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Media Fiqh and Pesantren Dignity: Competing Interpretations of the Xpose Uncensored Controversy

Nanang Mizwar Hasyim,[1] Nitra Galih Imansari,[1] and Nabiilah Capriani[2]

[1]Department of Islamic Communication and Broadcasting, Universitas Islam Negeri Sunan Kalijaga, Yogyakarta, Indonesia
[2]Department of Communication and Journalism, Gujarat University, Ahmedabad, Gujarat, India
Corresponding author: Nanang Mizwar Hasyim nanang.hasyim@uin-suka.ac.id

Abstract

This study examines competing interpretations of the October 2025 controversy surrounding Trans7's Xpose Uncensored through the coverage published by NU Online and Tempo.co. The program portrayed traditions at Pesantren Lirboyo, an Islamic boarding school in Kediri, Indonesia, in ways perceived by members of the pesantren community and institutional actors as denigrating the dignity of *kiai* (pesantren leaders) and *santri* (pesantren students). Employing a qualitative approach that combines Robert Entman's framing analysis with a media fiqh framework, this study investigates how the two outlets constructed and evaluated the controversy. The findings reveal distinct interpretive orientations: NU Online framed the controversy primarily as an affront to the religious dignity of the pesantren community and emphasized restorative accountability, whereas Tempo.co focused on broadcasting accountability, regulatory compliance, and institutional governance. Although Tempo.co demonstrated comparatively broader institutional source representation, NU Online placed greater emphasis on protecting pesantren dignity and addressing the social dimensions of conflict resolution. Evaluated through media fiqh, these differences reveal that ethical assessments of media coverage extend beyond formal regulatory compliance to encompass the protection of religious dignity, responsible representation, and socially responsive conflict resolution. This study argues that media fiqh complements conventional framing analysis by providing a normative basis for evaluating the ethical adequacy of media representations of religious communities.

Keywords
media fiqh; pesantren; media framing; NU Online; Tempo.co; Xpose Uncensored

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Introduction

The Ministry of Religious Affairs and Indonesia's broadcasting industry have long occupied adjacent yet distinct spheres of authority in shaping how religious institutions are represented to the public. In October 2025, the boundary between journalistic practice and religious sensitivities became a site of contestation when Trans7's Xpose Uncensored aired a segment featuring Pesantren Lirboyo and its senior religious leader, KH Anwar Manshur, under the title "*Santrinya minum susu aja kudu jongkok, emang gini kehidupan di pondok?*" ("The students even have to squat while drinking milk—is this really what life in a pesantren is like?"). The segment depicted the tradition of *santri* kissing the *kiai*'s hand while presenting an envelope,

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through a mode of presentation that was widely perceived as disparaging. The narrative was further construed as implying that such practices explained the kiai's wealth, thereby prompting criticism and controversy in the public sphere.[1]

The broadcast elicited swift responses from various institutions. The Indonesian Ulema Council (MUI) stated that the programme had undermined the dignity of *kiai*, *santri*, and pesantren as pillars of Islamic education and da'wah in Indonesia, and characterized the segment as a breach of journalistic ethics resulting from inadequate research and verification.[2] The Indonesian Broadcasting Commission (KPI) imposed a temporary suspension of the programme the day after the broadcast, while alumni associations staged protests in various regions, and the hashtag #BoikotTrans7 became a widely discussed topic across social media.[3] A group of pesantren alumni subsequently reported Trans7 to the Jakarta Metropolitan Regional Police (Polda Metro Jaya), alleging a violation of Indonesia's Electronic Information and Transactions Law (ITE Law) concerning hate speech based on ethnicity, religion, race, and intergroup relations (SARA).[4] Trans7 subsequently issued a formal letter of apology, acknowledging shortcomings in its production process, followed by a closed-door reconciliation meeting between representatives of Trans7 and the *mashāyikh* (senior religious leaders) of Pesantren Lirboyo. The process culminated in a direct visit by Chairul Tanjung, owner of CT Corp, who personally conveyed his apology to KH Anwar Manshur.[5]

The scale of the institutional response to the controversy extended far beyond verbal condemnation. KH Yahya Cholil Staquf, General Chairperson of the Executive Board of Nahdlatul Ulama (PBNU), publicly stated that the broadcast had openly insulted pesantren institutions and religious figures who have long been held in high esteem by NU, while instructing the PBNU Institute for Legal Aid and Advocacy (LPBH PBNU) to pursue legal measures.[6] Rabithah Ma'ahid Islamiyah of the Executive Board of Nahdlatul Ulama (RMI PBNU), as the institution responsible for coordinating the pesantren network across Indonesia, issued seven formal demands in response to the controversy. These demands included calls for

[1] Asep Firmansyah, "Tayangan 'Xpose Uncensored' Trans7 Picu Kontroversi," *Antara News*, October 15, 2025, https://bengkulu.antaranews.com/berita/444093/tayangan-xpose-uncensored-trans7-picu-kontroversi; Dinda Sabrina, "Sikap MUI Atas Program Xpose Uncensored Trans7 Soal Pesantren," *Tempo*, October 15, 2025, https://www.tempo.co/politik/sikap-mui-atas-program-xpose-uncensored-trans7-soal-pesantren-2079761.

[2] Dinda Sabrina, "Sikap MUI Atas Program Xpose Uncensored Trans7 Soal Pesantren."

[3] Haikal Attar, "Tayangan Trans7 Soal Pesantren Lirboyo Tuai Kecaman, Ini Respons Alumni hingga KPI," *NU Online*, October 14, 2025, https://nu.or.id/nasional/tayangan-trans7-soal-pesantren-lirboyo-tuai-kecaman-ini-respons-alumni-hingga-kpi-vJwor.

[4] Bangun Santoso, "Buntut 'Xpose Uncensored': Trans7 Terseret UU ITE, Dituduh Hina Santri dan Kiai," *Suara*, October 16, 2025, https://www.suara.com/news/2025/10/16/154355/buntut-xpose-uncensored-trans7-terseret-uu-ite-dituduh-hina-santri-dan-kiai.

[5] Madchan Jazuli, "Pesantren Lirboyo Terima Silaturahim Direktur Trans7, Klarifikasi Tayangan Xpose Uncensored," *NU Online*, October 15, 2025, https://jatim.nu.or.id/kediri-raya/pesantren-lirboyo-terima-silaturahim-direktur-trans7-klarifikasi-tayangan-xpose-uncensored-SE9nF; M. Rizky Fauzi, "KH Anwar Manshur Terima Permohonan Maaf Chairul Tanjung Atas Tayangan Program Xpose Uncensored Trans7," *NU Online*, October 23, 2025, https://jabar.nu.or.id/jatim/kh-anwar-manshur-terima-permohonan-maaf-chairul-tanjung-atas-tayangan-program-xpose-uncensored-trans7-kbnv2.

[6] Budi Setiyawan, "PBNU Kecam Program Xpose Uncensored Trans7, Gus Yahya Bilang Begini," *Radar Semarang*, October 14, 2025, https://radarsemarang.jawapos.com/kendal/2510140039/pbnu-kecam-program-xpose-uncensored-trans7-gus-yahya-bilang-begini.

the evaluation and temporary suspension of Xpose Uncensored, as well as consideration of pursuing legal action in coordination with LPBH PBNU. In addition, RMI PBNU reaffirmed its commitment to stand alongside pesantren institutions in defending their interests and safeguarding the dignity and institutional standing of pesantren.[7] In parallel, the Sarbumusi Legal Aid Institute (Lembaga Bantuan Hukum Sarbumusi) issued a legal demand (*somasi*) against Trans7 and filed a complaint concerning the broadcast with the Press Council.[8]

On the regulatory front, the Central Indonesian Broadcasting Commission (KPI) based its temporary suspension sanction on violations of Article 6 of KPI Regulation No. 01/P/KPI/03/2012 on Broadcasting Code of Conduct, as well as Article 6(1) and (2) and Article 16(1) and (2)(a) of KPI Regulation No. 02/P/KPI/03/2012 on Broadcasting Programme Standards, which prohibit broadcast programmes from insulting, ridiculing, or degrading educational institutions.[9] Ubaidillah, Chairperson of the Central Indonesian Broadcasting Commission (KPI), emphasized that the life of the pesantren, with its values of adab, compassion, scholarly tradition, and long history of social struggle, should not be reduced to an object of ridicule. He further stated that the escalation of the controversy had come to be regarded as a matter of national significance, prompting KPI to summon the broadcaster directly rather than proceed through the graduated warning-letter stages ordinarily followed under standard procedure.[10] At the regional level, the East Java Regional Indonesian Broadcasting Commission (KPID East Java) submitted an official report to the Central KPI and paid a direct courtesy visit to Pesantren Lirboyo on 15 October 2025 as an expression of its moral responsibility. At the same time, the East Java branch of the Indonesian Islamic Students' Movement (PMII) staged a peaceful protest at the East Java Office of Communication and Informatics (Diskominfo) to demand an internal review and a public apology from Trans7.[11] At the grassroots level, thousands of *santri* in Pekalongan also staged a peaceful demonstration in support of religious scholars and pesantren institutions, while calling for the

[7] Muhammad Syakir, "7 Poin Tuntutan RMI PBNU atas Penayangan Program Xpose Uncensored Trans7 mengenai Pesantren," *NU Online*, October 14, 2025, https://www.nu.or.id/nasional/7-poin-tuntutan-rmi-pbnu-atas-penayangan-program-xpose-uncensored-trans7-mengenai-pesantren-ssi5U.
[8] Haikal Attar, "LBH Sarbumusi Layangkan Somasi dan Laporkan Trans 7 ke Dewan Pers atas Tayangan Program Xpose Uncensored," *NU Online*, October 14, 2025, https://www.nu.or.id/nasional/lbh-sarbumusi-layangkan-somasi-dan-laporkan-trans-7-ke-dewan-pers-atas-tayangan-program-xpose-uncensored-rJFoA.
[9] Tim Redaksi, "KPI Resmi Hentikan Program Xpose Uncensored Trans7, Imbas Sudutkan Pesantren dan Kiai," *Majelis Ulama Indonesia*, October 14, 2025, https://mui.or.id/baca/berita/kpi-resmi-hentikan-program-xpose-uncensored-trans7-imbas-sudutkan-pesantren-dan-kiai; Nugroho Wisnu Adi, "KPI Jatuhkan Sanksi Penghentian Sementara Xpose Uncensored Trans7," *Radar Semarang*, October 16, 2025, https://radarsemarang.jawapos.com/berita/2510160002/kpi-jatuhkan-sanksi-penghentian-sementara-xpose-uncensored-trans7.
[10] Tim Redaksi, "KPI Jatuhkan Sanksi ke Trans7: Program 'Xpose Uncensored' Dihentikan Usai Dinilai Lecehkan Pesantren," *Idis News*, October 17, 2025, https://idisnews.co.id/berita/kpi-jatuhkan-sanksi-ke-trans7-program-xpose-uncensored-dihentikan-usai-dinilai-lecehkan-pesantren; Ferry Kisihandy, "Kasus Program Xpose Uncensored Trans7: Pakar UMJ Soroti Penerapan P3SPS," *Republika Online*, October 17, 2025, https://republika.co.id/share/t49sns472.
[11] Admin, "KPID Jawa Timur Tegaskan Tayangan 'Xpose Uncensored' Trans7 Langgar Regulasi Penyiaran," *KPID Jawa Timur*, October 21, 2025, https://kpid.jatimprov.go.id/id/regulasi/2825/kpid-jawa-timur-tegaskan-tayangan-xpose-uncensored-trans7-langgar-regulasi-penyiaran/.

revocation of Trans7's broadcasting licence. This development illustrates a scale of public mobilization that extended well beyond online protest alone.[12]

This controversy can be understood not merely as an isolated case of a broadcasting violation, but as a contested arena in which different media institutions compete to define what pesantren culture actually entails and which media narratives merit public trust. On the one hand, NU Online is a media institution closely affiliated with the Nahdlatul Ulama community and, institutionally, has a vested interest in defending the dignity of pesantren institutions. On the other hand, Tempo.co is a mainstream media outlet operating within a framework of professional and secular journalistic accountability. These divergent institutional positions raise important questions about how each media outlet constructs representations of pesantren culture. Equally significant is the question of the extent to which these constructions reflect competing conceptions of legitimate ethical standards—whether grounded in secular journalistic professionalism or rooted in the values of Islamic communication. However, examining these competing representations requires not only an analysis of how meaning is constructed but also an ethical assessment of how media narratives uphold or undermine the dignity of religious communities.

This question is particularly significant because pesantren occupy a distinctive position within Indonesia's religious landscape: they function simultaneously as educational institutions, centres of religious authority, and custodians of centuries-old traditions. When the media reduces the complexity of pesantren culture to decontextualized images—such as the exchange of envelopes or gestures of reverence stripped of their original meanings—the resulting representations risk oversimplifying social reality. Such representations may, in turn, inflict symbolic harm on the pesantren community, regardless of whether the broadcaster intended to demean or disparage it. Understanding how representations of pesantren culture are contested across different media outlets therefore requires an analytical perspective that extends beyond framing analysis alone. Such a perspective must also be capable of evaluating media representations against both secular broadcasting codes of ethics and ethical frameworks rooted in the values of Islamic communication.

Accordingly, to investigate this question in greater depth, the study integrates two analytical layers. First, it draws on Robert Entman's framing theory, which conceptualizes framing as the selection and salience of particular aspects of perceived reality in ways that promote specific problem definitions, causal interpretations, moral evaluations, and recommendations for action.[13] Second, media fiqh, understood as an extension of Islamic communication ethics, provides a framework for evaluating the production and circulation of information through the principles of *tabayyun* (verification), *amānah* (trustworthiness), *'adālah* (justice), *maṣlaḥah* (public benefit), and *ḥifẓ al-'irḍ* (protection of dignity and honour).[14] By integrating these two

[12] Adi, "KPI Jatuhkan Sanksi Penghentian Sementara Xpose Uncensored Trans7."
[13] Robert M. Entman, "Framing: Toward Clarification of a Fractured Paradigm," *Journal of Communication* 43, no. 4 (1993): 51–58.
[14] Siti Khoirotul Ula, "Fikih Media Sosial Sebagai Landasan Etika Komunikasi On-Line," *Proceedings of Annual Conference for Muslim Scholars*, n.d.

analytical frameworks, the study not only elucidates how each media outlet constructs its narrative of the controversy, but also evaluates the ethical foundations underpinning those narratives, drawing on both the principles of professional journalism and the values of Islamic communication. In doing so, the study addresses an analytical dimension that has received comparatively limited attention in predominantly secular framing analyses of broadcasting controversies in Indonesia.

Previous Studies

Framing analysis has been widely applied to the study of religious news coverage in Indonesia. Entman's model, alongside Pan and Kosicki's discourse-oriented framing approach, has been employed to examine how online media construct competing narratives surrounding controversial religious institutions.[15] Pangestu and Shabana, for instance, demonstrate that Kompas.com's coverage of Pesantren Al-Zaytun oscillated between framing the institution as a security threat and portraying it as a victim of moral panic, depending on the sourcing patterns employed in individual articles. More broadly, studies of pesantren representation in Indonesia's online media landscape have found that these institutions are frequently framed in the contexts of conflict, poverty, or extremism. This tendency suggests that the *Xpose Uncensored* controversy should not be treated as an isolated incident, but rather as part of a broader pattern in the mediated representation of pesantren within Indonesia's digital media sphere.[16] Most directly relevant to the present case, Sunarto and Zulfa applied Pan and Kosicki's framing model to the Xpose Uncensored broadcast itself, demonstrating that the programme's narrative and visual choices were tendentious and violated the principles of balance and social responsibility stipulated in Indonesia's Broadcasting Code of Conduct and Broadcasting Programme Standards (P3SPS).[17] A parallel study of the Pesantren Al-Zaytun controversy likewise demonstrates that differences in the institutional affiliations of news channels—in that case, between Tempo.co's official YouTube account and Kompas TV—generated significant variations in framing and audience responses. This finding reinforces the methodological premise that comparing media outlets with distinct institutional affiliations offers a productive approach to uncovering contests over the meaning and representation of religious institutions.[18]

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[15] Zhongdang Pan and Gerald M. Kosicki, "Framing Analysis: An Approach to News Discourse," *Political Communication* 10, no. 1 (1993): 55–57.

[16] Masruroh Jazila Wafa, Wisnu Pudji Pawestri, and Achmad Farouq Rifqi, "Konstruksi Realitas Media dalam Tayangan Kehidupan Pondok Pesantren: Analisis Framing Robert M. Entman Terhadap Program 'Xpose Uncensored' Trans 7," *VOXPOP* 7, no. 1 (2026): 12–26; Rifki Mustofa et al., "Construction the Image of Pesantren in Framing Mass Media News: A Robert Entman Perspective," *Linkage* 3, no. 1 (2026): 1–19.

[17] Nisrina Nabibah Sunarto and Laili Zulfa, "Analisis Framing dan Etika Penyiaran Terhadap Representasi Pesantren dalam Tayangan Xpose Uncensored Trans7," *Konsensus: Jurnal Ilmu Pertahanan, Hukum dan Ilmu Komunikasi* 2, no. 5 (2025): 87–103.

[18] Tessa Marlina, Aceng Ruhendi Saifullah, and - Budi Hermawan, "Analisis Framing Media dan Tanggapan Pemirsa Terhadap Pemberitaan Polemik Pondok Pesantren Al-Zaytun: Kasus Panji Gumilang dalam Akun Resmi Youtube Tempo.Co dan Kompas TV" (Thesis Masters, Universitas Pendidikan Indonesia, 2025).

These studies establish that the Xpose Uncensored broadcast itself constituted a distorted and tendentious representation of pesantren culture. What remains comparatively underexamined, however, is the second-order representation: how different media outlets subsequently represented the controversy itself, and whether their coverage met appropriate standards of ethical communication for reporting on religious communities. Existing framing studies of pesantren coverage in Indonesia have overwhelmingly evaluated media practices against secular journalistic codes, such as the Broadcasting Code of Conduct and Broadcasting Programme Standards (P3SPS) or the Journalistic Code of Ethics. Consequently, little attention has been given to how such reporting might be assessed according to ethical standards inherent in Islamic communication itself. Recent scholarship has begun to address this gap, albeit only partially. A study of media coverage of pesantren feudalism in Kumparan, for instance, evaluates its framing through the perspective of da'wah rather than relying exclusively on P3SPS, signalling an emerging tendency to assess pesantren coverage through an Islamic normative framework.[19] Nevertheless, such studies generally remain grounded in da'wah as a broad normative framework and have yet to operationalize more specific and replicable ethical indicators, such as the five principles of media fiqh employed in the present study. Recent scholarship on maqasid sharia frameworks for digital ethics likewise underscores *ḥifẓ al-'irḍ* (protection of dignity and honour) as one of the most relevant principles for assessing media content that may undermine the dignity of individuals or institutions. This perspective is consistent with the present study's emphasis on *ḥifẓ al-'irḍ* as a key differentiating indicator in the comparative analysis of NU Online and Tempo.co.[20]

In parallel, scholarship on Islamic communication ethics has increasingly advanced the concept of media fiqh as a distinctive normative framework that remains compatible with, yet conceptually differentiated from, professional journalistic ethics. Sukmaningtyas et al. argue that principles such as honesty, trustworthiness, and verification should be consistently observed by anyone who produces or disseminates information, extending beyond interpersonal communication to encompass institutional media practices.[21] Agustin et al. likewise emphasize *tabayyun*, grounded in Sura al-Ḥujurāt 49:6, as a prerequisite for responsible information dissemination in the digital age.[22] A recent systematic review of the role of Islamic values in addressing hoaxes and misinformation in digital media further demonstrates that *tabayyun*, *amānah*, and other Islamic ethical principles consistently emerge as normative frameworks in the literature, although their application remains predominantly prescriptive rather than descriptively

[19] Nurul Azizah, "Feodalisme Pesantren dalam Pemberitaan Media Massa: Analisis Framing Perspektif Dakwah," *Al-Ittishol: Jurnal Komunikasi dan Penyiaran Islam* 7, no. 1 (2026): 18–30.
[20] Alifa Awalia Rahmana et al., "Peran Hukum Islam dalam Membentuk Etika Generasi Muda di Media Sosial : Analisis Terhadap Hoaks, Ujaran Kebencian, dan Ghibah Online," *Tashdiq: Jurnal Kajian Agama dan Dakwah* 19, no. 1 (2026): 1–10.
[21] Anisa Nur Izzati Sukmaningtyas et al., "Etika Komunikasi Al-Qur'an dan Relevansinya dengan Komunikasi di Zaman Modern," *Jurnal Semiotika-Q: Kajian Ilmu al-Quran dan Tafsir* 4, no. 2 (2024): 556–76.
[22] Sahrini Agustin et al., "Tabayyun Sebagai Prinsip Komunikasi Islam dalam Menghadapi Hoaks," *Nubuwwah: Journal of Communication and Islamic Broadcasting* 4, no. 01 (2026): 21–32.

analytical in relation to concrete media cases.[23] The most recent developments point toward efforts to formulate a more systematic framework of Islamic media ethics. One proposed model of digital da'wah journalism governance, for instance, integrates the values of *ṣidq* (truthfulness), *amānah* (trustworthiness), *tablīgh* (conveying the message), *faṭānah* (wisdom and intellectual competence), istiqāmah (steadfastness), and *maṣlaḥah* (public benefit) as ethical dimensions for assessing the credibility of religious media.[24] Meanwhile, a comparative exegetical study of the *tabayyun* verse reconstructs the concept as a multilayered epistemology of verification, encompassing caution in receiving reports, critical understanding of the content and potential consequences of a message, factual verification through investigation, and legal responsibility in the dissemination of information. This framework is particularly relevant to journalistic practice in the post-truth era.[25]

Previous studies have remained largely conceptual and have rarely been operationalized as coding frameworks for analysing concrete media controversies, particularly those involving media outlets with distinct institutional affiliations. This study addresses this gap by treating five principles of media fiqh as analytical indicators and applying them comparatively to two media outlets with different institutional bases: NU Online, representing community-based Islamic media, and Tempo.co, representing professionally oriented mainstream secular media. This operationalization also enables a more systematic examination of how ethical principles are manifested in specific journalistic practices, while distinguishing normative expectations from empirically observable patterns of media representation. In doing so, the study contributes to two intersecting fields of inquiry: it extends framing analysis of pesantren coverage in Indonesia into the domain of Islamic communication ethics while simultaneously operationalizing media fiqh as a replicable comparative analytical instrument rather than merely as a normative discourse.

Research Methodology

Research Design

This study employs a qualitative research design that combines Robert Entman's framing analysis with an interpretive application of media fiqh. Framing analysis serves as the primary analytical approach for examining how NU Online and Tempo.co construct representations of the Xpose Uncensored controversy. Following Entman's framework, the analysis identifies four framing functions: problem definition, causal interpretation, moral evaluation, and treatment recommendation. These functions are used to examine how each outlet defines the controversy,

[23] Rizky Salsabila Fitria et al., "The Role of Islamic Values in Addressing Hoaxes and Misinformation in Digital Media: A Systematic Literature Review," *Al-I'lam: Jurnal Komunikasi dan Penyiaran Islam* 9, no. 1 (2025): 66, https://doi.org/10.31764/jail.v9i1.35287.
[24] Andi Hadi Ibrahim Baso, Muhammad Anshar, and Haeruddin, "Model Etika Governance Jurnalistik Dakwah di Era Society 5.0," *Pilar* 16, no. 2 (December 2025): 179–88, https://doi.org/10.26618/jxbknj77.
[25] Fransischa Nayla Puteri, "Rekonstruksi Paradigma Etika Media di Era Post-Truth: Studi Komparatif Epistemologi Tabayyun Lintas Era," *Tashdiq: Jurnal Kajian Agama dan Dakwah* 19, no. 2 (2026), https://cibangsa.com/index.php/tashdiq/article/view/12961.

attributes responsibility, evaluates the actions and actors involved, and presents possible responses to the dispute. The identified frames are subsequently interpreted through five principles of media fiqh: *tabayyun* (verification), *amānah* (trustworthiness), *'adālah* (justice), *maṣlaḥah* (public benefit), and *ḥifẓ al-'irḍ* (protection of dignity and honour). This interpretive stage evaluates the ethical dimensions of each outlet's representation, extending the analysis beyond the identification of framing patterns to consider how news coverage aligns with normative principles of Islamic media ethics. By integrating these two approaches, the study distinguishes between how the controversy is constructed in news discourse and how those constructions can be evaluated from an ethical perspective.

Data Sources

The primary dataset consists of news articles published by NU Online and Tempo.co between 13 and 25 October 2025 that directly address the Xpose Uncensored controversy. The selected period encompasses the emergence and subsequent development of the controversy, allowing the analysis to capture how the two outlets represented the issue as events unfolded. To establish the broader context and verify the sequence of events, the study also draws on official statements issued by the Indonesian Ulema Council (Majelis Ulama Indonesia, MUI) and the Indonesian Broadcasting Commission (Komisi Penyiaran Indonesia, KPI), together with supplementary news reports published by Antara, Suara.com, and Magdalene.co. These materials serve as contextual and corroborative sources rather than as part of the primary comparative dataset. They are used to reconstruct the chronology of the controversy, clarify the positions expressed by relevant institutional actors, and establish a contextual basis for examining the framing choices made by NU Online and Tempo.co. This distinction between primary and supplementary sources helps maintain a clear analytical focus on the two selected media outlets while situating their representations within the wider development of the controversy.

Analytical Procedures

Data analysis was conducted in two stages, following the logic of qualitative content analysis, which emphasizes the systematic examination of textual material before proceeding to further interpretation.[26] The first stage examined the textual structures of the coverage published by NU Online and Tempo.co to identify the framing devices employed by each outlet. This process involved identifying dominant actors, patterns of source selection and representation, and lexical choices used to describe the controversy, the parties involved, and the underlying issues. These textual elements were then examined in relation to Entman's four framing functions: problem definition, causal interpretation, moral evaluation, and treatment recommendation. This stage established how each outlet constructed the controversy, attributed responsibility, evaluated the conduct of relevant actors, and presented responses to the dispute.

[26] Klaus Krippendorff, *Content Analysis an Introduction to Its Methodology*, Fourth Edition (Los Angeles: SAGE, 2018).

In the second stage, the identified framing patterns were assessed against the five principles of media fiqh using indicators derived from their normative meanings. The analysis examined whether information was adequately verified before publication (*tabayyun*), whether facts and statements were presented accurately and responsibly (*amānah*), whether the selection and representation of sources reflected fairness toward the parties involved (*'adālah*), whether the coverage demonstrated consideration of the public interest and the potential consequences of reporting (*maṣlaḥah*), and whether the representation protected or potentially undermined the dignity and honour of the pesantren community (*ḥifẓ al-'irḍ*). These assessments were grounded in observable textual evidence, including sourcing practices, the presentation of competing claims, lexical choices, and the treatment of affected parties. The analysis therefore evaluated the ethical implications of specific representational choices rather than attributing ethical qualities to an outlet on the basis of its institutional affiliation. The findings from this stage were then compared across the two outlets to identify differences in their ethical orientations and approaches to representing the controversy.

Results

Both media outlets identify the broadcast as a misrepresentation of pesantren culture, yet they differ in how they define the underlying problem. NU Online frames the problem primarily in terms of the dignity and reputation of a specific institution explicitly named in the broadcast, together with its leader—Pesantren Lirboyo and KH Anwar Manshur—while identifying Trans7 as the actor responsible for the misrepresentation.[27] Tempo.co, although covering the same incident, situates the issue within a broader institutional framework. It foregrounds the MUI's formal call for the KPI and the Press Council to conduct an investigation, thereby presenting the incident as indicative of a systemic failure of accountability within Indonesia's national broadcasting system.[28] This difference in problem definition is also evident in how each media outlet presents the content of the broadcast itself. NU Online consistently highlights the programme's narrative depicting students as willing to endure considerable hardship merely to greet their kiai and offer him an envelope of money, accompanied by a sarcastic remark suggesting that, given the kiai's wealth, it should instead be the kiai who gives envelopes to the students. This framing was perceived by members of the pesantren community as distorting the underlying meaning of the tradition of showing respect to a kiai, which encompasses spiritual, ethical, and educational dimensions.[29] Tempo.co, by contrast, provides relatively little direct quotation from the original broadcast and instead places greater emphasis on the formal institutional responses to the ensuing controversy. This sourcing pattern reinforces the impression that the issue is framed primarily as

[27] Haikal Attar, "Tayangan Trans7 Soal Pesantren Lirboyo Tuai Kecaman, Ini Respons Alumni hingga KPI."
[28] Dinda Sabrina, "Sikap MUI Atas Program Xpose Uncensored Trans7 Soal Pesantren."
[29] Syahaamah Fikria, "Kasus Xpose Uncensored Hina Ponpes 'Santri Ngesot' Tak Cukup dengan Minta Maaf, Gus Yahya Tuntut Trans7 Lakukan Ini," *Radar Solo*, October 16, 2025, https://radarsolo.jawapos.com/nasional/2510160008/kasus-xpose-uncensored-hina-ponpes-santri-ngesot-tak-cukup-dengan-minta-maaf-gus-yahya-tuntut-trans7-lakukan-ini.

a matter of broadcasting governance and institutional accountability, rather than as a violation of a specific cultural meaning.

NU Online and the Discourse of Restoring Dignity

NU Online's coverage consistently reaffirms the legitimacy of pesantren traditions by highlighting the biographical background of KH Anwar Manshur and his position as Rais Syuriyah of PWNU East Java. The outlet also emphasizes that the practices of kissing a kiai's hand and giving him an envelope constitute expressions of customary respect and socio-religious relations, rather than forms of transactional exploitation as implied by the broadcast.[30] NU Online further maintains its focus on the reconciliation process by documenting a closed-door meeting between representatives of Trans7 and the *mashāyikh* of Lirboyo.[31] In addition, the outlet highlights the personal apology conveyed by Chairul Tanjung as part of the process of restoring the relationship.[32] Through this coverage, the pesantren community is positioned as an active agent in overseeing the sincerity and substance of the reconciliation process, rather than merely as a passive recipient of a written apology.

Furthermore, NU Online actively documents the successive stages of Trans7's apology, which unfolded through multiple channels. These stages included a direct meeting between Trans7's Production Director and the son of KH Anwar Manshur on the night the programme was broadcast; a written apology conveyed through an official message to the family of the pesantren leader on the following day; and a public apology issued through Trans7's official YouTube channel.[33] NU Online also highlights Trans7's termination of its collaboration with the production house responsible for producing the programme as an indication of the broadcaster's internal evaluation and corrective measures.[34] By documenting each stage of the process sequentially, NU Online implicitly positions itself as a social auditor of the sincerity and credibility of the reconciliation process, rather than merely as a news outlet reporting that an apology had taken place. This emphasis on the successive stages of reconciliation suggests that NU Online's reporting serves not only to restore the symbolic dignity of the pesantren community but also to make institutional accountability and corrective action visible to the public.

Tempo.co and the Discourse of Broadcasting Accountability

Tempo.co's coverage relies more heavily on official institutional statements, particularly the MUI's call for the KPI and the Press Council to conduct a comprehensive investigation and impose firm administrative sanctions in order to

[30] Patoni, "Profil KH Anwar Manshur, Pengasuh Pesantren Lirboyo, Sesepuh NU," *NU Online*, October 18, 2025, https://nu.or.id/jatim/profil-kh-anwar-manshur-pengasuh-pesantren-lirboyo-sesepuh-nu-z8sGq.
[31] Madchan Jazuli, "Pesantren Lirboyo Terima Silaturahim Direktur Trans7, Klarifikasi Tayangan Xpose Uncensored."
[32] M. Rizky Fauzi, "KH Anwar Manshur Terima Permohonan Maaf Chairul Tanjung Atas Tayangan Program Xpose Uncensored Trans7."
[33] Trans TV Officer, "Permohonan Maaf," *Trans7 Official*, accessed August 6, 2026, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-Ycesgo7HDM.
[34] M. Rizky Fauzi, "KH Anwar Manshur Terima Permohonan Maaf Chairul Tanjung Atas Tayangan Program Xpose Uncensored Trans7."

safeguard the quality and moral integrity of public broadcasting.[35] Compared with NU Online, Tempo.co incorporates a broader range of institutional voices, including those of the MUI, KPI, and Trans7, making its coverage appear more descriptive and informational than explicitly advocative. At the same time, this approach gives comparatively less attention to the cultural and personal dimensions of the kiai's dignity and honour, which constitute a central element of the narrative developed in NU Online's coverage.

A closer examination of Tempo.co's articles on the controversy reveals that the range of institutional actors covered is, in fact, broader than might be inferred from its references to the MUI and KPI alone. The opening article on the controversy foregrounded the legal action taken by PBNU in response to the broadcast. The report quoted PBNU General Chair Yahya Cholil Staquf, who argued that the programme violated journalistic principles by engaging in personal attacks, insulting the pesantren, and failing to provide balanced sourcing and opportunities for clarification.[36] The day after the KPI imposed sanctions, Tempo.co gave space to criticism from a member of Commission X of the Indonesian House of Representatives (DPR RI), who argued that the temporary suspension of the programme was disproportionate to the impact caused by the broadcast. The report also quoted his assessment that Trans7 understood pesantren life "from the outside without fully understanding the sociology of the pesantren" and his proposal that Trans7 executives should spend time living within a pesantren environment before producing similar content in the future.[37] The legal escalation was also reported when the Legal Aid and Counselling Institute (LPBH) of PWNU East Java filed a complaint against Trans7 with the East Java Regional Police (Polda Jawa Timur) over alleged hate speech and defamation under Indonesia's Electronic Information and Transactions Law (ITE Law) and Broadcasting Law.[38] In this respect, Tempo.co presents the development as an expansion of the issue—from a dispute over the dignity of a particular kiai and pesantren to a broader concern with the institutional dignity and reputation of Nahdlatul Ulama (NU) as an organization.

Equally important, Tempo.co is the only one of the two media outlets to feature a critical voice from within the NU community regarding PBNU's response. A young NU activist is quoted as describing PBNU's decision to pursue legal action as an overreaction, while also acknowledging that the Xpose Uncensored broadcast had "framed pesantren as inherently negative" and was therefore considered "unfair."[39] By presenting two competing perspectives within the NU community itself, without

[35] Dinda Sabrina, "Sikap MUI Atas Program Xpose Uncensored Trans7 Soal Pesantren."
[36] Dede Leni Mardianti, "PBNU Akan Tempuh Jalur Hukum Buntut Tayangan Trans7 Yang Singgung Kiai dan Santri," *Tempo*, October 15, 2025, https://www.tempo.co/politik/pbnu-akan-tempuh-jalur-hukum-buntut-tayangan-trans7-yang-singgung-kiai-dan-santri-2079687.
[37] Ervana Trikarinaputri, "Anggota DPR Bilang Sanksi Penghentian Program Trans7 Tidak Sepadan," *Tempo*, October 16, 2025, https://www.tempo.co/politik/anggota-dpr-bilang-sanksi-penghentian-program-trans7-tidak-sepadan-2080275.
[38] Vedro Imanuel Girsang, "LPBH PNWU Jatim Laporkan Trans7 ke Polda Jatim," *Tempo*, October 17, 2025, https://www.tempo.co/hukum/lpbh-pnwu-jatim-laporkan-trans7-ke-polda-jatim-2080538.
[39] Novali Panji Nugroho, "Tokoh Muda NU Bilang Respons Gus Yahya Soal Tayangan Kiai dan Santri Trans7 Berlebihan," *Tempo*, October 16, 2025, https://www.tempo.co/politik/tokoh-muda-nu-bilang-respons-gus-yahya-soal-tayangan-kiai-dan-santri-trans7-berlebihan-2080128.

explicitly endorsing either position, Tempo.co demonstrates an effort to incorporate a diversity of viewpoints into its coverage. The outlet also concludes its article by proposing that the pesantren community develop counter-narratives and public education initiatives, rather than relying solely on legal action. This approach suggests a relatively high degree of source balance at the level of the individual article, which is arguably more pronounced than the impression produced by an aggregate comparison of the two media outlets.

This tendency is consistent with Tempo.co's broader pattern of reporting on other religious controversies, in which the outlet generally prioritizes verification of institutional procedures. This focus is evident in its emphasis on matters such as KPI plenary meetings, the specific legal or regulatory provisions allegedly violated, and investigation deadlines, rather than on an in-depth exploration of the cultural meanings at stake in the dispute. Such an approach produces reporting that is procedurally precise and readily amenable to cross-verification. At the same time, it risks reducing religious controversies to a sequence of administrative procedures without sufficiently explaining why the misrepresented tradition carries cultural and religious significance that warrants preservation and protection.

Institutional Advocacy, Regulatory Responses, and Competing Interpretations

The contestation over how the Xpose Uncensored controversy was represented unfolded not only within the media sphere but also through institutional responses involving religious organizations, broadcasting regulators, and civil society groups. At the level of institutional advocacy, PBNU, under the leadership of General Chair KH Yahya Cholil Staquf, pursued a dual strategy by publicly condemning the broadcast while simultaneously instructing the LPBH PBNU to prepare legal action.[40] This position was further reinforced by RMI PBNU through a written set of seven demands calling for the programme to be evaluated and discontinued, while also urging students and pesantren families to voice their concerns through channels consistent with established regulations.[41] This strategy reflects an effort to defend the dignity of the pesantren through firm institutional advocacy while at the same time preserving social order and procedural restraint.

At the same time, the contestation entered the realm of formal regulation through established broadcasting oversight mechanisms. The Central Indonesian Broadcasting Commission (KPI Pusat) imposed sanctions on Trans7 pursuant to Article 6 of KPI Regulation No. 01/P/KPI/03/2012 on Broadcasting Code of Conduct and Articles 6 and 16 of KPI Regulation No. 02/P/KPI/03/2012 on Broadcasting Programme Standards.[42] KPI also decided to summon the broadcaster directly, without proceeding through the usual sequence of graduated warning

[40] M Izzul Mutho Masyhadi et al., "PBNU Protes Keras Tayangan Trans7, Instruksikan LPBH Ambil Langkah Hukum," *NU Online*, accessed August 6, 2026, https://banten.nu.or.id/nasional/pbnu-protes-keras-tayangan-trans7-instruksikan-lpbh-ambil-langkah-hukum-77R4q.
[41] Muhammad Syakir, "7 Poin Tuntutan RMI PBNU atas Penayangan Program Xpose Uncensored Trans7 mengenai Pesantren."
[42] Dinda Sabrina, "KPI Hentikan Sementara Program Xpose Uncensored Trans7," *Tempo*, October 15, 2025, https://www.tempo.co/politik/kpi-hentikan-sementara-program-xpose-uncensored-trans7-2079700.

letters, on the grounds that the escalation of the case had reached a national scale. At the regional level, the East Java Regional Broadcasting Commission (KPID Jawa Timur) further supported the process by submitting an official report to the Central KPI and conducting a direct visit to Pesantren Lirboyo as an expression of institutional responsibility.[43] Beyond organizational and regulatory channels, public pressure also constituted an important dimension of the conflict-resolution process. Grassroots mobilization—including a peaceful demonstration by PMII East Java at the East Java Office of Communication and Informatics (Diskominfo Jawa Timur), as well as calls from *santri* groups in various regions for the revocation of Trans7's broadcasting licence,[44] demonstrated that social responses developed in parallel with formal regulatory proceedings. The controversy therefore evolved beyond a matter of broadcasting violations alone, becoming an arena for negotiating how pesantren dignity, *kiai* authority, and the ethical boundaries of religious representation should be understood and contested within the digital public sphere.

Table 1. Comparative Media Framing of the Xpose Uncensored Controversy

Framing Dimension	NU Online	Tempo.co
Problem definition	Attack on the dignity of a specific *kiai* and pesantren	Violation of broadcasting accountability and public trust
Causal interpretation	Editorial negligence and disregard for pesantren traditions	Systemic weaknesses in broadcasting self-regulation
Moral evaluation	Violation of religious dignity and communal honour	Violation of the Broadcasting Code of Conduct and Programme Standards (P3SPS)
Treatment recommendation	Direct apology and restoration of the kiai's dignity	Administrative sanctions and institutional investigation

Source: Authors' elaboration, 2026.

These dynamics reveal a divergence in orientation between media framing and institutional responses. As summarized in Table 1, NU Online and Tempo.co construct contrasting frames of the Xpose Uncensored controversy across Entman's four framing dimensions. NU Online defines the controversy primarily as an affront to the dignity of a specific kiai and the pesantren community, attributing the problem to editorial negligence and a disregard for pesantren traditions. Its moral evaluation emphasizes the violation of religious dignity and communal honour, leading to a preferred resolution centred on a direct apology and the restoration of the kiai's dignity. In contrast, Tempo.co frames the controversy as a violation of broadcasting accountability and public trust, interpreting it in the context of systemic

[43] Novali Panji Nugroho, "Polemik Tayangan Trans7 soal Penghormatan Santri kepada Kiai," *Tempo*, October 16, 2025, https://www.tempo.co/politik/trans7-tradisi-pesantren-penghormatan-santri-2080149.
[44] Dede Leni Mardianti, "Lima Tuntutan NU Ke Trans7 Buntut Tayangan Singgung Santri dan Kiai," *Tempo*, October 15, 2025, https://www.tempo.co/politik/lima-tuntutan-nu-ke-trans7-buntut-tayangan-singgung-santri-dan-kiai-2079786.

weaknesses in broadcasting self-regulation. Its moral evaluation draws primarily on the applicable Broadcasting Code of Conduct and Programme Standards (P3SPS), with greater emphasis on administrative sanctions and institutional investigation. These differences suggest that, although both outlets address the same controversy, they prioritize distinct dimensions of accountability: NU Online foregrounds the restoration of religious and communal dignity, whereas Tempo.co emphasizes regulatory compliance and institutional responsibility.

Discussion

The framing differences identified in the findings are not merely variations in journalistic style; they also reveal distinct ethical orientations underlying each media outlet's reporting. These differences become more apparent when the coverage of both outlets is examined alongside institutional data and regulatory responses through the five principles of media fiqh. Accordingly, the following discussion systematically examines each principle before synthesizing the findings into a multi-layered analytical model in the concluding section. In the dimension of *tabayyun*, both media outlets meet the basic threshold of verification, albeit through different mechanisms. NU Online corroborates the chronology through direct statements from the pesantren and PBNU, whereas Tempo.co relies more heavily on formal verification embedded in official statements issued by the MUI and KPI.[45] Field data, however, indicate that the process of *tabayyun* actually takes place across multiple nodes simultaneously, rather than being confined to the newsroom. Dozens of representatives of the Lirboyo Islamic Boarding School Alumni Association in Jabodetabek explicitly described their visit to Trans7's office on 14 October 2025 as an effort at *tabayyun* to clarify the circumstances of the controversy directly with Trans7 Production Director Andi Chairil.[46] This initiative demonstrates that verification is not undertaken exclusively by media institutions but also by communities directly affected by the representation in question. Thus, at the grassroots level, *tabayyun* operates as a parallel process that even preceded the journalistic verification undertaken by the two media outlets examined in this study.

Institutional verification also took place at the regulatory level. The East Java Regional Broadcasting Commission (KPID Jawa Timur) recorded 288 public complaints concerning the broadcast before submitting an official recommendation to the Central Indonesian Broadcasting Commission (KPI Pusat). This finding indicates that *tabayyun* at the level of state regulation was grounded in an accumulation of evidence and public complaints, rather than solely in a unilateral assessment of the broadcaster.[47] Although both NU Online and Tempo.co met conventional standards of journalistic *tabayyun*, neither reported the specific figure of 288 public complaints received by KPID East Java. Yet this quantitative evidence

[45] Haikal Attar, "Tayangan Trans7 Soal Pesantren Lirboyo Tuai Kecaman, Ini Respons Alumni hingga KPI"; Dinda Sabrina, "Sikap MUI Atas Program Xpose Uncensored Trans7 Soal Pesantren."
[46] Dede Leni Mardianti, "Lima Tuntutan NU Ke Trans7 Buntut Tayangan Singgung Santri dan Kiai."
[47] Tim Redaksi, "KPID Jatim Terima Aduan 288 Aduan Terkait Tayangan 'Xpose Uncensored' Trans7," *KPI*, October 14, 2025, https://kpi.go.id/news/kpid-jatim-terima-aduan-288-aduan-terkait-tayangan-xpose-uncensored-trans7.

could have strengthened the argument that the controversy was not merely a ripple on social media, but rather reflected a formally documented and measurable expression of public concern.

In the dimension of *amānah*, both media outlets present facts accurately and in accordance with the basic principles of news reporting. The difference lies in their respective tones: NU Online adopts a more emotionally charged tone when reporting on Trans7, whereas Tempo.co consistently maintains a comparatively neutral journalistic tone. Ubaidillah, Chair of the Central Indonesian Broadcasting Commission (KPI Pusat), stated in remarks quoted by various media outlets, including Tempo.co, that kiai and pesantren should not be treated as objects of ridicule in broadcast programmes. He emphasized that pesantren life is grounded in values of ethical conduct (*adab*), compassion, knowledge, and a long history of contribution to the nation's struggle. This statement demonstrates how pesantren values function as a normative point of reference for assessing the principle of amanah in media representation.[48]

Conversely, the *amānah* of Trans7 itself was questioned by the affected community. Lirboyo alumni called for all controversial Xpose Uncensored content to be permanently removed from every platform affiliated with Trans7, including its social media accounts and website. This demand indicates that, from their perspective, an apology alone was insufficient to address and remedy the impact already caused. They argued that as long as the content remained publicly accessible, the misrepresentation could continue to shape public misunderstandings of pesantren traditions.[49] NU Online explicitly documented the demand for the removal of all controversial Xpose Uncensored content from platforms affiliated with Trans7. Tempo.co, by contrast, did not mention this demand in its coverage. This difference is significant from the perspective of amanah, because content removal constitutes a concrete and publicly verifiable corrective action, whereas an apology is primarily declarative in nature. The distinction therefore highlights an important dimension of *amānah*, accountability is not exhausted by acknowledging wrongdoing rhetorically but may also require tangible measures to mitigate the continuing effects of an inaccurate representation.

The differences between the two media outlets become more pronounced in the dimension of *'adālah*, as NU Online's coverage is dominated by the perspectives of the pesantren community and Nahdliyin, with relatively limited space given to Trans7's explanations or responses. Assessed against the principle of *'adālah*, this pattern indicates a limitation in source balance, although it is understandable given NU Online's institutional proximity to the party that regarded itself as having been harmed by the broadcast. By contrast, Tempo.co accommodates a broader range of institutional voices, thereby demonstrating a comparatively greater degree of source balance in the dimension of *'adālah*. Nevertheless, its relatively limited engagement

[48] Dinda Sabrina, "KPI Hentikan Sementara Program Xpose Uncensored Trans7."
[49] Bangun Santoso and Tiara Rosana, "Daftar 5 Tuntutan Alumni Lirboyo ke Trans7 Buntut Tayangan 'Xpose': Minta Maaf Tak Cukup!," *Suara*, October 15, 2025, https://www.suara.com/news/2025/10/15/134055/daftar-5-tuntutan-alumni-lirboyo-ke-trans7-buntut-tayangan-xpose-minta-maaf-tak-cukup.

with the cultural and personal meanings attached to the dignity of the kiai means that its coverage is less aligned with the principle of *ḥifẓ al-'irḍ* than that of NU Online.

Additional data indicate that *'adālah* should also be assessed in terms of the representation of a broader range of political and social actors, rather than being limited to religious institutions and regulatory bodies. Muhaimin Iskandar (Cak Imin), Chair of the National Awakening Party (PKB), for example, publicly expressed his objection to the broadcast, describing it as unfairly portraying Pesantren Lirboyo in a negative light, while the PKB parliamentary faction organized a solidarity action outside Trans7's offices.[50] NU Online gave relatively little attention to the involvement of political actors of this kind. Tempo.co, by contrast, did include criticism from a member of Commission X of the Indonesian House of Representatives (DPR RI) concerning the adequacy of the sanctions imposed by the KPI.[51] This coverage, however, differs from the statements made by political actors such as Cak Imin and the PKB parliamentary faction, neither of which was reported by Tempo.co or NU Online. The representation of the controversy in both outlets therefore does not fully capture the partisan-political dimension that accompanied the development of the case. Nevertheless, Tempo.co demonstrates somewhat greater openness to criticism from legislative actors than NU Online.

Dimension of *maṣlaḥah* becomes most apparent when data on institutional advocacy and regulatory responses are examined alongside the coverage produced by the two media outlets. The seven-point demands issued by RMI PBNU, which called for an evaluation of the programme while simultaneously urging santri to remain orderly when expressing their grievances, reflect an effort to balance the defence of communal dignity with the prevention of broader social conflict. This orientation demonstrates the application of the principle of *maṣlaḥah*, which places collective interests at the centre of responses to contentious issues.[52] On media fiqh perspective, the decision of the Central Indonesian Broadcasting Commission (KPI Pusat) to summon Trans7 directly, without proceeding through a graduated sequence of warning letters because the escalation of the case was deemed to have reached a national scale, can likewise be understood as reflecting *maṣlaḥah*-oriented considerations at the level of state regulation. The measure was intended to expedite conflict resolution and prevent broader social unrest, although its formal basis remained within the P3SPS regulatory framework.

The same *maṣlaḥah*-oriented approach is evident in the appeal by PBNU General Chair Gus Yahya urging NU members not to be provoked into anger and to remain steadfast in their service to religion, the nation, and the state, even as he issued a firm condemnation of Trans7.[53] A similar pattern can be observed in the

[50] Fardan Arda Nugraha, "KPI Hentikan Program 'Xpose Uncensored' Trans7," *Antara News*, October 14, 2025, https://bengkulu.antaranews.com/berita/444077/kpi-hentikan-program-xpose-uncensored-trans7.
[51] Ervana Trikarinaputri, "Anggota DPR Bilang Sanksi Penghentian Program Trans7 Tidak Sepadan."
[52] Muhammad Syakir, "7 Poin Tuntutan RMI PBNU atas Penayangan Program Xpose Uncensored Trans7 mengenai Pesantren."
[53] Setiyawan, "PBNU Kecam Program Xpose Uncensored Trans7, Gus Yahya Bilang Begini."

recommendation letter issued by KPID East Java, which, while calling for consideration of the revocation of Trans7's broadcasting licence, also stressed the importance of an internal managerial evaluation to prevent similar incidents from recurring. This combination of punitive sanctions and preventive corrective measures reflects a long-term *maṣlaḥah* logic rather than an orientation focused solely on punishment.[54] NU Online adequately documents Gus Yahya's appeal. Tempo.co, by contrast, with its emphasis on the MUI and KPI, gives comparatively limited attention to the dimension of social conflict management articulated by PBNU.

The structural differences between the two media outlets are most pronounced in the dimension of *ḥifẓ al-'irḍ*. As a media institution that emerged from and remains accountable to the Nahdliyin community, NU Online is epistemically more oriented towards protecting communal honour, although this orientation carries the practical consequence of reducing the space afforded to source balance. This is particularly evident in the demands articulated by the Lirboyo alumni, which extended beyond a mere institutional apology from Trans7. They called for a public apology specifically addressed to the *mashāyikh* of Pesantren Lirboyo.[55] In addition, they demanded a direct meeting with the narrator and the production house (PH) responsible for preparing the script for the broadcast, [56] indicating a demand for personal accountability that went beyond a merely corporate expression of apology.

Trans7, through its Production Director, Andi Chairil, responded to these demands by stating that sanctions against the production house (PH) would be discussed collectively by the board of directors. This response indicates an acknowledgement of the importance of personal accountability, although it did not yet provide any concrete assurance regarding the form of action to be taken at the time the statement was made.[57] NU Online reported this sequence of demands for personalized accountability in considerable detail. Tempo.co, by contrast, focused on the institutional administrative sanctions imposed by the KPI and did not address the demand to bring the narrator or the PH into the process on a personal basis. This disparity provides the clearest evidence that ḥifẓ al-'irḍ, understood as the restoration of honour through accountability directed at the individuals involved rather than solely at an abstract institution, is substantially more prominent in NU Online's representation than in that of Tempo.co.

The five preceding analyses demonstrate that the differences between NU Online and Tempo.co are structural rather than merely incidental matters of editorial choice. This finding extends the conclusions of Sunarto and Zulfa, whose analysis of the Xpose Uncensored broadcast itself focused primarily on violations of the

[54] Dinda Sabrina, "KPI Hentikan Sementara Program Xpose Uncensored Trans7."
[55] Ahmad Rifqi Hidayat, "Tayangan Xpose Uncensored Trans7 tentang Pondok Pesantren Lirboyo Melanggar Etika Penyiaran, Tak Cukup Permohonan Maaf," *NU Online*, October 14, 2025, https://jateng.nu.or.id/nasional/tayangan-xpose-uncensored-trans7-tentang-pondok-pesantren-lirboyo-melanggar-etika-penyiaran-tak-cukup-permohonan-maaf-qQRza.
[56] Haikal Attar, "Tayangan Trans7 Soal Pesantren Lirboyo Tuai Kecaman, Ini Respons Alumni hingga KPI."
[57] Hendrik Yaputra, "Trans7 Minta Maaf atas Tayangan yang Singgung Kiai dan Santri," *Tempo*, October 14, 2025, https://www.tempo.co/politik/trans7-minta-maaf-atas-tayangan-yang-singgung-kiai-dan-santri-2079574.

Broadcasting Code of Conduct.[58] The present study expands upon their findings by demonstrating that formal compliance with the Broadcasting Code of Conduct and Programme Standards (P3SPS), implicitly invoked by both NU Online and Tempo.co, does not necessarily equate to fulfilment of Islamic communication ethics. This divergence arises because the two ethical frameworks rest upon distinct epistemic foundations. The P3SPS framework is grounded in state broadcasting regulations, whereas Islamic communication ethics is rooted in communicative obligations derived from revealed values.

The gap between grassroots mobilization and media coverage also constitutes an important finding of this study. The mobilization of thousands of *santri* in Pekalongan, the peaceful demonstration organized by PMII East Java at the Office of Communication and Informatics, the 288 public complaints received by the East Java Regional Broadcasting Commission (KPID Jawa Timur), and the legal demand submitted by the Sarbumusi Legal Aid Foundation (LBH Sarbumusi) to the Press Council all indicate that public responses to the broadcast were broader in scale and more systematically organized than media coverage alone might suggest. These developments demonstrate that the dynamics of protest cannot be understood solely through the presence of the hashtag #BoikotTrans7 on social media. NU Online reported some aspects of this mobilization, but its coverage did not fully capture the broader scale of institutional advocacy unfolding simultaneously across different regions. Tempo.co, meanwhile, devoted little attention to the grassroots dimension of the mobilization and focused primarily on statements issued by central-level institutions such as the MUI and KPI. This disparity in coverage demonstrates that *ʿadālah* concerns not only balance among institutional elites but also the adequate representation of grassroots voices directly affected by the controversy.

These findings suggest a layered model for evaluating the representation of religious institutions in the media. At the initial stage, framing analysis is employed to identify how a controversy is narratively constructed through problem definition, causal interpretation, moral evaluation, and treatment recommendation. The five principles of media fiqh are then applied to assess whether such a construction meets the ethical standards of Islamic communication, with *tabayyun* functioning as a prerequisite for *amānah*, *amānah* as the foundation of *ʿadālah*, and the entire framework ultimately converging on *maṣlaḥah*, and *ḥifẓ al-ʿirḍ* as the ultimate criteria of ethical representation. Applying this layered model to cases beyond the present study—such as media representations of churches, Buddhist temples (Vihara), or religious minority communities—could provide an empirical test of the model's broader validity. Such testing is important for determining whether the pattern identified here, whereby community-based media tend to prioritize the protection of honour while mainstream media place greater emphasis on source balance, holds more generally. Further research could therefore establish whether this pattern reflects a broader characteristic of media representation of religious institutions or is instead specific to the relationship between pesantren and Nahdlatul Ulama.

[58] Nisrina Nabibah Sunarto and Laili Zulfa, "Analisis Framing dan Etika Penyiaran Terhadap Representasi Pesantren dalam Tayangan Xpose Uncensored Trans7."

Conclusion

This study demonstrates that the Xpose Uncensored controversy generated two distinct discourses of pesantren representation. NU Online framed the incident as an attack on sacred religious honour and emphasized the importance of restorative accountability. Tempo.co, by contrast, framed it as a matter of broadcasting governance and public accountability, particularly in relation to compliance with media regulations. When interpreted through the five principles of media fiqh, these framing choices demonstrate that formal compliance with the Broadcasting Code of Conduct and Programme Standards (P3SPS) does not automatically satisfy the ethical standards of Islamic communication. This is particularly evident in relation to the protection of the honour of religious communities (*ḥifẓ al-ʿirḍ*), which requires considerations extending beyond regulatory compliance alone. The comparative application of media fiqh to media outlets with different institutional affiliations offers an evaluative framework that broadens the study of media representation. Rather than merely replicating conventional framing analysis or secular broadcasting ethics, this framework introduces a normative dimension rooted in the values of Islamic communication.

This study is limited to two media outlets and a single controversy and relies on published news texts rather than editorial interviews, which might have provided more direct insight into the reasoning underlying editorial decisions. Future research could extend this comparative media fiqh framework by examining social media coverage of the same controversy. The framework could also be applied to a broader sample of controversies involving religious institutions and communities, including Christian, Buddhist, and Hindu communities in Indonesia. Expanding the scope of inquiry in this manner would be important for testing whether the pattern identified in this study—namely, that community-based media tend to place greater emphasis on the protection of honour, whereas mainstream media tend to prioritize source balance—holds more generally. Further research could thereby determine whether this pattern represents a characteristic of Indonesia's pluralistic media landscape or reflects dynamics specific to the representation of religious institutions within the country's Muslim-majority context.

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Ethical Approval

This study relied exclusively on publicly available documentary sources, including news articles, official institutional statements, and other publicly accessible materials. It did not involve human participants, interviews, or the collection of private or confidential personal data. Therefore, ethical approval was not required for this study.

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