Communication Strategies of FKUB in Mitigating Interfaith Conflicts in Nganjuk and Kediri

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Abstract

Religious Harmony Forum (FKUB) plays a crucial role in managing diversity to prevent conflicts that could undermine social integrity. Therefore, this study aimed to identify conflict mitigation strategies through communication as well as supporting and hindering factors in the management of interfaith harmony by FKUB Nganjuk Regency and FKUB Kediri City. This qualitative study used various data collection techniques including interviews, observations and documentation. Participants in the study were the leaders of FKUB and representatives of the Nganjuk and Kediri communities. Data analysis used Miles and Huberman's techniques for analysing primary and secondary data, complemented by Stella Ting-Toomey's Face Negotiation Theory to examine face-saving efforts in diversity conflict mitigation. The findings revealed that facework, as a strategy for mitigating diversity conflict through communication, was implemented by considering communication goals and elements. This strategy was manifested in the programmes conducted by the FKUB. The individualistic culture of the community was evident in the conflict management approach of FKUB Nganjuk Regency, while the conflict mitigation approach of FKUB Kediri City was in line with the collectivistic culture of the community. However, both FKUBs also used collectivist approaches to conflict mitigation, particularly through integration. The supporting and hindering factors in managing interfaith harmony stemmed from both internal and external aspects of the FKUB, highlighting the need for synergy between different stakeholders to effectively manage interfaith harmony.

Keywords: Communication Strategy, Managing Harmony, Cross Religion, FKUB

Introduction

Cultural, ethnic, social status, and religious diversity are both a blessing and a defining characteristic of Indonesia as a pluralistic nation.[1] Therefore, a thorough and comprehensive understanding of joint efforts to foster a dynamic and harmonious atmosphere in national life is crucial to minimise potential problems.[2] The serious attention of the government and society to

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[1] Rinda Fauzian et al., "Penguatan Moderasi Beragama Berbasis Kearifan Lokal Dalam Upaya Membentuk Sikap Moderat Siswa Madrasah," *AL-WIJDÁN: Journal of Islamic Education Studies* VI, no. 1 (2021): 1–14.

[2] Deni Miharja and M Mulyana, "Peran Fkub Dalam Menyelesaikan Konflik Keagamaan Di Jawa Barat," *Religious: Jurnal Studi Agama-Agama Dan Lintas Budaya* 3, no. 2 (2019): 120–32.

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the potential for religiously motivated conflicts should be promptly addressed with preventive measures. This is necessary to ensure the preservation of interfaith harmony throughout Indonesia. As a policymaker, the government has made concrete efforts to promote a good life and mutual respect among people of different faiths.

The Religious Harmony Forum (FKUB) is a mandate from the Joint Ministerial Regulation (PBM) of the Minister of Religious Affairs and the Minister of Home Affairs No. 9 and No. 8 of 2006, which discusses the promotion of interreligious harmony at the regional level. Article 1 paragraph (1) of the Joint Ministerial Regulation of the Minister of Religious Affairs states that interfaith harmony is a state of relations between followers of different religions based on tolerance, mutual understanding, mutual respect, appreciation of equality in the practice of their religious teachings, and cooperation in social, national, and state life within the Republic of Indonesia based on Pancasila and the 1945 Constitution of the Republic of Indonesia.[3]

As an institution, FKUB not only bridged communication between different religious groups, but also strengthened the potential of religious communities. Interfaith communication was also carried out to manage interfaith harmony and became an important aspect in reducing the impact of conflicts. Said Agil Husain Al-Munawwar in his book "Fiqih Hubungan Antar Agama" defines harmony as an atmosphere of brotherhood and togetherness among all people despite their differences in ethnicity, taste, religion, culture and group.[4] As a forum for interfaith relations, the FKUB was expected to help maintain harmony among religious communities.

One area in Indonesia that shows harmonious relations between religions is Nganjuk Regency and Kediri City. Based on the results of the latest survey conducted by the Kediri City Government in cooperation with the team of IAIN Kediri Research and Community Service Institute (LP2M) in 2021, it is stated that the Religious Harmony Index (IKUB) in Kediri City has reached 3.97 and is in the (high) category. There are three sub-districts which are the points of distribution, including Islamic Boarding School Sub-district with an index of 3.76, Kota Sub-district which reached 4.01, and there is one sub-district which got the highest figure of 4.06, namely Mojoroto Sub-district.[5]

The IKUB score showed a significant improvement compared to 2019, when it was recorded at 3.91, and in 2018 it only reached 3.76. The survey results showed that the dynamics in several aspects such as tolerance, cooperation, politics and equality had reached a very good level of progress. This was in line with the slogan "Harmoni Kediri" introduced and disseminated by the city of Kediri. In contrast to Kediri, which experienced a continuous increase in the religious harmony index, in 2018 there was a problem between religious groups related to the construction of the Sidang Jemaat (GSJA) church in Loceret District, Nganjuk Regency.[6] In addition, a similar issue arose in 2017 due to the differences in faith among the Nganjuk community between mainstream Islam and the Hizbut Tahrir Indonesia (HTI) group.[7]

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[3] Lukman Hakim, "Strategi Komunikasi Lintas Agama FKUB Surabaya Dalam Menangani Konflik," *Al-Mada: Jurnal Agama, Sosial, Budaya* 1, no. 1 (2018): 19–34.

[4] Said Agil Husin Al-Munawwar, *Fikih Hubungan Antar Agama* (Ciputat: Ciputat Press, 2005).

[5] LP2M IAIN Kediri, "Kerukunan Umat Beragama Di Kota Kediri Tahun 2022," *Realita* 21, no. 1 (2022): 75–94.

[6] Gita Ajeng Effendy and Agus Mahfud, "Nganjuk's Inter-Religious Harmony Forum (FKUB) in Handling House of Worship Permit Disputes of Gereja Sidang Jemaah Allah (GSJA) in Kanakan, Nganjuk," *Kuriositas: Media Komunikasi Sosial Dan Keagamaan* 14, no. 1 (2021): 74–89.

[7] Mukhamat Saini, "Harmoni Pendidikan Islam Nusantara (Studi Resolusi Konflik Keagamaan Di Kabupaten Nganjuk)," *Tasyri'* 26, no. 1 (2019): 10–36.

The disparity between these two multi-religious communities naturally led to different processes in achieving a harmonious society, particularly in the conflict mitigation strategies employed. The dynamics of community life amidst religious diversity fostered by the FKUBs in these two regions could be studied from the communication approach as a form of conflict mitigation in religious diversity. This was because communication strategies could open up spaces for constructive dialogue and provide opportunities for different parties to listen to and understand each other's perspectives, thus creating a more tolerant and harmonious society.

From a communication perspective, diversity was not an obstacle to building common understanding in a multi-religious society. Communication could be a medium for building links between religious communities, and integration in plurality was built within a system of harmony and unity based on the way people communicate with each other, as in Yasyva Afga Nizar and Yusnia I'atur Rofiqoh's research on intercultural communication and plurality of tolerance between religious communities.[8]

Previous research discussing the role of FKUB in maintaining and sustaining community welfare by respecting religious differences was conducted by Deni Miharja and M. Mulyana. Both researched the role of FKUB in responding to and resolving religious problems in West Java. The method they use is descriptive qualitative with an anthropological and sociological approach, which functions to capture the dynamics that occur in the field. The study concludes that FKUB is an institution that is a meeting point between different existing religions. It is based on the aspiration of networking, which serves to promote the resolution of conflicts when they occur.[9]

Another still relevant study was conducted by I Wayan Kontiarta and Redi Panuju on the communication strategies used by FKUB to maintain community welfare while respecting religious differences in Bali Province. The research method used was qualitative descriptive. The conclusions from this research that need to be carried out to maintain harmony include studying the historical stories and dynamics of people living in Bali, recognising character or personality and local wisdom values, getting to know the social system in Bali Province and getting to know the internal relationships and mutual respect among people. Balinese Religion.[10]

Kiki Mayasaroh and Nurhasanah Bakhtiar write about the strategies used to build harmony between religious communities in Indonesia. Unlike previous research, Kiki and Nurhasanah's research used library methods. The results of his research show six strategies for building harmony within religious communities, such as living and maintaining tolerance, maintaining kinship, mutual trust, avoiding prejudice, mutual respect and appreciation, clarification, confirming information, and acting fairly.[11] There is also research conducted by Ali Mustofa in Medowo Kandangan Kediri on religious education to create harmony between people of different religions. This research shows that prosperity between religious communities is built through various events that emphasise family values. For example, celebrating village birthdays together, praying together, mutual cooperation, community service and visiting each other during holidays.[12]

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[8] Yusnia I'natur Rofiqoh Yasyva Agfa Nizar, "Komunikasi Interkultural Dan Pluralitas Toleransi Antar Umat Beragama," *Al Munir* 12 (2021): 1–14.

[9] Miharja and Mulyana, "Peran Fkub Dalam Menyelesaikan Konflik Keagamaan Di Jawa Barat."

[10] Redi Panuju I Wayan Kontiarta, "Komunikasi FKUB Dan Umat Beraga Di Tengah Ancaman Intoleransi Di Provinsi Bali," *Commed: Jurnal Komunikasi Dan Media* 3, no. 2 (2018): 1–22.

[11] Nurhasanah Bakhtiar Kiki Mayasaroh, "Strategi Dalam Membangun Kerukunan Antarumat Beragama Di Indonesia," *Al-Afkar: Journal for Islamic Studies* 3, no. 1 (2020): 77–88.

[12] Ali Mustofa, "Pendidikan Keagamaan Untuk Membentuk Kerukunan Antar Umat Beragama Di Medowo Kandangan Kediri," *Nazhruna: Jurnal Pendidikan Islam* 3, no. 1 (2020): 14–37.

Based on several studies above, FKUB's efforts to manage interfaith harmony have been discussed in general. However, for Kediri City, the existence of FKUB, including supporting factors and obstacles in the process of harmonious inter-religious relations, has never been researched. The experience of FKUB in Kediri City, which has been successful in achieving harmony, needs to be explored in more depth in order to find out what formulations and approaches need to be taken in order for it to be successful. The results of this research will be very valuable and can inspire other regions to create a safe and peaceful climate for interfaith relations.

Development in various fields of education, social, security and so on is based on the interaction between individuals in religious life, which is the main supporting factor. It is impossible for the state to develop if it is affected by prolonged conflict. For this reason, the author is interested in studying the existence of FKUB in managing conflict and maintaining inter-religious harmony in Kediri City and Nganjuk Regency with communication strategies, supporting and inhibiting factors in managing inter-religious harmony will also be studied in this research.

It is hoped that this research will open up scientific horizons and experiences regarding efforts, supporting factors and obstacles to inter-religious harmony. Especially for researchers with the same focus, they can use the results of this research as a basis for developing subsequent research. The results of this research are useful as an input in determining policies related to religious harmony by the Kediri City and Nganjuk Regency Governments, and can be replicated by other regions to be developed and applied so that inter-religious harmony becomes more widespread throughout Indonesia.

Method

The research uses a qualitative descriptive method with a case study approach, which is generally used in qualitative research to study and examine an event or phenomenon in specific individuals or groups.[13] This approach was chosen because a case study allowed for a deeper understanding of the complexities of the conflicts experienced by FKUB, thus providing an opportunity to gain a comprehensive understanding of the perspectives and experiences of different stakeholders. The selection of Kediri City and Nganjuk Regency was based on the different approaches taken by the local governments and the role models in building harmony and unity among the people in matters of religion. These two regions also have different histories of religious conflict.

Data collection techniques in this study included interviews with the leaders and members of the FKUB. Secondary sources were obtained from interviews with people in Kediri town and Nganjuk regency using purposive sampling. This sampling technique was used based on predetermined indicators, namely: having in-depth knowledge and experience related to the role of FKUB in Kediri City and Nganjuk Regency, understanding communication strategies for conflict mitigation, active participation in FKUB, and people who know the role of FKUB, live in a multi-religious environment, and have experience with diversity conflicts. Purposive sampling was used to obtain data from appropriate and qualified informants and to ensure the diversity of perspectives obtained.

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[13] Sugiyono dan Puji Lestari, *Metode Penelitian Komunikasi (Kuantitatif, Kualitatif, Fan Cara Mudah Menulis Artikel Pada Jurnal Internasional)* (Bandung: Alfabeta, 2021).

Table 1. Informants

Kediri City FKUB Region	Nganjuk Regency FKUB Region
P1 (Ketua)	P2 (Ketua)
Ang1 (Anggota)	Ang2 (Anggota)
Ad (Masyarakat)	S (Masyarakat)
Ab (Masyarakat)	P (Masyarakat)

Source: Researcher's processing

Observations were made in several places in Kediri City and Nganjuk Regency with a high harmony index, with three observation frequencies. First, the objects were observed with the instruments that had been prepared to find initial data. Second, the same objects were observed with a focus on things that had not been obtained in the initial observation. Thirdly, the same observations were carried out with the aim of confirming and completing the data previously obtained. Meanwhile, secondary sources for this research were obtained from the documentation of journals, books and relevant literature.

Miles and Huberman's interactive model is used in this research to analyse the data, which includes data collection through interviews, observation and documentation. The researcher then categorised the data into different themes. Then, the data is presented in the form of structured sentences, and this process ends with drawing conclusions based on interpretation or understanding of the meaning according to the data obtained.[14] To make the data more accurate, triangulation is carried out by checking the validity of data from different sources in different ways and at different times.[15]

Results and Discussion
Conflict Management between Religious People

Interfaith communication is basically a form of inclusive communication process carried out by people of different religions, who send messages to each other in order to reach a common understanding. Interfaith communication is an interaction that occurs between followers of religions (Christians, Catholics, Muslims, Hindus and Buddhists) who discuss humanitarian issues such as peace, harmonisation, interfaith relations, crime, solidarity and so on.[16] Interreligious communication aims to reduce the level of misunderstanding and insecurity that can lead to interreligious conflict.

Plurality in Kediri town and district. Nganjuk contains vulnerabilities that give rise to the interests of certain groups so that it becomes a division or conflict between communities, cultural plurality becomes a tool that triggers the emergence of ethnic, religious, racial and inter-group (SARA) conflicts.[17] Conflict is an inhibiting factor to harmony while according to Martin and Nakayama intercultural conflict is a conflict that occurs between two individuals or groups who have different cultural backgrounds.

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[14] Jhonny Saldana Matthew B. Miles, A. Michael Huberman, *Qualitative Data Analisys: A Methods Sourchbook* (London: SAGE Publications, 2014).

[15] Lestari, *Metode Penelitian Komunikasi (Kuantitatif, Kualitatif, Fan Cara Mudah Menulis Artikel Pada Jurnal Internasional)*.

[16] Wirayuda Nasution Cut Nalda Sari, "Komunikasi Multikulturalisme: Study Etnografi Di Masyarkat Mabar Pajak Sore Lingkungan IV Kecamatan Medan Deli," *Adabiyah Islamic Journal* 1, no. 1 (2023): 14–28.

[17] Soni Akhmad Nulhaqim Mellia Hartini, "Analisis Konflik Antar Umat Beragama Di Aceh Singkil," *Jurnal Kolaborasi Resolusi Konflik* 2, no. 2 (2021): 93–99; Yulia Sari, "Peranan Forum Kerukunan Umat Beragama (FKUB) Dalam Meningkatkan Kerukunan Antar Umat Beragama Di Kota Pontianak," *INFACTUM: Journal of Interfalth Cultural Understanding Moderation* 1, no. 1 (2022): 1–24.

To create harmony in the midst of religious diversity, conflict management with good communication strategies is needed. Therefore, this research uses the Face Negotiation Theory, which is also relevant to conflict management in interfaith communication. The theory was developed by Stella Ting-Toomey in 1985. This theory helps to manage conflicts between different cultures in the aspect of communication, this theory was developed to predict a person's actions when showing their identity (facework) in different cultures.[18]

Ting-Toomey shows that there are differences between people from individualistic and collectivistic cultures in how they deal with face in conflict situations. In conflict situations, collectivist cultures place more emphasis on caring and paying attention to each other's faces and other people's faces, they are less concerned with their own face.[19] Conflict due to cultural differences is an important element in Face Negotiation Theory, which is the study of intercultural communication.[20]

Efforts to protect one's face are also carried out in different ways in different cultures. Stella Ting Toomey divides this culture into two, individualist and collectivist, with individualist societies such as the United States tending to resolve conflicts through competition or more aggressive actions. Meanwhile, collectivist societies throughout Asia, including Japan, tend to resolve conflicts more passively, avoiding or requiring resistance. Societies with individualistic tendencies do facework to save their own face, but societies with collectivistic tendencies do facework to save the face of their group.[21]

The role of the FKUB in dealing with conflicts is to assist the government as a mediator in conflicts that exist in society regarding cases of pluralism. Thus, the role of the FKUB is not only to maintain existing inter-religious harmony, but also to create harmony that has been lost due to conflict. One of the conflicts that occurred in the FKUB area of Nganjuk Regency was over the establishment of a GSJA (*Gereja Sidang Jemaat Allah*) church in the Loceret area.

The conflict began when residents objected to the construction of the church because it was being built in a private house, which was considered a violation of the PBM, and because it did not have a building permit because it did not have the support of at least 60 residents. Meanwhile, the village's previous discussions with the pastor had failed to produce any common ground and the problem had escalated. P2 revealed that this case was the most serious inter-religious conflict in Nganjuk Regency:

> "In the end, it took quite a long time to resolve, it took a long time from 2018, 2021, and it didn't subside until 2022, right? It stopped in 2019 because of the election, and after the election it became noisy again, there was a banner war, it was quite serious, you could say it was the most serious case." (Interview with the head of FKUB Nganjuk Regency, 4 December 2023)

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[18] Dewa Gede Sudika Mangku Cahya Palasari, Ni Putu Rai Yuliarti, "Penyelesasian Sengketa Secara Damai Dalam Perspektif Hukum Internasional," *Jurnal Komunikasi Hukum* 8, no. 2 (2022): 688–97; Dongye Wu Tianyu Gu Zhiyuan Guan, Jiancong Tang, "Comparisons the Different Views of Face Negotiation Thery?," in *Proceeding Og the 2021 3rd International Conference on Economic Management and Cultural Industry (ICEMCI 2021)*, 2021, 2585–87.

[19] Stella Ting Toomay, "Toward a Theory of Conflict and Culture," in *Annual Meeting of the Speech Communication Association* (Louisville: ERIC:institute of Education Science, 1982).

[20] Judith Martin Thomas K Nakayama, *Intercultular Communication in Context* (United State: The McGraw-Hill Companies, 2010).

[21] Toomay, "Toward a Theory of Conflict and Culture"; A. Manadin, "Role of Leader-Member Exchange, Knowlledge Hiding, Prosocial Motivation, and Impression Management Motivation for The Craetive Potential of Employees," *Journal of Intercultural Communication* 23, no. 3 (2023): 68–81.

Although Indonesia is an Asian country whose society tends to have a collectivist culture.[22] However, in the conflict management conducted by FKUB Kab. Nganjuk actually tends to fall into the characteristics of individualistic conflict management, namely by compromising, trying to dominate and integrating.[23] This can be seen from the conflict resolution process that took place and the end of the conflict:

a. Compromise

Compromise is an activity between two parties who meet and agree to set aside their rights to enforce all their interests.[24] Efforts have already been made between the village community and the church to agree on a solution and to negotiate through deliberation. However, this has not yet led to a common ground because there is no solution that is seen as beneficial to both parties, and the pastor still wants to conduct his worship activities there. Finally, the conflict has escalated because of the narratives of the Nganjuk people on social media, who are seen as intolerant.

b. Dominating

Domination is an effort to maintain control, people try to maintain their "face" (facework) through their domination efforts. This domination was carried out through the policy of the village head of Loceret, who still did not allow the church to operate and tried to change the name of the house even though it had been purchased. This was done because the house was first bought in a private name, but after the purchase they wanted to change the name to a church. This action violated PBM No. 8 and 9 of 2006, which states that in order to establish a church, there must be at least 90 congregations and 60 people who agree and receive recommendations from FKUB and Kemenag.[25] The conflict flared up again when a banner calling for the closure of the church was put up by local residents.

c. Integration

The last effort the community can make to resolve the conflict and save face is through FKUB Kab. Nganjuk is working with related parties at the district level. This step was taken because conflict resolution at the village level was no longer possible. FKUB district. Nganjuk channels the community's aspirations to the Regent through a joint discussion forum attended by elements of the regional leadership, namely the Acting Regional Secretary of Nganjuk Regency, the Chief of Nganjuk Police, the Chief Prosecutor, the Chief of the Ministry of Religion, Bakesbangpol, the Chairman of the FKUB and the Chairman of the Church-Church Cooperation Agency. The conflict was finally resolved by borrowing the PUPR building from the Nganjuk Regency Government to use as a church for six months.

Another legendary conflict in Nganjuk was the distribution of takjil food by the Catholic Church during the fasting month of 2016. This distribution took place at four in the afternoon and many were taken by the homeless, pedicab drivers and waste pickers around the church. In the end, it became a problem because the distribution was not done at the breaking of the fast. The

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[22] Fuad Mas'ud Dyah Ayu Puspitasari, "Pengaruh Nilai Budaya Nasional Indonesia Terhadap Preferensi Gaya Manajemen Konflik (Studi Pada Karyawan Tendik FISIP Undip)," *Diponegoro Journal of Manajemen* 7, no. 4 (2018): 1–12.

[23] Vas Taras Marjaana Gunkle, Cristopher Schlaegel, "Cultural Values, Emotional Intelligence, and Conflict Handling Style: A Global Study," *Journal of World Business* 51 (2016): 568–85.

[24] Thomas Meyer, *Kompromi Jalur Ideal Menuju Demokrasi* (Jakarta: Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung (FES) Kantor Perwakilan Indonesia, 2012).

[25] Menteri Dalam Negeri Menteri Agama, "Peraturan Bersama Menteri Agama Dan Menteri Dalam Negeri No. 9 Tahun 2006" (Jakarta, 2006).

problem became worse when the Imam of the Tarawih Kultum said that the Catholics had humiliated and trampled on the dignity of the fasting Muslims in Nganjuk and demanded that the Chairman of the FKUB, who was the Takmir of the mosque at the time, take responsibility. This was revealed by P2 in his testimony:

> "One of the preachers said that we Muslims in Nganjuk have been trampled on and have no dignity. Why is there tolerance in front of our eyes? At 4pm, the non-Muslims distributed takjil in the churchyard. It was mealtime, and those who ate were rickshaw pullers, the homeless and scavengers. Yes, that's true, but it was wrong and it wasn't time yet. It wasn't time to break the fast, but people were already curious and coming. It was still steaming hot, there were still some, yes, that was the trigger for the preacher or the trigger that we were being trampled on. From that sermon he immediately said that Pak Solihin was responsible. I heard this sentence myself". (Interview with the head of the FKUB Nganjuk regency, 4 December 2023)

Almost as before, conflict management tends to lead to an individualistic community culture of saving one's own face. This case was handled directly by FKUB Kab. Nganjuk in the following way:

a. Compromise

Chairman of FKUB district. Nganjuk decided to come to the Bakesbangpol office to discuss the problem with the Bakesbangpol chairman and several other religious elements such as the Dandim, who is Hindu, and the police chief, who is Christian. In this compromise effort, the chairman of FKUB Kab. Nganjuk proposed four ways to solve the problem:

1) The community protests must be stopped because it is feared that they will become more chaotic and undesirable things will happen.

2) It is permissible to do takjil, but just leave it to the existing mosque committee, just send it to the mosques that really need it. So the church doesn't have to put up a banner in front of it.

3) If the activity is at 1 or 2 o'clock (afternoon), it is better to give it only in the form of raw food (sembako).

4) You can just hand it over to FKUB, with the FKUB flag being the one that organises it, not the church. However, the place is not in the church, but in the women's building, where the courtyard is quite large. So the people who come are not crowded and it is more orderly. So it is done in the name of FKUB.

b. Dominating

FKUB's efforts to maintain control over this conflict can be seen in the way FKUB's chairman Kab. Nganjuk continued to defend his idea, despite rejection by other parties, because it was considered a humanitarian activity. Chairman of FKUB district. According to him, the sharing of takjil has become part of a form of intervention by other religions in religious rituals, which should be separated from the ceremonial; the FKUB chairman still supports social activities that do not look at religious differences but do not enter into ritual areas. On this basis, the efforts of the Chairman of the FKUB Kab. Nganjuk to maintain and restore his face as a result of the conflict.

c. Integration

Although efforts have been made to reach a compromise with Bakesbangpol, the conflict has not been resolved and has been exacerbated by demonstrations by FPI groups from different regions in the Begadung Nganjuk field. FKUB Kab. Nganjuk is to work with the regional

government, represented in this case by the Regent of Nganjuk. The decision to resolve this conflict was handed over to FKUB by the Regent.

The efforts of the FKUB Kab. Nganjuk's efforts to resolve the conflict in their region are characterised by an individualistic community culture, as they try to preserve their own face rather than the face of the district. As a result, Nganjuk is seen as intolerant by other communities. This case also shows the existence of power distance because the Muslim community is the majority.[26] Even though they had to save their face as a group identity, the demands of the Muslim community through FKUB became a solution to the conflict.

In addition, the conflict management that was carried out was highly dependent on the informant, in this case the statement of the FKUB Nganjuk Regency Chief as a politician and representative of the FKUB. The statement given describes a person's face concern. According to Toomey, someone who is concerned about his own 'face' (FKUB) will use a dominant approach. The informant representing the FKUB of Nganjuk Regency seemed to have an independent self-image, as evidenced by his behaviour in interfaith conflicts with other parties who valued autonomy more and prioritised the FKUB's self-image as an institution that embraced different religions. Thus, when problems arose, the informant's concern was with the FKUB's own self-image. However, in conflict resolution, the FKUB of Nganjuk Regency also engaged in integration, which is an approach to conflict management to maintain mutual face by holding consultations with other stakeholders.[27]

The two conflicts that occurred in Nganjuk Regency were a form of intercultural conflict, namely problems that occurred between people who adhered to Christian and Catholic religions and the general public, which was predominantly Muslim. Intercultural conflict can occur because of inequality between society and culture; power is unequally distributed between two social groups in a society with different cultures. Thus, the accepted value system gives privileges to some people but harms others (Ariffin 2020). In this case, it can be seen that the Nganjuk community, which is predominantly Muslim, has more power than communities of other religions.

On the other hand, Kediri City, with its paternalistic urban society, is considered to be more tolerant, friendly, polite and courteous, as evidenced by the high value of the Religious Harmony Index (IKUB), which reached 4.47.[28] There has never been any conflict between cultures or religions in the midst of quite complex diversity in the city of Kediri, although there are still negative or radical narratives from certain parties, people who are harmonious in their social life are not too influenced by the existence of these negative narratives and even tend to ignore them. As one of the areas that initiated the existence of FKUB, Kediri City always maintains harmony, although sometimes conflicts do not originate from other religions, but from within certain religions, as explained by P1:

> "No, there has never been any conflict. There has never been physical contact between religions, especially in relation to the construction of places of worship, because it violates the common ministerial regulations. Instead, there are conflicts that usually occur within the religion itself, such as the conflict between the administrators of the Al-Muttaqin mosque in Manisrengo, to the radical statement by one of the LDII figures who said that

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[26] Rio Aurachman Christanto Triwibisono, "Budaya Suku Bangsa Di Indonesia Dalam Mendukung Pengelolaan Organisasi (Studi Kasus: Uniersitas Telkom)," *JISI: Jurnal Integrasi Sistem Industri* 8, no. 1 (2021): 45–53.

[27] Irwansyah Deandra Syarizka, Kinanti Nareswari, "Citra Diri Individu Dan Negosiasi Muka Warga Dengan Budaya Kolektivisme Di Negara Berbudaya Individualisme," *Interaksi: Jurnal Ilmu Komunikasi* 10, no. 1 (2021): 44–54.

[28] et all. Ropingi el Ishaq, "Kerukunan Umat Beragama Di Kota Kediri Tahun 2022," *Realita: Jurnal Pendidikan Dan Kebudayaan Islam* 21, no. 1 (2023): 75–94.

Muslims who are not LDII are considered infidels and are not valid to perform religious rituals such as marriage before being initiated and joining the LDII group". (Interview with the leader of FKUB Kediri City, 8 December 2023).

Although there has never been any conflict between religious communities in Kediri City, they still have preventive and problem-solving measures in place to maintain their face or identity as a region with a relatively high index of religious harmony. The brand community *"Harmoni Kediri"* is also in line with the situation between religious communities in this city.[29]

Conflict management carried out by FKUB Kediri City tends to be in accordance with the ideal concept of collectivist culture, which pays attention to the mutual face or the other face.[30] This collectivist culture in conflict management is manifested in several forms, namely avoidance, cooperation or compromise. The following forms of conflict management are practiced by FKUB Kediri City:

a. Avoidance

    Based on the characteristics of the people of Kediri City, who do not really react to negative or radical narratives, FKUB Kediri City keeps its face by "not giving a damn" if there is a radical narrative from a particular religion, they do not make it a serious problem or conflict as stated by P1:

    "The people of Kediri City are relaxed, enjoying, comfortable, even though there are many differences and extreme narratives about religion, they do not react much to radical narratives." (Interview with the leader of FKUB Kediri City, 8 December 2023).

b. Cooperate or compromise

    Kediri City FKUB tends to leave conflicts to institutions with capacity, such as the Ministry of Religion and MUI, especially in matters of faith, such as the problem of the radical narrative of LDII. Kediri City FKUB pays attention to the common face of its group (FKUB) and also pays attention to the other face of its area, which is known as a harmonious city.

    The conflict management of the FKUB of Kediri City showed an interdependent self-image, which was evident in their behaviour when faced with problems. The FKUB of Kediri City tended to avoid problems, stating that there was never a problem, even though in diversity there was a high possibility of differences of opinion that could lead to potential conflicts.[31] This meant that there was a concern about the self-image (face concern) of the informant representing FKUB and the image of others.[32]

FKUB Communication Strategy in Conflict Mitigation

In essence, a strategy is planning and management to achieve a goal, including strategies seen in the communication aspect. In order to achieve a certain goal, the communication strategy must be able to show how operations will be carried out tactically, so that the approach can be different

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[29] Marzuki Irawan Hadi Wiranta, "Kerukunan Antarumat Beragama Sebagai Dasar City Branding Harmoni Kediri The Service City," *JIPPK* 3, no. 1 (2018): 64–73.

[30] Marjaana Gunkle, Cristopher Schlaegel, "Cultural Values, Emotional Intelligence, and Conflict Handling Style: A Global Study."

[31] Mardary Rauv Alfi Sihati, Anisa Nur Rohmah, SIti Masturoh, "Kebhinekaan Dan Keberagaman (Integrasi Agama Di Tengah Pluralitas)," *Jurnal Inovasi Penelitian* 2, no. 9 (2022): 2945–56.

[32] Deandra Syarizka, Kinanti Nareswari, "Citra Diri Individu Dan Negosiasi Muka Warga Dengan Budaya Kolektivisme Di Negara Berbudaya Individualisme."

depending on the situation and conditions. Apart from this, it is also important to examine the supporting and inhibiting factors in a communication strategy to achieve maximum goals.[33]

FKUB as an institution that maintains interfaith harmony certainly has duties and functions that cannot be separated from communication processes such as discussions, deliberations, interfaith dialogues, seminars and other FKUB programmes. The communication process will go well if all the elements in it are fulfilled along with the goals to be achieved, which is to maintain the seeds of natural harmony in the district. Nganjuk and Kediri City. The following are several communication strategies implemented by FKUB Nganjuk Regency and FKUB Kediri City:

Table 2. Elements of communication strategy in conflict management

Element	Managing Inter-Religious Harmony	
	FKUB District. Nganjuk	FKUB District. Nganjuk
Communicator	Approaches to certain religious figures who are respected by their followers.	Approaches to certain religious figures who are respected by their followers.
Target audience and audience needs	FKUB District audience. Nganjuk is a society with fairly inclusive characteristics but still has the need to exercise its religious rights well without discrimination or other restrictions.	FKUB District audience. Nganjuk is a society with fairly inclusive characteristics but still has the need to exercise its religious rights well without discrimination or other restrictions.
Message preparation	The message of harmony between religious communities is packaged in interactive dialogue activities that present participants from various groups such as youth, students, and women. The messages are designed according to the dialogue participants and filled by certain religious figures and academics.	The message of harmony between religious communities is packaged in interactive dialogue activities that present participants from various groups such as youth, students, and women. The messages are designed according to the dialogue participants and filled by certain religious figures and academics.
Media	FKUB District activities and programs. Nganjuk was published and published on the official district government website. Nganjuk and some conventional online news.	FKUB District activities and programs. Nganjuk was published and published on the official district government website. Nganjuk and some conventional online news.

Source: Processed by Researchers

a. Strategy in identifying communicators

The role of the communicator is to act as a messenger, in this case of the message of harmony between religious communities. A communicator must be able to empathise with the target of his communication. In addition, the attractiveness of the source and credibility are

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[33] Wildan Adi Rahman, "Strategi Komunikasi Forum Kerukunan Umat Beragama Dalam Pengembangan Kerukunan Umat Beragama Di Kabupaten Sleman," *El-Madani* 2, no. 2 (2020): 237–60.

important for the communicator to be accepted and noticed by the audience.[34] FKUB District. Nganjuk identify their communicators based on their approach to certain religious figures who are respected by their followers, as explained by P2:

> "So the approach is like this, from the Christians, who is the most listened to figure? I think the most listened to Christian figure here is Pak Jerry, Pastor Jerry. So we invite Pastor Jerry to discuss where this is going, to read their minds. (Interview with the head of the FKUB Nganjuk regency, 4 December 2023).

This is done not only as an outreach strategy, but also because certain prominent religious figures are more trusted and their calls are considered more likely to be heard by the public.[35] The same was expressed by S (Nganjuk community):

> "In order to improve community harmony, of course religious leaders/leaders must also participate in programmes like this, such as holding interfaith dialogue activities on a regular basis. Because the community will certainly be more obedient (sendiko dawuh) to the religious leaders they follow. (Interview with Nganjuk community, 5 December 2023).

The strategy of selecting communicators who are public figures or representatives of certain public institutions is also carried out by the Kediri City FKUB. Thus, the Kediri City FKUB always maintains synergy with several related institutions such as Forkopimda, Ministry of Religion, MUI and other religious figures. The dominant public figure who is the communicator of Kediri City FKUB in conveying the message of harmony is the Mayor of Kediri.

The communicator selection strategy meets the indicators of a good communicator because he has high credibility and attractiveness, so he attracts more attention and easily influences the public. This is in line with important factors in communication, namely the attractiveness of the source and the credibility of the source.[36]

b. Strategy defines target groups and audience needs

The target audience of the communication strategy is people of different religions. District Community Internally, Nganjuk Muslims live side by side in harmony, although they have different faiths such as NU, Muhammadiyah and LDII. However, interfaith relations within FKUB Kab. Nganjuk are not as good as among the Muslims within Nganjuk. This is suggested by statement P1:

> "We have learnt that in Nganjuk, when the forum is more conducive, the Catholics are more inclusive and they don't have, you know, their own mission and they are not ambitious either." (Interview with the head of FKUB Kediri City, 8 December 2023).

The conflicts that arise also illustrate the needs of the public to be able to properly exercise their religious rights without discrimination or other restrictions. For example, the FKUB Kab. Nganjuk is dominated by interfaith dialogue, which takes place from sub-district to sub-district, and seminars conducted by academics to build the capacity of religious leaders and community harmony.

The Kediri City FKUB also targets people from different religious backgrounds. With slightly different characteristics from Kab. Nganjuk, the people of Kediri City tend to be

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[34] Ibid.

[35] Turnomo Rahardjo Amelia Monica, Agus Naryoso, "Kridibilitas Tokoh Ulama Dalam Mengedukasi Masyarakat Bukittinggi Tentang Bahaya Covid-19," *Interaksi Online* 10, no. 3 (2022): 519–35.

[36] Fajarina, *Modul Psikologi Komunikasi* (Universitas Esa Unggul, 2020).

more inclusive, fun-loving, relaxed, polite and not overly sensitive to negative narratives. This is also what makes Kediri town always harmonious and conflict-free, even though there is a lot of diversity.

The high index of religious harmony in the city of Kediri also means that the needs of the public are no longer the fulfilment of religious rights, but the maintenance of harmony, even the increase of the index of religious harmony. Therefore, not only inter-religious dialogues or seminars are created, but also multicultural schools for communities, even religious moderation villages. This communication target selection strategy is in line with the concept of communication theory, which suggests a closer understanding of the communicant.[37]

c. Strategy in composing messages

Messages are contents in FKUB communications or programmes that are addressed to targets in accordance with previously determined objectives.[38] Therefore, in a communication strategy to manage harmony, the content of the message to be conveyed must be considered in order to best achieve the goal.[39]

Messages in the interfaith dialogue conducted by FKUB Kab. Nganjuk emphasised the message of interfaith harmony according to the invited participants. As an interfaith women's programme, the message conveyed is the role of interfaith women in their families, such as caring for children to prevent stunting, health, growth and development of children.

In addition, the empowerment of interfaith leaders within FKUB Kab. Nganjuk as a way of spreading the message of harmony between religious communities, as P2 explained in an interview:

> "If the young figures are dynamic for sure. But I think the elders also want what, their existence is recognised, the more communities also, that's why we held almost 95% of the religious elements. We have also held a religious harmony socialisation, the aim of which is to give religious leaders and community leaders from all religious elements in Nganjuk Regency an understanding of how to respond to the rampant problem of radicalism, and how to maintain the security situation, order and peace of the community in Nganjuk Regency". (Interview with FKUB member from Nganjuk Regency, 4 December 2023)

The message of inter-religious harmony by FKUB in Kediri City is also included in the programmes implemented. However, several seminars/dialogues organised by FKUB Kab. Kediri raise big issues according to the current conditions, for example, political years such as the National Seminar on Increasing Religious Moderation in Welcoming the Democratic Party 2023.[40] The message of this activity was: "Although harmony has been established in Kediri City for a long time, other regions have not been able to implement it. This proves that managing harmony among religious communities is not easy". Apart from this, there is also a

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[37] Deddy Mulyana, *Ilmu Komunikasi Suatu Pengantar* (Bandung: Remaja Rosda Karya., 2014).

[38] Giralda Martje Lawalata, Igpb Suka Arjawa, and Gede Kamajaya, "Peran Forum Kerukunan Umat Beragama (FKUB) Dalam Menjaga Solidaritas Sosial Antar Pemeluk Agama Di Kota Denpasar," *Jurnal Ilmiah Sosiologi* 1, no. 02 (2021): 1–13.

[39] Rifa Atul Murtofi'ah, "Peran Forum Kerukunan Umat Beragama (FKUB) Dalam Mengelolakerukuanan Antar Umat Beragama (STudi Kasus Di Desa Getas Kecamatan Kaloran Kabupaten Temanggung Tahun 2013-2015)" (Uinversitas Islam Negeri Walisongo, 2015).

[40] Admin Berita, "FKUB Kota Kediri Gelar Seminar Nasional Menyongsong Pesta Demokrasi 2024," *Kedirikota.Go.Id*, August 29, 2023, https://www.kedirikota.go.id/p/berita/10111909/fkub-kota-kediri-gelar-seminar-nasional-menyongsong-pesta-demokrasi-2024.

message about maintaining harmony between religious communities amidst the potential for division due to different political preferences. This was explained by P1:

> "We also held an event at the Lotus Hotel yesterday, all religious elements were invited. The activity was held to welcome the political year. The activity was also held to create a peaceful and safe Kamtibmas atmosphere ahead of the 2024 general election". (Interview with the Head of FKUB Kediri City, 8 December 2023)

Messages on managing religious harmony in FKUB Kab. Nganjuk and Kediri City FKUB are verbal and non-verbal, educational and persuasive in nature to always maintain harmony among religious communities. Non-verbal messages that can be observed are the body gestures of religious figures and community figures interacting peacefully during activities, illustrating the existence of harmony that is always maintained.[41]

d. Strategy in determining the media

The media that FKUB Kab. Nganjuk and FKUB Kediri City to manage harmony, namely official websites of government institutions and mainstream online media. One of them is Antara News East Java, a media that often covers the activities of FKUB Kediri City and also conducts research on interfaith harmony. This was explained by P1 during the interview:

> "Antara also once reported on the interfaith harmony index in Kediri City" (Interview with a member of FKUB Kediri City, 8 December 2023).

Kediri City FKUB is reported more often than District FKUB. This is because Kediri City has a relatively high index of religious harmony, FKUB programmes are more diverse, and it took a long time for FKUB to be established, which makes the media more interested in covering FKUB programmes with messages of interreligious harmony.

Enabling and Inhibiting Factors

The supporting and inhibiting factors for the management of interfaith harmony by the FKUB are crucial things to discuss so that the programme for managing harmony in the future can be maximised. The formation of harmony among religious communities is, of course, due to the role of various parties who are factors and will be explained in the following points.

Table 3. Facilitating and inhibiting factors in conflict management

Factor	Managing Inter-Religious Harmony	
	FKUB District. Nganjuk	Kediri City FKUB
Supporter	1. Cooperation and closeness between religious leaders 2. Support and commitment from local leaders to provide a space for inclusive dialogue 3. Conflict resolution with a peaceful approach 4. Empowerment of women and youth 5. Active participation of the District community. Nganjuk in participating in FKUB programs.	1. Cooperation and closeness between religious leaders 2. Support and commitment from local leaders to provide a space for inclusive dialogue 3. Conflict resolution with a peaceful approach 4. Empowerment of women and youth 5. Active participation of the District community. Nganjuk in participating in FKUB programs.

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[41] Rahman, "Strategi Komunikasi Forum Kerukunan Umat Beragama Dalam Pengembangan Kerukunan Umat Beragama Di Kabupaten Sleman."

Inhibitor	1. Lack of knowledge about the regulations for establishing places of worship by the community and religious leaders. 2. The emergence of prejudice and stereotypes in society towards other religious groups. 3. A rigid cultural approach to cultural practices and beliefs. 4. There is a lack of harmonious synergy between religious leaders and the government, as happened in the conflict over the establishment of places of worship.	1. Lack of knowledge about the regulations for establishing places of worship by the community and religious leaders. 2. The emergence of prejudice and stereotypes in society towards other religious groups. 3. A rigid cultural approach to cultural practices and beliefs. 4. There is a lack of harmonious synergy between religious leaders and the government, as happened in the conflict over the establishment of places of worship.

Source: Processed by Researchers

Based on these factors, important religious figures who are members of FKUB Kab. Nganjuk are synergising with each other to realise religious harmony, inclusiveness of internal discussions created by FKUB. The good relations can also be seen in the approach developed by FKUB Kab. Nganjuk:

> "So the approach is this: from the Christians, who is the most listened to figure? In my opinion, the most listened to Christian figure here is Pak Jerry, Pastor Jerry. So we invite Pastor Jerry to discuss where this is going, to read their minds. (Interview with the head of the FKUB Nganjuk regency, 4 December 2023).

The support and commitment of local leaders can be seen in the Regent, who always provides space for dialogue and discussion for all parties involved to resolve inter-religious conflicts. Although the characteristics of FKUB Kab. Nganjuk tends to be more individualistic. Nganjuk's conflict management tends to be more individualistic, their approach to conflict resolution is still peaceful, namely by integrating the conflict with the relevant authorised institutions. This suggests that the FKUB Kab. Nganjuk uses a peaceful and mediating approach to prevent escalation and maintain harmony between people.

Meanwhile, the inhibiting factor for FKUB Kab. Nganjuk's management of harmony stems from the prolonged conflict that occurred in Nganjuk over the construction of a place of worship, which was opposed by the community because it did not comply with regulations. Meanwhile, regulations are made so that all people can exercise their respective rights without anyone being disturbed, thus reducing harmony in society.[42] In addition, the existence of prejudices and stereotypes against certain religious groups can create obstacles to efforts to build understanding and tolerance, and if not well managed, can easily trigger diversity conflicts and reduce tolerance. This prejudice is reflected in the source's statement:

> "... it's the Protestant Christian groups that sometimes have their own manoeuvres. But again, we react calmly to them". (Interview with the head of FKUB Kediri City, 8 December 2023).

Apart from the things mentioned above, the efforts made by Kediri City FKUB to manage religious harmony are of course supported by certain factors such as the position of the magnitude of economic turnover in Kediri, which shapes community behaviour patterns, receiving good

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[42] Nugroho Nugroho, "Kebijakan Dan Konflik Pendirian Rumah Ibadah Di Indonesia," *Jurnal Studi Agama* 4, no. 2 (2022): 1–17.

information from the community is able to form open, wise, thinking patterns. and tolerant [43]. Other supporting factors are: The 2023 Human Development Index (HDI) in Kediri City is ranked highest in the former Kediri Residency, reaching 80.97.[44]

A quality community certainly strengthens cooperation and builds a good understanding of the importance of harmony between religious communities. Government support is provided through the infrastructure prepared for FKUB Kediri City. This was also explained by the informant that the role of the government is very good in realising a harmonious and harmonious Kediri City:

"There are many processes related to becoming Kediri City like this, especially the role of Kediri City government is very big." (Interview with the head of FKUB Kediri City, 8 December 2023).

In addition to these facilitating factors, there are also some inhibiting factors: Extremism from religious groups is still encountered through radical narratives. The lack of enthusiasm among people to join religious organisations leads to differences in the maturity of thinking from one generation to the next.

Conclusion

The communication strategies of FKUB Nganjuk Regency and FKUB Kediri City in conflict management were part of facework to maintain the identity or image of FKUB and its area of work. The communication strategies were carried out by considering the objectives and elements of communication involved. Several of these communication strategies were manifested in programmes carried out by each FKUB Nganjuk Regency and FKUB Kediri City. FKUB, as one of the advisory institutions, had a tendency for different conflict resolution between FKUB Nganjuk Regency's conflict management and FKUB Kediri City's conflict mitigation. FKUB Nganjuk Regency tended towards the characteristics of individualistic community conflict management with dominant steps to maintain opinions and as a form of self-expression towards the conflict to maintain self-face. However, the collectivist culture of Indonesian society was still evident in the integration approach, which was also carried out to maintain mutual face.

On the other hand, the conflict management approach of FKUB Kediri City was in line with the collectivist community culture, which tended to prioritise preventive measures so that conflicts did not occur by combining conflict avoidance and integration to maintain self-face, other-face and mutual-face. This was due to the difference in facework or the image of self-identity that people want to see (self-concern) as well as the priority of face, both self-face, other face and mutual face. The supporting and inhibiting factors for FKUB Nganjuk Regency and FKUB Kediri City in managing inter-religious conflicts in their respective regions came from both external and internal FKUB itself. This shows that efforts to manage harmony between religious communities require synergy between different parties and elements of society.

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[43] Ropingi el Ishaq, "Kerukunan Umat Beragama Di Kota Kediri Tahun 2022."

[44] Didik Mashudi, "Indeks Pembangunan Manusia Kota Kediri Tahun 2023 Tertinggi Di Eks Karisidenan Kediri," *TribunMataraman.Com*, December 12, 2023, https://mataraman.tribunnews.com/amp/2023/12/12/indeks-pembangunan-manusia-kota-kediri-tertinggi-di-eks-karisidenan-kediri.

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