

Student Responses to the Policy of KPID West Java Regarding Religious Programs in Television

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Abstract: *The study aimed to explain and analyze Student Responses to Policy Circular Number 1 of 2022 KPID West Java concerning Religious Programs in Television. Policy Circular containing guidelines for radio and television broadcasting institutions in West Java regarding how religious broadcasts should be carried out. This research uses a qualitative approach with a case study method with a single case. Primary data were obtained from in-depth and focused interviews with informants, field observations in the form of notes about situations and events, and informant data. Researchers selected all informants in this study using purposive and snowball sampling techniques. College students are aware of the circular letter through the West Java KPID website and social media, watch religious broadcasts that offend other religions, appreciate this circular letter, and hope that the quality of religious broadcasts will increase and support national integration. College students participate actively by criticizing religious issues, being responsive in reporting violations of religious programs, and educating those closest to them about broadcasting policies. The research conclusion is that West Java KPID Circular Letter Number 1 of 2022 is relevant in overcoming broadcasting problems developing in West Java. KPID is responsive in its efforts to create inter-religious harmony and national integration through its policies.*

Keywords: *religious program, student response, west java regional indonesian broadcasting commission*

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INTRODUCTION

The West Java Regional Indonesian Broadcasting Commission issued Circular Number 1 of 2022 concerning Religious Broadcasting Programs at Broadcasting Institutions. The letter published on August 15, 2022, is related to several problems that have developed recently, especially at broadcasting institutions in the West Java region.

The circular letter is a guideline for West Java radio and television broadcasting institutions regarding how religious broadcasts should be carried out. Even though the letter does not contain sanctions, broadcasting institutions that violate them can be subject to punishment according to the Broadcasting Code

of Conduct and Broadcast Program Standards (P3SPS).

The circular letter contains 14 points. According to Adiyana (Chairman of the West Java KPID), broadcast programs are prohibited from containing attacks, insults, or harassment of views and beliefs between or within certain religions. They must respect the ethics of inter-religious relations. Broadcast programs that present content containing different views or understandings in certain religions must be presented carefully, in a balanced, impartial manner, with competent and accountable sources. When looking for competent sources, broadcasting institutions can pay attention to recommendations

from religious organizations registered according to regulations. The latest circular letter from the West Java KPID regulates broadcasts of the call to prayer, which must be by local time and are prohibited from inserting advertisements (Siswandi, 2022).

However, the development of religious television programs still raises some problems. In 2013, KPI issued an official warning against TVRI for giving broadcast slots to Islamic organization which openly opposes the existence of the Republic of Indonesia. A preacher on a religious program in 2017 also received a warning for describing heaven with an inappropriate narrative. A similar case also happened when a TV station that aired a religious program with exorcism as one of its primary elements received harsh backlash in 2018. Another issue also arises when religious shows are considered to support one party and at the same time alienate the other party; for example, a preacher on a TV station condemns the traditional practice of *tahlilan* (prayer gathering) as heresy. Television is also inseparable from the contestation of various religious understandings. Current developments also raise issues, especially with the rise of religious channels on YouTube with questionable religious understandings and the lack of government control on such free platforms (Fauzy & Jannah, 2021).

Television is a viral mass media in society. He is in almost every public place, office, home, and room. Any information conveyed through television will be straightforward to reach the middle of the community. Likewise, *tabligh* messages will be socialized quickly if conveyed through television. Therefore, the existence of television is neutral, depending on who the user is. Like a knife, it can be used for good, such as cutting fruits and vegetables, or for evil,

such as killing. Television can be a tool to undermine the nation's morals, or vice versa, as a medium of *da'wah*, namely changing bad conditions to become good and those that are already good to be better (Kusnawan, 2004).

State control influences the formation of historical phases of developing religious programs on Indonesian television. Religious programs have passed three main phases on television; first, the conventional TV phase which was strictly controlled by the state so that it was only colored by the format of monologue lectures and recitations of the Koran and was monopolized by state-owned TV (1962-1998); second, the phase of private conventional TV which functions as an economic entity with a focus on profit and impacts on the pressure of religious conservatism on television (1998-2011); and lastly, non-conventional TV which actively uses new media as a space for religious group expression so that it has an impact on the strengthening of religious conservatism. Apart from playing a role in developing religious programs on television, state regulation and control also play a role in contesting religious views.

The presence of the state through KPI control in the realm of conventional television makes the religious narratives that develop tend to be closed and dominated by ideologies that tend to be moderate and conservative. Conversely, the absence of state control impacts variations in religious understanding that develop in religious programs. Moderate and conservative understanding of religion has developed more broadly so that it can accommodate religious understandings that are considered liberal and Islamic. Variations in religious understanding extend to the types of television that escape state supervision.

Religion is a passionate and warm

topic worldwide, and there is excellent hype internationally due to religious issues. Religion is more influential in the conversion of social values worldwide. The people mostly follow the religion and can easily divert themselves from the religious values. That is why religious commodification is a top-level, highly-rising issue globally.

Davie (2007) concluded that there are some worldwide facts and ground realities in the domain of religion. However, these global phenomena also challenge perceptions of societies under their norms and cultures. The international market's economy is growing and has been developed at a higher level. Some factors are critical in the convergence of people on religious points.

The critical factors in this process are the work process and practices of the market, the use of advanced and modern technology, and the movement of citizens from one region to another. Another important and helpful factor is religious institutions' use of capital and information. In the modern era, the different prominent religions are competing and are very interested in research and reinvention to attract the consumers of the religious market (Jahan & Shabir, 2021).

Religious programs on non-conventional television are more popular than those on conventional television. Judging from religious narratives, narratives that represent conservative and Islamic views tend to be more popular than narratives that reflect moderate and liberal understandings of religion. This difference in popularity is influenced by the figure who brings the narrative. The popularity of religious programs depends on the figure of the ustadz and which television it is from compared to the theme's content. The same theme can have different popularity when conveyed by ustadz figures who have different popularity. The popularity of ustadz seems

to have become a new form of authority for conveying religious narratives (Siaran Pers Hasil Penelitian "Dakwah Digital: Narasi Agama Di Platform Online Dan Televisi, 2021).

However, it is not easy to say that religious broadcasts are more popular than other broadcasts; religious broadcasts on television are not popular programs; even though the market is available, many things must be considered in the production process. There are several formats in broadcasting religious programs: the *tausiyah* format, the documentary or magazine format, and the traveling format. Among the three, the performance of the religious program in the *Tausiah* format was better than the other formats, both in share and rating. Regarding demographics, viewers of religious broadcasts are dominated by those aged 35 years and over (Ihza, 2022).

With the sophistication and impact of television on everyone who watches it, the use of television as a medium of propaganda is very effective. Television can offer a technologically and institutionally distinct form of cultural framework and expression and the expression of broader social, political, and economic forces. Television is persuasive as an audio-visual (hearing) medium because the audience can simultaneously see live images and sound. The audience can receive even the live sound and images through live coverage when a *tabligh* event or sermon occurs. Television has an extensive reach (coverage) in disseminating messages quickly with all its impacts on the lives of individuals and society (Jalil, 2021).

The mass media has the power to influence people at various levels; as mentioned by Bungin, the mass media theoretically functions as an information channel, education channel, and entertainment channel, but the mass media provides other effectiveness beyond that

function. The effects of the mass media not only affect a person's attitude but can also influence behavior, even at a more distant level; the effects of the mass media can affect social systems and the cultural system of society (Bungin, 2009).

Students are a group of people tasked with multiplying and increasing intellectually. Students can be categorized as one of the elite groups in society. Because of the status function and role, it carries as an intellectual group. The intellectual quality of a student is greatly influenced by the quality of the source of knowledge/information he obtains. The higher the quality of the sources of knowledge obtained by a person, the higher the quality of knowledge/intellect. Conversely, if the quality of the source of information/knowledge obtained is low, then the intellectual quality of the person is low. This will be very important for the development of a nation; if students and the younger generation of a nation obtain or consume information that is not of high quality every day, then the people of that nation will also not be healthy, or the quality of the people will be low. If the quality of the people is low, then the nation will be very slow in making progress (Sulaiman, 2018).

The research aims to discover the method of the Indonesian Regional Broadcasting Commission of West Java Province Number 1 of 2022 Circular Letter on Religious Programs in Television Media in Efforts to Strengthen National

Integration, which is disseminated to students. Observations and feelings of students on religious broadcasts and Policy Circular Number 1 of 2022 KPID West Java concerning Religious Programs on Television Media in Efforts to Strengthen National Integration. As well as how students actively participate in implementing Policy Circular Letter Number 1 of 2022 of the West Java KPID concerning Religious Programs on Television Media in Efforts to Strengthen National Integration.

METHOD

This research uses a qualitative approach with a case study method. With the case study method, this research is expected to provide a deep understanding of the problem under study. A qualitative approach is seen as more relevant and suitable because it aims to explore and understand what is hidden in the issue of the West Java Regional Indonesian Broadcasting Commission (KPID) Circular on Religious Broadcasting Programs in Broadcasting Institutions.

The type of case study used in this research is a single case study. In this study, the researcher pays attention to and examines an issue that attracts attention and uses a case as an instrument to describe it in detail. The single case in this study is related to student responses in addressing the KPID policy.

Primary data were obtained from interviews with informants, field

TABLE 1. Research Informants

No	Name	University	Add-in
1	Gifari Adzani Akbar	Universitas Pasundan	campus activist
2	Farhan Khaikal	Universitas Padjajaran	mass media enthusiasts
3	Sultan Dafa	Universitas Islam Bandung	campus activist
4	Lugi Satria	UIN Bandung	campus activist
5	Faishal Abdul Majid	Universitas Tel-U	campus activist

Source: Researcher, 2023

observations in the form of notes about situations and events, and data about informants. The researcher used purposive and snowball sampling techniques to select all the informants in this study. This purposive sampling technique includes people who are selected since specific criteria are made by the researcher based on the research objectives. The snowball sampling technique is a technique for determining a sample that is initially small and then enlarges. For more details, research informants can be seen in the Table 1.

Secondary data is data obtained through data that has been researched and collected by other parties related to research problems. Secondary data is used to support primary data. Secondary data is obtained from documents on websites, social media, and others.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

Television, as the most popular and familiar medium in Indonesia, has experienced several changes due to the presence of advanced technology. One of the significant transformations is the transition from analog to digital broadcasting systems. The new era of

digital broadcasting could improve the performance and quality of digital television itself. Most people consider television as a basic need. Massive access to information broadcast on television has always been a treat for its viewers. Almost everyone, including children, adolescents, adults, and the elderly, watches television to quench their thirst for knowledge (Haquq & Eryad, 2020). Looking at these things, it can be said that television has a somewhat important role in the development of the times; television has its charm so that it can progressively affect society's social, economic, and political conditions, especially in Indonesia (Sjuchro et al., 2023).

The Method of Indonesian Regional Broadcasting Commission of West Java Province Number 1 of 2022 Circular Letter on Religious Programs in Television Media in Efforts to Strengthen National Integration is Disseminated to Students

Students know circular letter No. 1 of 2022 KPID West Java policy regarding Religious Programs in Television Media through various methods and media. Starting from googling, as stated by Lugi



FIGURE 1. Online News Portal

Source: <https://sindikasi.republika.co.id/berita/rh1rt6352/dprd-jabar-apresiasi-surat-edaran-siaran-keagamaan-kpid-jabar>



FIGURE 2. West Java KPID Instagram Posts
Source : Instagram KPID Jabar

Satria, “After I received news that there was such a circular until in the end I tried to find out what the contents of the circular were like, at the end I opened a Google page and could search from the circular issued by the West Java KPID regarding religious programs on television media to strengthen national integration like that” (Satria, 2023).

Some informants learned from chats or discussions with active friends in Hima. At the same time, the media widely used to know about circular letter No. 1 of 2022 was the West Java KPID official website, social media such as Instagram and Twitter, and online news portals. “In a way, that is information literacy, especially for us Communication Science students who are closely related to the media and broadcasting, by looking at the official website or social media from the West Java KPID. From several online media news portals and the official media of the West Java KPID” (Akbar, 2023).

Like the communication pattern that often occurs, individuals can find information informally through chat and then try to find more complete information through the media. One of the informants stated, “Previously, the

circular was only known briefly, then we gathered at the secretariat of hima to hear from friends who were vocal about it. Try to find it on the KPID website and read the end. After trying to find out through the KPID website, I also learned from online media such as Kompas Mind the People” (Majid, 2023).

Following Figure 1 and Figure 2 are some examples of media used by informants to find out information about circular policy No. 1 of 2022 KPID West Java concerning Religious Programs in Television Media.

Whereas Satria’s way of finding out about policies was different again, “My way of finding out about circular number 1 of 2022 issued by the West Java KPID, of course, is that I follow the news about developments rather than the flow of communication technology, especially after the implementation of the analog switch off, right, that is also the title. In my thesis, coincidentally, I learned that KPI in West Java gave circular number 1 of 2022. Besides that, I could also find out because I also happened to have interned at KPID West Java for one month. There were also guidelines, namely a guidebook on broadcasting (P3SPS), and I had the

chance to read about the circular like that” (Satria, 2023).

The statement above explains that students are trying to find other sources that are more complete about the circular policy of Circular Letter Number 1 of 2022 KPID West Java concerning Religious Programs in Television Media so they can find out the entire contents of the policy. The informant knew the contents of the policy as an appeal to the contents of the broadcast, “Essentially KPID Calls on Television Media in broadcasting during the month of Ramadan must pay close attention to the provisions of P3SPS and other provisions recorded in the circular letter” (Dafa, 2023). According to Khaikal, “The point in broadcasting on television is not to insult or disrespect other religions; the point is to respect each other” (Khaikal, 2023).

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Detoni (2016) said that in an era of multiplatform content distribution, media sector oligopoly, and the transnational nature of the culture industry, Public Radio and TV need to find new social functions that differentiate them from private media and justify state investment

in the communications sector. This new function creates and strengthens media public space that encourages citizen participation and transformative action (Kaligis et al., 2021).

Observations of students on religious broadcasts and Circular Letter Policy No. 1 of 2022 KPID West Java

Students pay attention so far that religious broadcasts on television are pretty wise; no religious shows corner other religions. Students can explain that if it is related to the circular letter, as far as they know, television rarely contradicts the circular, except on social media, which is indeed difficult to control.

As stated by the informant Haikal, “Maybe we already respect each other; there are no attacks or no respect for other religions. Moreover, with this circular letter, Television can be more selective in making and running religious programs” (Khaikal, 2023). Another informant highlighted religious broadcasts, especially in the month of Ramadan, which were very diverse: “Religious broadcasts based on circulars are broadcasts which are related to activities carried out during the month of Ramadan which refer to certain provisions regarding religion, where all broadcasts have provisions that are appropriate or not during the month of Ramadan broadcast” (Dafa, 2023).

Students see the relevance of religious broadcasts on television media related to Circular Letter Number 1 of 2022 KPID West Java concerning Religious Programs in Television Media in Efforts to Strengthen National Integration; in their view, the relevance of this circular letter is considered very good, especially in the agenda of strengthening national integration, as stated by Farhan “From what I see, although not as a whole, it is by the circular letter. Especially if the KPID has issued a circular regarding the rules to strengthen national integration,

the television should have anticipated that there will be no friction between religious communities” (Khaikal, 2023).

Students’ understanding of religious broadcasts on television media is related to Circular Number 1 of 2022 KPID West Java concerning Religious Programs in Television Media in Efforts to Strengthen National Integration. Students understand that issuing a circular letter from the West Java KPID can minimize divisions with religious backgrounds, as stated by Gifari: “What I understand by the enactment of the circular letter can minimize divisions over religious backgrounds. I understand this letter applies so society has no religious divisions, especially West Java” (Akbar, 2023). Students also observed that prior to the publication of this circular letter, they still saw religious broadcasts that could cause misunderstandings, as stated by Faishal, “I observed that prior to the issuance of this circular, there were still several television broadcasts that could cause misunderstandings with one another, but again we as viewers must also choose wisely which ones are good and which are not. Furthermore, I hope that after this circular letter, the public and the media will understand more about the importance of strengthening this national integration” (Majid, 2023).

Television, which has become a media industry, encourages its workers to create a program that attracts the audience’s interest to watch to get a high number of ratings and shares to affect the income that comes in. Television media, which has become an industry in creating programs, thinks about profit values. This is what drives the commodification of each program. The commodification is contained in programs containing entertainment formats and religious programs considered sacred by the community. So it happens that religion, a use-value for society, turns into a selling point to reap profits from the

high number of shares and ratings that impact the number of advertisements that are entered. Almost Commodification of religion in the religious program Siraman Qalbu on MNC TV (Wibisono and Vera) Each television station has religious programs in various forms. One of the religious/religious programs that caught the attention of researchers was the Siraman Qalbu Program with Ustadz Dhanu, which was broadcast by the private television station MNC TV (Wibisono & Vera, 2022).

Student observations on religious broadcasts and the West Java KPID Circular Letter No. 1 of 2022 concerning Religious Programs in Television Media in Efforts to Strengthen National Integration show that religious broadcasts on television generally are by the circular letter. Undeniably, some stations are still not selective in choosing sources, which can sometimes cause polemics in society.

Students feelings on Policy Circular Letter No. 1 of 2022 KPID West Java

Feelings are psychological symptoms that are subjective. Feelings are experienced by individuals in the quality of being happy or not happy to a certain degree. In the context of this study, the feelings referred to are spiritual or sublime feelings related to religious feelings, moral feelings, intellectual feelings (related to thoughts), and social feelings (related to fellow human beings).

Overall, the study results show that students have positive feelings or are happy with Circular Letter Number 1 of 2022 KPID West Java concerning Religious Programs in Television Media. Students feel that KPID is very aware and concerned about the possibilities in Indonesia if there is no preventive action in the form of this policy. Faishal says, “Because I am grateful that this KPID circular letter can make our country, especially West Java, also become

peaceful and respect each other between religions. I am thrilled because the West Java KPID cares about sensitive matters in a society where hoaxes quickly consume our society, and this circular letter can change the behavior of the public and the media to pay more attention to what will be broadcast and not” (Majid, 2023).

Lugi also felt the same way. Lugi even linked this policy to the political year, fearing that broadcast television programs would become a “political tool” for certain parties. “My feelings are very positive; yes, I appreciate and welcome the existence of this circular letter because it is felt necessary to enforce that every television or radio broadcast has such a quality broadcast level by not leading public opinion by cornering one group or one religion for the sake of the interests of one religion or the interests of one of the groups itself, especially in these political years, religion has often been a vehicle that can attract enough attention like that, so it must be enacted instead of regulations regarding broadcasting on television or radio which regulate broadcast content regarding religious. As I explained above, today, it is necessary to have a system or regulation that can create or maintain the conduciveness of society in Indonesia itself, let alone approach political years like that. I also explained that in a political year, religious issues often become sensitive issues and can become and can be used as a tool by irresponsible people, so I very much positively welcome Circular Letter 1 of 2022, which was launched or issued by the West Java KPID” (Satria, 2023).

This positive feeling reflects the general public’s feelings regarding this circular letter’s policy. “I am thrilled with this program because it benefits the public in forming characters with good morality. I think the community also needs this program to motivate them to worship during Ramadan” (Interview with Dafa,

2023, 25 March). Then Gifari stated, “I have a positive feeling because if this circular letter is obeyed, it will create peace and minimize conflicts motivated by religion. I think open-minded people who yearn for national integration will welcome it” (Akbar, 2023).

The public should care about and be critical of the content broadcast by public television and radio broadcasters. Television has become an integral part of Indonesian families. In one family, there are even those who have more than one television. The family enjoys television broadcasts almost every day. Watching television has direct effects on the audience. The audience then becomes more aggressive and accepts using aggression to resolve conflict. Another effect, namely desensitization, is the audience’s feelings become dull when they see the violence that occurs in real life around them, and television can give the effect of mean world syndrome; the audience becomes convinced that life in the real world is indeed vicious/hard as depicted on television.

Active participation in the implementation of Circular Letter No. 1 of 2022 KPID West Java

The role of students as intellectuals can be carried out in public education so that the purpose of enacting the circular policy can produce a satisfactory output. As the Sultan conveys, students play a role in educating their friends and family: “The role of students, especially for me, is to teach or educate friends and family about the KPID policy so that it can be successful” (Dafa, 2023). Furthermore, the informant Faishal said, “By being an example in implementing it for the community, I think as a student I should also especially myself be actively involved in spreading goodness, especially in this case about religious issues like that right and also have to be proactive regarding

the findings that I found, for example to directly report these findings to the West Java KPID as what is the name of the holder of the system rather than broadcasting itself like that” (Majid, 2023).

Students focus on increasing their ability to implement Circular Letter Policy No. 1 of 2022 KPID West Java concerning Religious Programs in Television Media in Efforts to Strengthen National Integration. There needs to be a wise attitude in receiving all information. Students are specifically aware of the amount of fake or hoax news, as stated by Lugi, “Choosing the right information and reducing the triggers for hoax news, prioritizing several related matters must be increased” (Satria, 2023).

Student businesses participate in the long-term implementation of Circular Letter No. 1 of 2022 KPID West Java concerning Religious Programs in Television Media in Efforts to Strengthen National Integration, get involved by monitoring and reporting if there are violations on television media, “For the long term is an escort, we as students can also report to the West Java KPID when there are things that are not by the circular policy” (Interview with Satria, 2023, 1 April). Moreover, the program can be consistently implemented. Faishal explained at length that “Activities as a form of long-term participation that can be carried out are consistent with what is felt to be wrong and alert and also responsive to reporting mistakes that we find either on television or radio broadcasts considering that with the existence of regulations these rules should be able to be implemented properly by every so-called owner of the television or the owner of the radio itself so as not to broadcast content that can pit the people of Indonesia against each other” (Majid, 2023).

Of course, a long-term effort is to maintain the implementation of this

circular letter, not only in broadcast media but also in people’s personal lives, to respect each other more, especially for broadcast media owners who must consistently broadcast positive things for the community.

Advances in technology and communication in television media are essential to disseminating information to the public. The media, especially television, has a dominant influence in Indonesian society. The emergence of television is capable of being a very effective medium. Nowadays, television can be said to have entered almost all time and space in human life. Television is in development; this medium functions as entertainment and is used by religions to spread da’wah messages. (Handoko et al., 2021)

CONCLUSION

Students know circular letter No. 1 of 2022 KPID West Java policy regarding Religious Programs in Television Media through various methods and media. They are starting from informal chats or discussions to browsing through the media. The media widely used to find out about circular policy No. 1 of 2022 is the West Java KPID official website, social media such as Instagram and Twitter, and online news portals. Students know this policy is an appeal to the West Java KPID for the contents of television programs not to insult or disrespect other religions, which is mutual respect. Student observations on religious broadcasts and the West Java KPID Circular Letter No. 1 of 2022 concerning Religious Programs in Television Media in Efforts to Strengthen National Integration show that religious broadcasts on television generally are by the circular letter. Undeniably, some stations are still not selective in choosing sources, which can sometimes cause polemics in society. Students have positive feelings or are happy with the

policy of circular letter No. 1 of 2022 KPID West Java concerning Religious Programs in Television Media. This policy is considered a form of awareness and concern for the West Java KPID to strengthen national integration. Positive feelings will impact the implementation and role of students; students can conduct public education so that the purpose of implementing these policies can produce output that is as expected. Students actively participate in implementing the KPID circular letter by providing education to the community, supervising and monitoring religious broadcasts on television media, and following up by making reports to the West Java KPID. This may indicate that student informants have a direct role in increasing media literacy in society.

Suggestions from this study: To create inclusive content, broadcasting institutions are selective in choosing sources, especially in religion; at least two things are required: competence in religion and not being related to banned mass organizations. Broadcasting institutions avoid taking sides with one group or group by always pursuing a fairness doctrine or covering both sides. Students can play an active role in increasing media literacy in society by forming study groups or spearheading the formation of broadcast content monitoring units about religion by collaborating with youth organizations such as Karang Taruna. Moreover, broadcasting institutions need to make signs understood by both the speakers and the creative content team so they do not intersect with diversity, which can trigger our national disintegration.

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