi Nur Raharja, Muhammad Kace, and Yahya Waloni, under Articles 28 (2) and 45A (2) of the Indonesian ITE Law. The table details the nature of violations, the digital platforms used, and the resulting social impacts.

For instance, in the case of Sugi Nur, the violation stemmed from his offensive metaphor comparing NU to "a public bus with a drunk driver," which was disseminated via his YouTube channel and provoked a strong backlash from NU leaders and members. Similarly, Muhammad Kace's dissemination of false theological claims, such as misinterpreting Surah Al-Ma'un, caused theological confusion among Muslims and social unrest. In the case of Yahya Waloni, his statement that "the Christian holy book is not the Bible," broadcasted via a YouTube channel, heightened interfaith tensions and drew criticism from interfaith organizations.

Table 4 underscores the significant societal harm caused by the dissemination of unlawful digital content. These cases illustrate how digital platforms can amplify divisive narratives, making the enforcement of legal measures and digital literacy initiatives crucial to maintaining social harmony in a diverse society like Indonesia.

The analysis of the data in Table 4 reveals distinct patterns in the dissemination of religious hoaxes, particularly their consistent violations of Articles 28 (2) and 45A (2) of the Indonesian ITE Law. A key trend is the strategic exploitation of digital platforms like YouTube, which provide a broad reach and facilitate the rapid spread of divisive narratives targeting specific religious groups and doctrines. These hoaxes rely on provocative rhetoric designed to evoke emotional reactions, as evidenced by Sugi Nur's inflammatory metaphor comparing NU to "a public bus with a drunk driver" and Yahya Waloni's claim that "the Christian holy book is not the Bible." Such statements deliberately exploit logical fallacies, including *ad hominem* attacks and populist appeals, to undermine opposing perspectives. Furthermore, the hoaxes consistently focus on sensitive religious issues, such as foundational beliefs and institutions, to maximize their emotional and polarising impact. The societal repercussions are profound, including polarisation within religious communities, heightened interfaith tensions, and theological confusion, underscoring the significant harm caused by these narratives in disrupting social harmony and eroding trust among diverse groups.

These findings contribute to the broader discourse on digital ethics and societal resilience by emphasizing the critical need for initiatives that promote media literacy, critical thinking, and interfaith dialogue as countermeasures to the effects of misinformation. Media literacy programs integrated into educational curricula have proven effective in enhancing critical thinking and analytical skills, equipping individuals to critically evaluate the reliability of online content (Mango-Quispe, Pérez-Postigo, & Turpo-Gebera, 2024). Tools such as fact-checking training and gamified educational approaches further support this goal by fostering digital competencies and skepticism towards unreliable sources (Gil Ruiz, 2024; López-Meri, Doménech-Fabregat, & Marcos-García, 2024). Similarly, problem-based learning and metacognitive training encourage students to develop deeper reasoning abilities, enabling them to identify logical fallacies and misinformation (Carvalho et al., 2017; Rivas, Saiz, & Ossa, 2022). In parallel, interfaith dialogue initiatives, whether community-based or facilitated through online platforms, play a vital role in building mutual understanding and tolerance, particularly among youth, who are often the primary consumers of digital content (Ismail & Mujani, 2012; Valleau, Rahimov, & Cherkasov, 2018). Collectively, these strategies not only mitigate the divisive impact of religious hoaxes but also foster a more informed and cohesive society capable of navigating the complexities of a digital information ecosystem.

4. Conclusion

This study provides critical insights into the dynamics of religious hoaxes in Indonesia by examining their logical, religious, and legal dimensions. The findings reveal that religious hoaxes are propagated through deliberate framing strategies that exploit logical fallacies such as *ad hominem*, missing the point, and *argumentum ad populum*. These hoaxes, disseminated via digital platforms like YouTube and Twitter, target sensitive religious issues, amplifying societal polarisation, interfaith tensions, and theological confusion. By analyzing these cases using Entman's framing theory, the study demonstrates how strategic framing manipulates public perception and incites social unrest, posing significant challenges to societal harmony and trust.

The study contributes to academic discourse by integrating logic, religion, and law to analyze the multifaceted impact of religious hoaxes. It highlights the role of logical fallacies in shaping divisive narratives, the ethical implications of hoaxes in religious contexts, and the relevance of legal frameworks such as the Indonesian ITE Law in addressing these issues. Furthermore, it underscores the critical importance of media literacy, critical thinking, and interfaith dialogue in mitigating the spread of religious hoaxes and fostering a resilient and informed society.

Despite its contributions, this research has limitations. First, the study primarily focuses on high-profile cases involving public figures, which may not capture the full spectrum of religious hoaxes in Indonesia. Second, the analysis relies heavily on qualitative data, limiting the generalisability of the findings. Finally, while the study addresses the legal implications of hoaxes, it does not extensively explore the enforcement challenges of existing laws. Future research could expand by incorporating quantitative approaches to measure the prevalence and impact of religious hoaxes, analyzing lesser-known cases to provide a broader perspective, and evaluating the effectiveness of law enforcement in combating misinformation. By addressing these limitations, subsequent studies can build upon this research to develop a more comprehensive understanding of the issue and its solutions.

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