



## Caring for Religious Moderation through the Management of Social Media on the Salatiga Campus as the City of Tolerance

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### ABSTRACT

Awareness of religious moderation is an important value in Salatiga City as the most tolerant city in 2021. The city has two religious universities, namely IAIN Salatiga and Satya Wacana Christian University. Through social media accounts on Instagram, both universities disseminate information about the existence of the institution. Assuredly, social media management is the main thing in content management, especially regarding religious moderation as a form of religious tolerance in Salatiga. Therefore, this study aims to determine how the social media management of both universities related to religious moderation includes planning, organizing, actuating, and controlling through the case study method.

As an educational institution in one field, the awareness to maintain and realize the City of Harmony - Salatiga City with an attitude of religious moderation has been implemented through postings on their Instagram platform. Social media management is not only manifesting religious moderation as a planned image but a practice of daily life. The posts of universities are the result of joint thinking in their respective public relations departments through a brand story strategy with validation before being uploaded.



## INTRODUCTION

One of the characteristics of humans is the existence of diversity. This diversity can be seen in genetic factors, DNA mutase, human adaptation processes, environmental factors, and habits. These factors then affect the phenotype or outward appearance of humans (Anggara, 2020). This is what causes diversity in Indonesia because ancestors come in turn (Indonesia.go.id, 2019). Because of the territory of Indonesia, the condition of the island nation, differences in natural conditions, the state of transportation and communication, the acceptance of society to change, historical factors, religious factors, foreign cultural influences, races and groups in society, and the acceptance of society to change, Indonesia has diversity (Hutomo, 2020).

The variety of Indonesian culture is intended to foster tolerance, resulting in mutual respect and harmony, particularly in the digital age. Digital technology (Ranney & Troop-Gordon, 2015) has ushered in a new era of convenience and speed in communication and information, one of which is social media. According to survey statistics, Indonesia has 160 million active social media users (Haryanto, 2020). In 2020, the three most widely used social media platforms are Youtube, WhatsApp, and Instagram (Boyle, 2022) (Dahono, 2021). However, WhatsApp outperforms Instagram in terms of time, with an average of 30.8 hours per month vs 17 hours per month for Instagram (Lidwina, 2021).

Looking at the statistics, it's easy to see why social media has such a

significant following nowadays. Unfortunately, individuals are still unaware of the need for social media literacy. According to Kaspersky's research, two of ten users share news on social media without confirming it. This is done only for social purposes, namely to demonstrate that they are folks who keep up with technological developments and are well-informed (Pusparisa, 2020). Of course, because tolerance is vulnerable to hoaxes (Domenico et al., 2021), this might detract from its benefits.

The existence of social media (Rahmitasari, 2017) from the two universities in Salatiga also demonstrates the existence of tolerance awareness, particularly because it is in stark contrast and side by side, but preserves the notion of cultural variety and religious moderation. In the concept of city branding, universities become co-brand in campaigns. Because cities as academic centers can get advantages from partnerships between city communication strategies and university communication strategies in students' perceptions of city brands to the plan (Briciu et al., 2021). This situation necessitates the use of social media management (Looy, 2016) by institutions (Thurlow et al., 2017). Because social media may enhance brand recognition by up to 69% of respondents, as an educational institution, we realize the value of "a good name college" (Pusparisa, 2020).

The city of the university is one of the factors that influence the decisions of the students to study. In other words, the city has competitiveness and attraction in that success doing marketing in

education. When the university is a brand, the digital integrated marketing communications activity (Noveriyanto & Adawiyah, 2021) of the university should be in harmony with the city branding and the city should serve the needs of the potential students of the university (Rekettye & Pozsgai, 2015). For different segments, attractiveness, interest in marketing, and promotion of the city are the dimensions of attitudes of foreign people toward a city brand. Henderson (1999) and Roedder John (2005) said that the information about the brand is stored in the consumers' long-term memory (Brandt & Mortanges, 2011). A city brand is the identity of the city that hopes people have a positive impression (image) of the city, city imaging (Widodo, 2016).

City branding is to develop a positive image of a given destination and the products that are offered by the city (Cudny, 2019). An effective city brand has stakeholder engagement which should be committed at each stage of the branding process with an intelligible and credible brand (Dinnie, 2010).

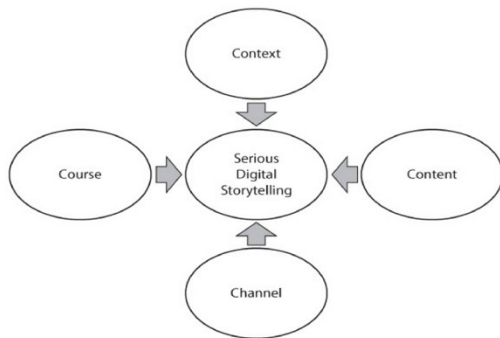
The Fact of today, cities get pressing challenges in urban life to accommodate larger, more diverse, and increasingly mobile populations. In this context of specific, the affordances of digital media are transforming the city as a communicative environment (McQuire & Wei, 2020). City branding represents an interesting application of place branding strategies in which urban space is designed, recorded, and narrated in the contemporary imagination at the individual and social levels. Place brand identity communications have three tools

in the online environment: place brand design, place brand behavior, and place brand communication (Lam, 2020). Furthermore, McQuire (2007) recorded buildings and material urban structures as symbolic resources that "communicate" certain values, or about urban space as a "space of appearance" (Paganoni, 2015).

Communicating with social media is complemented by the new communicative space giving a new platform to communicate with visitors. Opportunities in social media for circulating official advertising campaigns (Putri & Eriyanto, 2020) and word of mouth, or communication processes. More specifically, city branding projects use social media to communicate messages directly and globally. Using social media presents more advantages platforms for monitoring reputation, creating content, and engaging with target audiences (Bellini & Pasquinelli, 2016). Similarly, Munar (2011) said that visitors also make stories on social media platforms to share experiences and information, as well as to learn from the experiences of other visitors. The contribution of social media to governments provides opportunities in the public sector, in several areas: Improving Efficiency and Productivity, Improving Local Public Services, Improving Policy Making, and Strengthening Local Democracy (Sobaci, 2015).



Figure 1: 4C mode to create storytelling



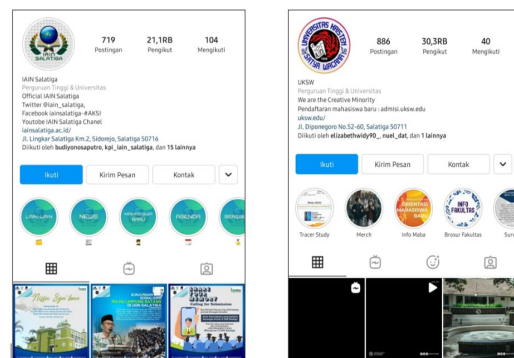
Source: (Mansfield & Topler, 2022)

A media studies viewpoint can be visualized using 4C mode to create storytelling that is context, course content, and channel. Social media as a channel is playing an increasingly important role since innovation stories are told through smartphone apps available in real-time, dynamic, visible, and influential, e.g. YouTube, Facebook, a printed novel, Instagram, and tweets on Twitter (Mansfield & Topler, 2022).

Innovative practice and positive outcomes, communication (West & Turner, 2008) have had a role in the development and social change by development actors (Dagron, 2009). The development of modern technology makes communicators not only focus on the concept of message content delivered to the audience (Rustan & Hakki, 2017). As a result, social media management (Sidjanin, 2012) becomes a phase in the overall management process, which encompasses a variety of management activities such as planning, organizing, executing, and regulating.

This makes social media management important with principles, namely planning, organizing, actuating, and controlling. Planning is one important aspect that describes what things will be used or undertaken to achieve its goals. Organizing is the principle that governs various activities and resources. Actuating is a directing principle related to procedures/policies in running social media. Controlling is the last principle that aims to provide control, consisting of pathways, timing, attitudes in completing work, and follow-up (Silalahi et al., 2020). Social media includes new media whose use refers to the internet (Lythreath et al., 2022) and technology (Tang et al., 2022). Because social media users are interconnected and social networks can be seen, this can bring together people who do not know (Hersinta et al., 2010). Social media is about online interactions (Tashandra, 2017) and connections having accessibility, speed, interactivity, longevity/ loyalty and reach (Taprial & Kanwar, 2013).

Figure 2: Salatiga Campus Social media



Source: (@iain\_salatiga, 2021) and (@uksw\_salatiga, 2021)

The emergence of hoaxes (Gerintya, 2018; mastel. id, 2019; Yuliani, 2017) through social media is very disturbing (Sulistyawati, 2019), especially to community harmony, and can seriously hamper development. Hoax news (Aldwairi & Alwahedi, 2018) can lead to the emergence of slander, character assassination, statement wars on social media, breaking friendships, and damaging the harmony of people's lives (Ardiansyah et al., 2018). One solution that controls this is the attitude of religious moderation. Moderating means controlling something to guide, regulate or mediate as well as reduce violence and avoid extremes (Hakim, 2018). In case, social media becomes a means of moderation, it means having the intention to control everything so that it is on the right and balanced path.

In 2018, the Ministry of Religious Affairs (Chomsah, 2019) emphasized the need of understanding religious moderation @kemenag\_ri used #moderasiberagama in multiple postings on his official account (Arenggoasih & Wijayanti, 2020). The key to creating a society tolerant of a group's differences, the adherents of religion and community, is to create harmony and reject extremism and liberalism in terms of faith. Moderation is defined as the attitude of listening to one another and listening to handle one another's differences (Hakim, 2018). The concept of "media city" in contemporary cities discusses the influence of media platform articulation on the co-constituted experience of social space (McQuire & Wei, 2020). Therefore, this study wants to describe how religious moderation in social media

of higher education management in Salatiga

## METHODOLOGY

This study discusses the social media management of the two faith-based universities (State Institute for Islamic Studies - IAIN Salatiga and Satya Wacana Christian University Salatiga), especially regarding the attitude toward religious moderation through their respective Instagram social media, namely: @iain\_salatiga and @uksw\_salatiga. In qualitative research, this analysis was obtained through a case study and data collection through interviews, observation, and documentation (Kriyantono, 2014).

The function of the method has comprehended communication as an involving process of media, organizing in specific ways through a platform of connecting people in their social networks (Ben-Harush, 2010). Qualitative research with a case study method was used through data collection led using document studies, field observations, and in-depth interviews (Mihardja et al., 2020) from July to September 2021.

The case study method opened the events that related to a case can look very simple or complex but have a unique value or a specific locus in scientific activities. Then, it was carried out in an intensive, detailed, and in-depth series about a program, event, and action, at the level of individuals, groups of people, institutions, or organizations to gain in-depth knowledge (Rahardjo, 2017). The casuistic values in the Salatiga area related to IAIN Salatiga and Satya Wacana Christian University become



selected events, here in after referred to as ongoing, real-life events something that has passed. Through the interviews with the informants, this study conducted pattern matching from their answers. The explanations from Rektor and Public Relations of IAIN Salatiga and Satya Wacana Christian University were grouped by looking at their similarities to each other (Rashid et al., 2019). The last for validity, test construct validity is used as a Case Study Tactic by using multiple sources of evidence, building a chain of evidence, and having a draft review of crucial informants (Yin, 2009).

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

### Building Religious Moderation by Campus in Salatiga

Salatiga has been advocating for the City of Harmony since 2017, with the hopes of fostering tolerance similar to that of gamelan, which produces a harmonic beat even though it is made up of numerous instruments when performed (Solikun, 2017). The predicate "City of Harmony" is derived from the variety of Salatiga people, as evidenced by the multiplicity of ethnicities, tribes, and faiths coexisting with minimum interaction or enmity. The establishment of Satya Wacana Christian University – UKSW and the State Islamic Institute – IAIN Salatiga as religiously based educational institutions that have progressed in the development of the city creates contrast in Salatiga. Both educational institutions believe in the transmission of multiple religious knowledge and in the power of education to develop tolerance. Namely, social harmony in The City of Harmony must

understand and accept differences and diversity in a multicultural society with the consequences of tolerance (Javakhishvili et al., 2016). There is a study focusing on student social distance (Generation Z) against followers of different religions revealing which is social distance with local religious adherents related to campus activities (Sulistiyani et al., 2021).

In Indonesian or Javanese, the word harmony implies "to get along nicely". Harmony is not a static or stagnant state; it is a dynamic one that must be pursued. Social disputes are frequently the consequence of a variety of factors ranging from politics to economy to culture and religion. This balance must be dynamic, and it must be achieved through numerous facets of life. As a result, Salatiga as a City of Harmony is a proactive initiative involving all levels of society and the academic community. Tolerance, like the City of Harmony campaign's aim, necessitates a social, political, and cultural approach. As a result, from a social-cultural standpoint, all educational institutions must recognize and contribute to the development of extremely proactive pillars from all walks of life, as well as mutual regard and respect through religious life.

The emergence of cases of radicalism involving religious life in the campus environment (Gunadha & Yasir, 2019). Becoming urgent since, in general, universities or educational institutions are the focus as well as the most strategic institution in doing social engineering and are a medium that determines the social condition of society in the present and the future.



Both religious universities in Salatiga agree on the need of transforming Salatiga into a City of Harmony (Cheng, 2018). The support was evident when the Rector of IAIN Salatiga - Dr. Rahmat Hariyadi, Rector of UKSW - Neil Samuel Rupidara, Yuliyanto, and Muh Haris - Mayor and Deputy Mayor of Salatiga met together for a public discussion with the theme "Tolerance in Salatiga City" in the communication of Ramadan Festival (CORAL) in 2018. The relief to adopt religious moderation in creating the City of Harmony is based on religious differences as the foundation of the two Educational Institutions. In other words, religious moderation that does not discriminate from certain groups is an indicator of the predicate City of Harmony from the plurality of Salatiga society. Minister of Religious Affairs Lukman Hakim Saifuddin visited UKSW in 2017 to launch the Assembly of the Complete Workers of the Federation of Churches in Indonesia (MPL-PGI), and IAIN Rector Salatiga Rahmat Hariyadi was also there (Daniel/mkd/mkd, 2017).

Figure 3. Documentation of the meeting between the Rector of IAIN Salatiga



Source: Public Relation of Salatiga City, 2018

The term "moderation" has two meanings: leading, regulating, mediating, and decreasing violence, as well as avoiding extremes. The two definitions are equivalent and equally valid when it comes to performing control duties. As a promoter and Minister of Religious Affairs at the time, Lukman Hakim saw moderation as a manner of operating. Controlling things to avoid the lazy, attracting outrageous things to stay on track, and peeling things off to attain balance are examples of moderating (Hakim, 2018). The findings of research on WEIRD cultures (Western, educated, industrial, rich, and democratic) explain that extraversion moderates political and moral beliefs through (1) associating conformity and openness with ideology; (2) associating extraversion with the individualization of the foundation; and (3) associating extraversion with a binding moral foundation (Alper & Yilmaz, 2019).

Figure 4. Illustration of the website header



Source: Website of IAIN Salatiga, 2019

IAIN Salatiga promotes the notion of Wasatiyyah Islam, which is an Islamic doctrine that encourages the

Ummah to be fair, balanced, religious, and proportional often known as “moderate,” to become Wasath/mediators (Ikhsanudin, 2021). Zakiyuddin Baidhaway (Rector of IAIN Salatiga) explained the differences and diversity present from the internal, such as Muslim religious backgrounds that emerged from the coast, interior, Nahdlatul Ulama - NU, Muhammadiyah, LDII, and others. In addition to improving and maintaining the branding of The City of Harmony, IAIN Salatiga opened the Center for Wasatiyyah Islam in September 2020, in addition to enhancing and preserving the branding of The City of harmony, to continue to propagate the ideals of religious moderation valued by the Ministry of Religious Affairs (Sasongko, 2020).

In the future, IAIN Salatiga will be involved in a University to be a center of Islamic moderation, specifically a pilot campus that implements moderate Islam (Humas, 2021). As a result, assuring that 16,200 students from all faculties or study programs, particularly scholarship recipients, are free from radical understanding, as well as some provisions for lecturers and workers. Satya Wacana Christian University (UKSW), Indonesia’s oldest Christian University (PDDikti, 2020), also supports Salatiga’s City of Harmony effort. The cultural parade, also known as the Indonesian International Culture Festival, is organized by UKSW (IICF) since 2013, this action has been ongoing (@iicf.uksw, 2014) by cooperating with the Salatiga City Tourism Office, and this event becomes a yearly tradition. In reality, 19 nationalities were documented as participating in IICF activities in 2015 (Nugroho et al., 2015). Therefore, Rini

Kartika Hudiono, Head of the Promotion, Public Relations and Alumni Bureau (BPHA) UKSW stated that this activity is a devotion to the Indonesia Mini campus (RNA & Jie, 2015).

Rini Kartika Hudiono outlined the numerous activities that UKSW has done so far in terms of religious tolerance. In 2018, together with the Mayor, religious leaders, and over 250 interfaith youth in Salatiga City, UKSW was included in the proclamation of Kabhinekaan and Salatiga Cinta Damai (ern, 2018). The existence of this unity is sustainable in the Mitra Village Assistance Program (PPDM) of Satya Wacana Christian University (UKSW) in collaboration with The Peace Copyright Community (Kocipda) Salatiga and The Peace Creative Tourism Village (DWKP) Srumbung Gunung held a Peace Camp in August 2021. This program intends to convey 12 peace ideals to a group of 30 people that represent Islam, Catholicism, Christianity, Buddhism, and believers (rh/upk/chis, 2021).

UKSW only teaches Christianity through its learning curriculum, not merely technologically. Rini Kartika Hudiono explained that Christian courses are Pancasila Christian classes which means providing the possibility of a free forum for every student who adheres to another religion can argue. Although UKSW is identical or dominant with Christian students but accepts students of other faiths, even allows Muslim students to wear hijab in the campus environment, and has facilities for Muslims to perform prayers in building B on the 5th floor.



### Social media as a medium of religious moderation

Social media management is important especially to maintain religious moderation. Today, management classes are filled with digital natives that are toward activities involving social interaction. One of the powerful drivers of change in social interaction is social media platforms. It is particularly suited to fast exchanges of thoughts, ideas, and information then facilitates relationship establishment and management, communication, and information sharing (Kapidzic, 2020; Wankel, 2016).

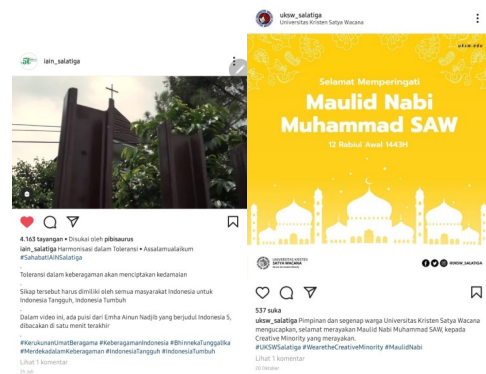
### Planning of social media in Religious Moderation

In strategic planning, an organization manifests the valued participation of public relations by showcasing how social media programs contribute to accomplishing an organization's objectives (Luo et al., 2015). Some fundamental and instrumental impacts of practicing social media (Diga & Kelleher, 2009) are building community (Sweetser & Kelleher, 2011) and monitoring issues (Briones et al., 2011). Iain Salatiga's social media management is surely not devoid of religious moderation in conformity with the Ministry of Religious Affairs' objectives. Head of Administrative, Public Relations, and Household Subsection IAIN Salatiga, Muh. Amin, S. Ag, M.M. explained in the social media planner of the Instagram account @iain salatiga that all official channels of IAIN Salatiga support the values of religious moderation by one of

them continuing the program conducted by the Center of Wasatiyyah Islam. Focus account uploads @iain\_salatiga not only about religious moderation, other posts such as activities, and academic or non-academic related information to achieve . However, uploads are done with caution in principle to avoid inadvertently causing harm.

The focus of postings carried out, similar to @uksw\_salatiga accounts, is not always burdened with the concept of religious moderation. This value is generated naturally rather than artificially. The Institution recognizes, however, that social media may be a reflection of one's image and a kind of branding in society.

Figure 5. Illustration of the post with tolerance



Source: @iain\_salatiga, 2021 and @uksw\_salatiga, 2021

The institution pledged to assist the City of Harmony Salatiga through soft marketing, particularly through religious moderation such as congratulating other religious festivities. Of course, this is done in line with the

SKKB calendar established by the government. Indeed, the Institution not only uploads joyful posts on the celebration of other religions' major holidays on its @uksw salatiga accounts but actively advertises in print media.

### **Organizing social media in Religious Moderation**

Even though both IAIN Salatiga and UKSW are under the ministry of religious affairs, they are cognate campuses. IAIN Salatiga is under the auspices of the Directorate of Islamic Religious Higher Education, as per the Minister of Religious Affairs of the Republic of Indonesia's Regulation No. 42 of 2016 About the Organization and Working Procedures of the Ministry of Religious Affairs. Meanwhile, the Directorate General of Christian Community Guidance, particularly the Sub-Directorate of Higher Education, which supervises the field of Christian religious higher education, has jurisdiction over UKSW (Ditjen Bimas Kristen, 2021). In other words, as community services, IAIN Salatiga and UKSW have indirect networking or ties.

All social media profiles controlled by IAIN Salatiga (including Instagram accounts) are under the supervision of public relations and are overseen directly by the Rector. IAIN Salatiga employs Youtube social media and website platforms as a media connection and digital information hub for stakeholders, in addition to Instagram social media. Naturally, the uploaded or given information has a voice to

encourage religious moderation in the context of the activity. Hubbul Wathan Minal Iman's idea becomes a handle for developing organizational systems, particularly in administering social media organizations.

The battle of academics and Kiai Nusantara in Indonesia has inherited the notion of Hubbul Wathan Minal Iman, which means love of the country (nation) from or a portion of the faith (Ibda, 2017). To put it another way, the Rector, through the public relations unit, whose job it is to operate the campus media technically, carries out the value of nationalism while incorporating Islamic spirit and patriotism (Sadiyah et al., 2021). The Public Relations department contains a group division that comprises a social media public relations team, a protocol publicist, and a status transfer public relations team. In line with the field of activity reported, social media public relations is in charge of operating social media and always collaborating with the Head of the Section, then Vice Rector I or Vice Rector III. This is carried out to get a screening or approval lead. Furthermore, public relations always coordinates to continue programs that have the Center of Wasatiyyah Islam regarding material broadcast on social media connected to religious moderation.

While the Bureau of Promotion, Public Relations, and Alumni is in charge of the @uksw salatiga account, the Bureau of Promotion, Public Relations, and Alumni is in charge of the @uksw salatiga account (BPHA). Employees in this industry are extremely cautious, even



when posting about followers of other religions; draft postings are constantly discussed with specialists, especially when it comes to grammar or phrases like other religious festivities, which are commonly shared on Instagram story platforms. In reality, not only did BPHA make statements on social media, but UKSW also commissioned a special page in the newspaper. Given that, the workers at UKSW are mostly Christians, with Muslims and Buddhist-Hindu religions accounting for 43 percent of the workforce, and hundreds of people are active in the management of campus groups.

### **Actuating social media in Religious Moderation**

All operations, including creating networking or partnerships, must be regulated digitally in the period of industrial revolution 4.0. This is why social media (one of which is an Instagram account) becomes a reflection of the Institution as a channel of communication and, more importantly, as a means of displaying the Institution's identity as a supporter of religious moderation. A strategic brand narrative is one strategy that may be used. The strategic focus is to have traction and authenticity, and involve elements of brand stories which are the vision or values conveyed by the brand (Fauziah & Fachira, 2021). As a result, both IAIN Salatiga and UKSW support Ministry of Religious Affairs policies, particularly religious moderation initiatives. The form of Muamalah is something that both institutions constantly retain. To put it

another way, these two colleges must be able to maintain positive relationships with all members of the religious community. Of course, this is done to reduce the likelihood of disputes arising from disagreements.

### **Controlling social media in Religious Moderation**

Validation processes are always carried out in all information systems by IAIN Salatiga and UKSW, notably validating and discussing with leaders. This monitoring is done in the hopes that no news that is submitted would become a subject of dispute. The Institution will remove (take down) posts if they are in the public eye and generate issues, resulting in demonstrations and negative reactions from a large number of students.

### **CONCLUSION**

The universities of Salatiga, IAIN Salatiga, and UKSW, have committed to support the Harmoni City initiative. One of them is the harmonizing of religious divides through the use of Instagram social media to actualize religious moderation. In reality, this is a potential answer to the emergence of In fact, as well as the start of their success. The significance of Instagram social media for these two organizations demonstrates the necessity of social media management, which includes planning, organizing, acting on, and controlling.

Community building and monitoring challenges are organizational expressions of strategic planning. Second, through coordinating social



media, IAIN Salatiga and UKSW indirectly have a network or link with the Ministry of Religious Affairs as community workers. Third, in the religious moderation process, both social media and university social media have concentrated on strategic approaches to get momentum, be real, and include components from brand tales. Last but not least, both social media and colleges work together to achieve and sustain Salatiga's City of Harmony, particularly via religious moderation.

#### CREDIT AUTHORSHIP CONTRIBUTION STATEMENT

**Name:** Wuri Arenggoasih, the first author who managed the idea of research, introduction, writing-conceptual or theoretical, and data analytics in modeling, analysis, and interpretation.

**Name:** Nova Mega Pertiwi, the second author who managed to write methodology, processing in data acquisition, and data processing

#### DECLARATION OF COMPETING INTEREST

We certify that there is no conflict of interest with any financial, personal, or other relationships with other people or organizations related to the material discussed in the manuscript.

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