

Humanitarian Framing of the 2025 Indonesian Demonstrations: A Comparative Analysis of NU Online and Suara Muhammadiyah

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ABSTRACT

In the context of increasing public reliance on religious-based media as credible sources of information, Islamic media play an important role in shaping moral discourse and public interpretation of political events. The 2025 demonstrations in Indonesia raised various humanitarian concerns, including violence, student arrests, and human rights violations. This research aims to analyze how NU Online and Suara Muhammadiyah frame humanitarian issues in their coverage of the August–September 2025 demonstrations. The study employs a qualitative framing analysis using Robert Entman’s framing model. Data were collected from selected news articles published by both media outlets during the peak period of the demonstrations. The findings reveal that both media outlets emphasize humanitarian concerns but construct them through different interpretative frameworks influenced by their organizational orientations. NU Online tends to frame demonstrations through narratives of human rights, social justice, and protection of demonstrators, while Suara Muhammadiyah emphasizes social ethics, moderation, dialogue, and political stability. These differences indicate that Islamic online media function as active agents in constructing humanitarian discourse and shaping public understanding of political demonstrations. This study contributes theoretically to the development of framing theory in the context of Islamic digital media and enriches the literature on Islamic political communication. In practice, the findings suggest the importance of ethical, balanced framing in religious media coverage of political events discourse.

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INTRODUCTION

The media do not merely function as neutral channels for disseminating information; rather, they actively construct social reality through processes of selection, interpretation, and meaning-making (Entman, 1993; Scheufele, 1999). In the context of political events, particularly controversial ones such as demonstrations, the media play a crucial role in defining what constitutes a problem, identifying responsible actors, and suggesting appropriate solutions. This process is inherently shaped by institutional values, ideological orientations, and organizational interests (Gamson & Modigliani, 1989; McCombs & Shaw, 1972). Consequently, media coverage of demonstrations is not only informative but also influencing how the public understands issues of legitimacy, justice, and authority.

Framing theory provides a useful analytical lens to examine this process. As conceptualized by Entman, framing refers to the selection and salience of certain aspects of perceived reality in a communication text, promoting specific problem definitions, causal interpretations, moral evaluations, and treatment recommendations (Entman, 1993). These four elements, namely, define problems, diagnose causes, make moral judgments, and suggest remedies, enable researchers to systematically analyze how media construct narratives around social and political events (Alamsyah, 2024; Mezy & Amali, 2025). Framing is particularly relevant in reporting demonstrations, where competing interpretations often emerge between state authorities, protesters, and civil society actors (Subagyo & Alwatan, 2024; Zuraida, 2023).

In addition to framing theory, this study is informed by the broader social construction of reality perspective, which holds that reality is socially constructed through processes of externalization, objectification, and internalization. In media contexts, this implies that news content is not merely a reflection of events, but a constructed representation shaped by discourse and interpretation (Berger & Luckmann, 2011). In digital environments, particularly within religious media, the construction of social reality often incorporates moral and ethical dimensions that shape how audiences interpret humanitarian issues and political conflicts. This dynamic becomes especially significant in countries where religion plays a central role in public life and where large segments of society rely on religious institutions as credible sources of information. In such contexts, media outlets affiliated with religious organizations are not only viewed as news providers but also as trusted moral authorities (Ronaldi et al., 2024; Virga, 2025).

This condition is particularly relevant in Indonesia, where religion plays a prominent role in shaping public discourse and societal values. In this context, demonstrations represent a complex socio-political phenomenon with significant humanitarian implications. The wave of large-scale protests during August–September 2025 highlighted critical issues such as casualties, student detentions, alleged violence by security forces, and broader concerns regarding human rights violations. These events were widely covered across various media platforms, including online Islamic media, which form an integral part of Indonesia's digital media ecosystem. Such media not only report events but also embed them within moral-religious frameworks, thereby shaping public discourse in distinctive ways (Campbell & Evolvi, 2020; Lim, 2017).

Among these, Nahdlatul Ulama (through NU Online) and Muhammadiyah (through Suara Muhammadiyah) represent two of the largest Islamic organizations in Indonesia, each with millions of followers and significant influence on Muslim public opinion. These media outlets operate at the intersection of journalism and da'wah, combining news reporting with religious messaging and reflecting the theological and ideological orientations of their parent organizations (Kayane, 2020; Nasir, 2020; Slama, 2018). Their presence raises important questions about how religious morals and values shape media framing, particularly in politically sensitive contexts.

Previous studies have examined media framing across various domains. Research shows that media framing of political actors often aligns with ideological tendencies, influencing how audiences perceive political figures and events (Effendi et al., 2023). Similarly, studies on digital da'wah content demonstrate that framing elements in online religious communication often align with Entman's model, particularly in defining issues through religious perspectives and offering value-based solutions (Nasution & Alisya, 2024). In the context of demonstrations, studies on Indonesian media indicate that mainstream media tend to frame protests through perspectives of political stability, public order, and law enforcement (Rohid et al., 2025; Suwana, 2020). Meanwhile, research on Islamic media highlights the role of religious narratives in shaping political and social discourse, particularly in the context of identity politics, elections, and religious authority in digital environments (Akmaliah & Nadzir, 2024; Lim, 2017; Slama, 2018).

However, despite these contributions, several gaps remain in the literature. First, comparative studies specifically examining how Islamic organizational media frame humanitarian issues in demonstrations remain limited. Second, existing research rarely applies Entman's four-element framing model comprehensively to Islamic media organizations. Third, there is a lack of analysis regarding how ideological differences, such as the traditionalist orientation of Nahdlatul Ulama and the modernist orientation of Muhammadiyah, influence the framing of humanitarian narratives. Fourth, studies exploring the role of Islamic digital media in constructing moral legitimacy within contemporary public discourse remain scarce.

These gaps highlight the urgency of examining Islamic media framing of humanitarian issues during demonstrations. Understanding how such media construct narratives is essential not only for advancing academic discussions in political communication and religious media studies but also for providing insights into how moral discourse is shaped in the digital public sphere. Given the increasing influence of online media in shaping public opinion, particularly among Muslim audiences in Indonesia, this topic holds both theoretical and practical significance.

This study offers novelty by integrating framing theory with religious media analysis in a comparative framework. It applies Entman's model systematically to examine how two major Islamic media outlets construct humanitarian narratives in the context of political demonstrations. By doing so, this study bridges the gap between political communication studies and Islamic media research, highlighting the role of organizational ideology in shaping media discourse. Therefore, this study aims to analyze how NU Online and Suara Muhammadiyah frame humanitarian issues in their coverage of the August–September 2025 demonstrations using Entman's framing model. Specifically, this study seeks to identify how each media outlet defines problems, diagnoses causes, makes moral judgments, and proposes solutions, and to compare how their ideological orientations influence the construction of humanitarian narratives in digital media discourse.

METHOD

This study employed a qualitative framing analysis using a constructionist approach. The constructionist perspective views social reality as neither objective nor fixed, but rather as constructed through processes of interpretation and meaning-making by social actors, including the media (Putri et al., 2024). In this framework, media organizations are considered active agents that shape reality through the selection, emphasis, and organization of information (Berger & Luckmann, 2011). Accordingly, this research examines how Islamic online media construct the reality of demonstrations and humanitarian issues through their news coverage.

The objects of this study were news articles published by two Islamic online media outlets, NU Online (nu.or.id) and Suara Muhammadiyah (suaramuhammadiyah.id). These two media were selected purposively based on several considerations. First, both platforms are official media of the two largest Islamic organizations in Indonesia, Nahdlatul Ulama and Muhammadiyah, which have millions of members and a significant influence on public opinion. Second, both media represent distinct Islamic orientations: Nahdlatul Ulama is often associated with traditionalist perspectives, while Muhammadiyah is associated with modernist perspectives, enabling meaningful comparative analysis. Third, both media actively reported on the demonstrations during August–September 2025.

This study used purposive sampling to select relevant news articles. The research period was limited to August–September 2025, which marked the peak of large-scale demonstrations in Indonesia. This period was selected because of the high intensity of protests and the emergence of significant humanitarian issues, including casualties, student detentions, and allegations of violence. Additionally, during this period, both NU Online and

Suara Muhammadiyah published multiple reports related to the demonstrations, providing sufficient data for comparative analysis.

Data collection was conducted through digital documentation techniques. Researchers accessed and collected news articles from both media portals using specific keywords such as "demonstration," "demo," "mass action," "rally," "protest," and other related terms. The collected data comprised 33 news articles, including 18 from NU Online and 15 from Suara Muhammadiyah. The data collection instrument used in this study was a coding sheet for framing analysis based on Entman's framing model. The coding sheet included four analytical categories: (1) problem definition, (2) causal interpretation, (3) moral evaluation, and (4) treatment recommendation. Each article was systematically coded using these categories to identify the framing patterns used by each media outlet.

Data analysis was conducted using Robert Entman's framing model, which consists of four key elements: defining problems, diagnosing causes, making moral judgments, and suggesting remedies (Entman, 1993). First, the researcher identified how each article defined the demonstration and related humanitarian issues. Second, the analysis examined how each media outlet identified the causes or responsible actors behind the events. Third, the study analyzed moral evaluations embedded in the news narratives, particularly those related to Islamic values and humanitarian concerns. Fourth, the analysis identified the solutions or recommendations proposed by the media.

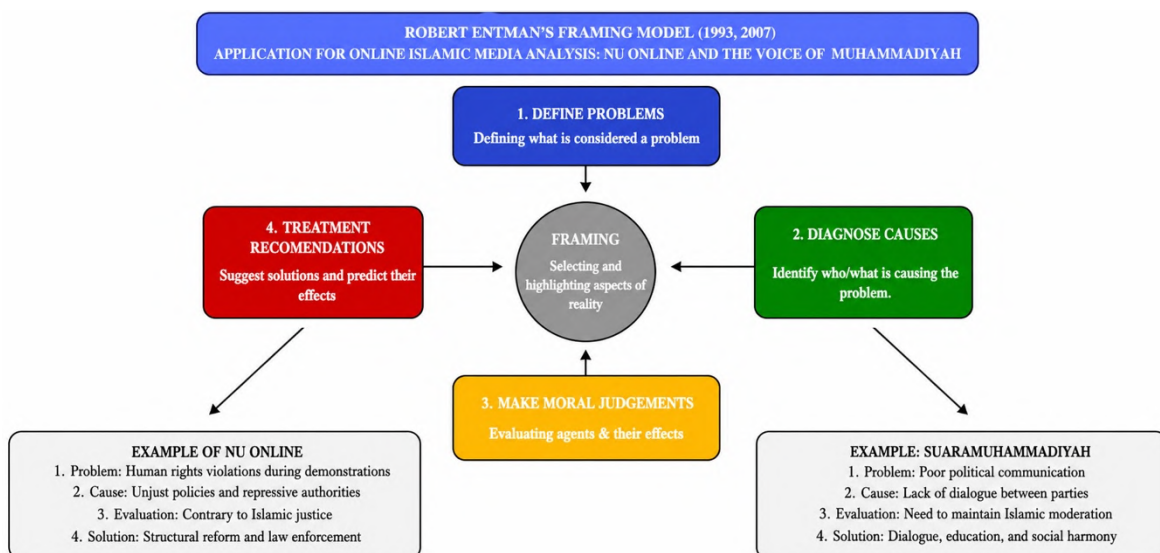


Fig. 1. Entman's Framing Model Applied to Online Islamic Media Analysis

Source: Adapted from Entman (1993)

As shown in Figure 1, the analysis process involved several stages: data reduction, data categorization based on framing elements, interpretation of framing patterns, and comparative analysis between NU Online and Suara Muhammadiyah. This approach allowed the researcher to systematically identify similarities and differences in how both Islamic media outlets framed humanitarian issues in demonstrations. Through this methodological approach, the study aims to provide a comprehensive understanding of how Islamic online media construct humanitarian narratives in political demonstrations within the Indonesian digital media landscape.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Intensity of Demonstration Coverage During August-September 2025

An analysis of 33 news articles published by NU Online and Suara Muhammadiyah indicates high coverage intensity during August–September 2025. Table 1 presents the distribution of demonstration-related news across the two months.

Table 1. Distribution of Demonstration News in August-September 2025

Media	August 2025	September 2025	Total
NU Online	10	8	18
Suara Muhammadiyah	9	6	15
Total	19	14	33

Source: Primary Data (2025)

As shown in Table 1, NU Online published a greater number of demonstration-related articles than Suara Muhammadiyah during the observed period. NU Online contributed 18 articles, accounting for 54.5% of the total sample, while Suara Muhammadiyah published 15 articles (45.5%). The highest volume of coverage occurred in August 2025, with 19 articles (57.6% of the total), coinciding with the large-scale national demonstrations on August 25, 2025. In comparison, September 2025 recorded 14 articles (42.4%). The elevated level of reporting suggests that both media outlets regarded the demonstrations as significant political and social events deserving sustained attention and strategic news framing.

Define Problems: Problem Construction in Demonstration Coverage



The first element in Entman’s framing model is Define Problems, which refers to how the media interprets and constructs an event as a particular issue or social problem. In the context of demonstration coverage, this dimension examines how NU Online and Suara Muhammadiyah define the meaning, urgency, and consequences of public protests. Based on Table 2, NU Online defines demonstrations primarily as a legitimate expression of citizens’ constitutional rights that the state should protect. In the article *“Ketua PBNU Sebut Demo di Pati sebagai Pembangkangan Sipil: Rakyat Sudah Mengerti Politik”* (August 14, 2025), demonstrations are framed as evidence of growing political awareness and public maturity (Attar, 2025). This perspective reflects NU’s long-standing orientation toward social justice and advocacy for the people, consistent with the Islamic principle of *amar ma’ruf nahi munkar* in the socio-political sphere.

More significantly, NU Online positions the main problem not in the act of protesting itself, but in the state’s repressive response and related human rights violations. The article *“TAUD Ungkap 382 Anak Ditahan dalam Aksi Protes Akhir Agustus”* (September 10, 2025) frames the detention of children as a serious humanitarian concern (Rohman, 2025b). Likewise, the death of an online motorcycle taxi driver in *“Pengemudi Ojol Meregang Nyawa Dilindas Rantis Polisi, Ketua DPR Bilang Begini”* (August 29, 2025) is presented as a consequence of disproportionate police action (Rohman, 2025a). This pattern aligns with NU’s values, which emphasize the protection of vulnerable groups (*dhu’afa*) and the pursuit of justice.

In contrast, Suara Muhammadiyah defines demonstrations as legitimate civic activities that nonetheless require ethical conduct, restraint, and dialogue. In the article *“PWM DIY Serukan Aksi Damai, Jaga Persatuan, Tolak Kekerasan”* (September 1, 2025), demonstrations are accepted as a form of public expression, provided they are conducted peacefully and do not threaten national unity (Suara Muhammadiyah, 2025d). Similarly, the article *“Ketua MPKSDI PP Muhammadiyah Minta Jaga Kedamaian di Tengah Gejolak*

Politik Nasional” (September 1, 2025) frames demonstrations within the broader context of political turbulence that could endanger public peace (Suara Muhammadiyah, 2025c).

Table 2. Comparison of Define Problems between NU Online and Suara Muhammadiyah

Aspect	NU Online	Suara Muhammadiyah
Key Definitions of Demonstration	Constitutional rights of citizens must be protected	Expression aspirations that require ethics and dialogue
Focus on Humanitarian Issues	Casualties, violence, authorities, and human rights violations by participants	Potential social conflict, damage unity
Tone of the News	Factual-critical of the country	Normative-educative to the public
News Example	"382 Anak Ditahan dalam Aksi Protes" (10 Sep)	"PWM DIY Serukan Aksi Damai, Jaga Persatuan" (1 Sep)
Perspective Ideological	Taking sides with the victims and demonstration participants	Social harmony and stability political
Visual example		

Source: Primary Data (2025)

These contrasting definitions reflect the broader ideological orientations of the two organizations. NU, historically rooted in pesantren traditions and rural communities, tends to prioritize social justice, grassroots interests, and protection of civil rights. Meanwhile, Muhammadiyah, with its modernist orientation and strong presence in urban education sectors, emphasizes rational dialogue, order, and social stability as essential foundations for national development (Kayane, 2020; Nasir, 2020).

Diagnose Causes: Identify the Cause of the Problem

The second element of Entman’s framing model is Diagnose Causes, which refers to identifying who or what is considered responsible for a problem. In the context of demonstration coverage, this dimension examines how NU Online and Suara Muhammadiyah attribute the causes of protests, violence, and social unrest. Based on Table 3, NU Online attributes the causes of demonstrations primarily to government policies considered unjust and insensitive to public demands. In the opinion article *“Demo Agustus 2025: Alarm Keras Suara Rakyat”* (August 30, 2025), protests are explicitly framed as a response to “economic pressure, policy inequality, and structural injustice” (Ibriy, 2025). This reflects a structural–systemic attribution pattern in which responsibility is placed on the governing regime and institutional systems perceived as failing to protect citizens’ interests.

NU Online also identifies state repression as the principal cause of violence and casualties during demonstrations. In reporting the death of Affan Kurniawan, an online motorcycle taxi driver struck by a Brimob vehicle, the outlet framed the tragedy not as a consequence of protest actions, but as the result of “disproportionate handling by the authorities” (August 29, 2025). Similarly, the article *“GNB Minta Prabowo Bebaskan Semua*

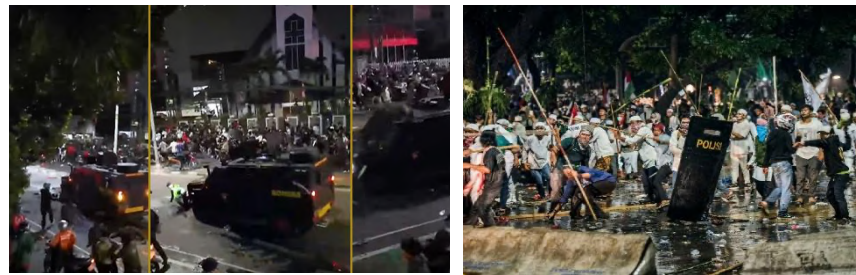
Aktivis yang Ditahan Usai Demo” (September 12, 2025) attributed the detention of activists to repressive law-enforcement policies (Amaliyah, 2025).

In contrast, Suara Muhammadiyah applies a broader and more nuanced causal framework. Rather than focusing solely on state policy, it frames demonstrations as the result of ineffective political communication and insufficient governmental responsiveness. The article *“Respon Aksi Demo, NA Dorong Pemerintah Lebih Sensitif terhadap Penderitaan Rakyat”* (September 4, 2025) described protests as emerging from a lack of sensitivity and poor communication between the government and society (Suara Muhammadiyah, 2025e). This indicates a cultural–communicative approach that emphasizes relational failures over structural injustice. Suara Muhammadiyah also tends to avoid assigning direct blame to a single actor. In the article *“Aksi Radikal: Pertarungan Rakyat atau Manufactured Chaos”* (September 3, 2025), demonstrations are framed ambiguously as either genuine expressions of public discontent or the product of political engineering (Suara Muhammadiyah, 2025a). This balanced framing reflects Muhammadiyah’s tradition of moderation (*wasathiyyah*) and its preference for non-confrontational engagement with the state, consistent with the principle of *dakwah bil hikmah*.

Table 3. Diagnose Causes: Causal Attribution in Demonstration Coverage

Aspect	NU Online	Suara Muhammadiyah
Reason Demonstration	A policy government that does not respond fairly and responds unfairly	Communication bad between the government and the people
Reason Violence / Victims	Repressive measures, excessive force	Absence of dialogue and provocation from various parties
Blamed Actor	Government and official security (explicit)	All parties, in a way, are general (implicit)
Example Attribution	"Demo Agustus 2025: Alarm Keras Suara Rakyat atas tekanan ekonomi dan ketidakadilan"	"Aksi Radikal: Pertarungan Rakyat atau Manufactured Chaos"
Approach Causal	Structural-systemic	Cultural-communicative

Visual example



Source: Primary Data (2025)

The differences in causal attribution carry important implications. NU Online’s structural–systemic framing encourages policy reform and institutional accountability, whereas Suara Muhammadiyah’s cultural–communicative framing prioritizes dialogue, mutual understanding, and improved communication channels. These findings support previous studies showing that religious media do more than report events; they also shape public understandings of responsibility, conflict, and possible solutions (Nasution & Alisya, 2024).

Make Moral Judgments: Moral Evaluation of Demonstrations

According to Entman’s framing model, Make Moral Judgments refers to the evaluation of causal actors, actions, and consequences in terms of moral values. In the context of Islamic media, this dimension is especially significant because judgments are often

articulated in terms of Islamic ethical principles. Based on Table 4, NU Online offers a firm moral evaluation of demonstrations and their surrounding events. Peaceful demonstrations are framed as a manifestation of *amar ma'ruf nahi munkar*, namely the moral obligation to speak truthfully and resist wrongdoing. In the article "*Demo Agustus 2025: Alarm Keras Suara Rakyat*," protests are portrayed as a "moral warning to the nation" and a collective response to economic pressure and injustice. This framing places demonstrations within a religious obligation to uphold justice.

NU Online's strongest moral judgments are directed toward state actions and victims' suffering. The death of Affan Kurniawan was framed as a serious humanitarian violation requiring a transparent investigation and accountability. Likewise, the article "*TAUD Ungkap 382 Anak Ditahan dalam Aksi Protes Akhir Agustus*" (September 10, 2025) evaluated the detention of minors as a violation of children's rights and inconsistent with Islamic principles of child protection. These judgments are rooted in Islamic values concerning the protection of life (*hifzh al-nafs*) and social justice. NU Online consistently employs a moral framework that sides with marginalized groups (*dhu'afa*). In the article "*Mahfud MD: Demonstrasi Perlu Ditanggapi Positif dan Polisi Harus Humanis*" (August 29, 2025), emphasis is placed on the moral duty of security forces to act humanely and avoid excessive violence (Tristara, 2025). This reflects NU's traditional orientation toward social justice and advocacy for ordinary citizens.

In contrast, Suara Muhammadiyah advances a moral evaluation centered on social harmony, order, and moderation. Peaceful demonstrations are considered legitimate forms of civic expression, but only when carried out ethically and without threatening public unity. The Yogyakarta Regional Leadership Council's call to "Maintain Unity, Reject Violence" demonstrates that *ukhuwah islamiyyah* (Islamic brotherhood) is a primary moral value. This perspective reflects Muhammadiyah's principle of *wasathiyyah* (moderation) and its concern for maintaining social cohesion as a prerequisite for da'wah and development. Suara Muhammadiyah also evaluates violence during demonstrations as contrary to Islamic teachings and socially destructive. In the article "*FGM Pusat Prihatin Insiden Pelindasan Ojol, Imbau Demo Damai*" (August 29, 2025), the Affan Kurniawan incident was described as a tragedy that should be prevented through maturity and restraint from both demonstrators and authorities (Suara Muhammadiyah, 2025b). This framing distributes moral responsibility more evenly and avoids assigning blame to a single actor.

Table 4. Comparison of Making Moral Judgments between NU Online and Suara Muhammadiyah

Moral Aspect	NU Online	Suara Muhammadiyah
Evaluation of Peaceful Demonstration	<i>Amar ma'ruf Nahi munkar</i> moral obligation to speak the truth	Legitimate expression, if in accordance with Islamic ethics and law
Evaluation of Violence in Demo	Contrary to Islam and humanity	Contrary to Islamic teachings, destroying unity
Evaluation against the Actions of the Authorities	Violation Serious towards human rights and values Islam about protecting life	Need caution and professionalism in operating tasks
Evaluation against the victims	Tragedy humanity demands justice and accountability	A disaster that must be avoided with maturity on the part of all parties
Islamic Value Framework	Justice social (<i>is ijtima'iyyah</i>), siding with <i>dhu'afa</i>	Social harmony (<i>ukhuwah</i>), moderation (<i>wasathiyyah</i>)

Source: Primary Data (2025)

These differences in moral evaluation reflect broader theological and ideological distinctions. Nahdlatul Ulama, with its traditionalist social theology, tends to emphasize justice, compassion, and protection of the vulnerable as expressions of faith. Muhammadiyah, by contrast, with its modernist orientation, prioritizes moderation, rationality, and social harmony as effective ways of upholding Islamic values. Although both

perspectives are legitimate within the Islamic tradition, they generate distinct moral framings of the same social phenomenon (Kayane, 2020).

Treatment Recommendations: Recommended Solutions

The fourth element of Entman’s framing model, Treatment Recommendations, refers to the solutions proposed to address an issue and the expected outcomes of those actions. In demonstration coverage, this element reflects how media suggest responses for the government, security forces, protesters, and civil society. Based on Table 5, NU Online frames solutions around structural reform and fair law enforcement. It urges the government and security forces to adopt more humane approaches in handling demonstrations and to improve policy responses. For instance, in *“Mahfud MD: Demonstrasi Perlu Ditanggapi Positif dan Polisi Harus Humanis”* (August 29, 2025), the media highlights the need for police to act humanely and for the government to respond constructively to public protests. Similarly, *“GNB Minta Prabowo Bebaskan Semua Aktivis yang Ditahan Usai Demo”* (September 12, 2025) emphasizes fair legal processes and the release of detained activists (Amaliyah, 2025).

NU Online also highlighted the need for accountability in cases of violence. In coverage of the Affan Kurniawan tragedy, it supported transparent investigations and held those involved accountable. Meanwhile, *“KPAI: Pelajar yang Ikut Demonstrasi Tak Boleh Kehilangan Hak Pendidikannya”* (September 12, 2025) stressed that students participating in demonstrations should not lose their right to education (Jannah, 2025). These recommendations reflect a focus on institutional reform and rights protection. For demonstrators, NU Online supports peaceful protest and affirms that demonstrations are a constitutional right. In *“Demo Agustus 2025: Alarm Keras Suara Rakyat,”* it recommended maintaining dignity in expressing aspirations and encouraged dialogue, social justice, and the role of religious leaders in peacefully channeling public demands.

In contrast, Suara Muhammadiyah emphasizes dialogue, education, and moderation. The article *“UNISA Yogyakarta Serukan Dialog, Keadilan, dan Perlindungan Rakyat”* (September 1, 2025) recommended that the government open a dialogue with society and listen to the aspirations of the public to solve problems constructively (Suara Muhammadiyah, 2025g). This reflects a dialogical rather than confrontational approach. Suara Muhammadiyah also urges all parties to maintain peace and unity. In *“Jaga Kedamaian di Tengah Gejolak Politik Nasional”* (September 1, 2025), leaders of Muhammadiyah encouraged cadres and the wider Muslim community not to be provoked. Similarly, *“NA Dorong Pemerintah Lebih Sensitif terhadap Penderitaan Rakyat”* (September 4, 2025) called on the government to be more responsive to social suffering and adopt fairer policies (Suara Muhammadiyah, 2025e).

Table 5. Comparison of Treatment Recommendations between NU Online and Suara Muhammadiyah

Moral Aspect	NU Online	Suara Muhammadiyah
Solutions for the State/ Government	Repair policy, respond to people's aspirations, respect human rights, and take action against offenders	Upgrade sensitivity, open dialogue space, and listen to aspirations
Solution for Apparatus	Act humanistically, proportionally, not repressively, and respect the right of demonstrators	Professionals, avoid excessive violence, maintain order without repressive
Solution for Demonstrators	Demonstrate peace, protect the rights of others, and avoid anarchism	Convey aspirations with Islamic ethics, maintain unity, and avoid provocation
Solutions for Islamic Communities	advocacy, support justice, criticize policy. No fair	Keep the peace, facilitate dialogue, and provide help with the law, if required
Solution Approach	Structural reform and enforcement law	Dialogue, education, and moderation

Source: Primary Data (2025)

Interestingly, Suara Muhammadiyah also supports legal aid for demonstrators facing criminalization, as seen in “*UMS Berikan Bantuan Hukum Gratis Lindungi Hak Demonstran dan Masyarakat*” (September 2, 2025). However, this assistance is framed more as legal protection and mediation than confrontational advocacy (Suara Muhammadiyah, 2025f). These differences reflect distinct da’wah strategies. NU tends toward a structural-reform approach through criticism, accountability, and rights advocacy, while Muhammadiyah favors a cultural-dialogical approach based on education, moderation, and mediation. Both approaches align with Islamic principles of *tabligh* (conveyance), *taghyir* (change), and *islah* (improvement), but with different emphases (Aulia et al., 2024).

Islamic Media as an Agent of Humanitarian Discourse Construction

The findings of this study contribute to the development of media framing theory and the broader field of Islamic political communication by demonstrating how Islamic online media actively construct humanitarian discourse during political demonstrations. By applying Entman’s four-element framing model, this research reveals that NU Online and Suara Muhammadiyah do not merely report the 2025 demonstrations as objective events. Instead, both media outlets selectively emphasize particular aspects of reality, thereby constructing specific humanitarian narratives aligned with their organizational values and communication strategies. This process reflects the fundamental premise of framing theory that media coverage is not neutral but shaped by editorial decisions and institutional orientations (Entman, 2007).

From the perspective of framing theory, Entman argues that framing involves selecting certain aspects of perceived reality and making them more salient in communication texts to promote particular interpretations, problem definitions, and solutions (Entman, 1993; Triana & Amali, 2024). In the coverage of the 2025 demonstrations, humanitarian issues emphasized by NU Online and Suara Muhammadiyah were therefore not simply reflections of events, but rather outcomes of editorial selection and narrative emphasis. NU Online tended to highlight themes related to human rights protection, social justice, and state accountability. In contrast, Suara Muhammadiyah emphasized social ethics, moderation, dialogue, and political stability. These differences indicate that Islamic media actively shape public understanding of political events through distinct framing strategies that reflect their respective ideological orientations and institutional missions.

These findings further reinforce Entman’s argument that framing structures consist of four key elements: defining problems, diagnosing causes, making moral judgments, and recommending solutions (Entman, 1993). Both media outlets consistently applied these elements in constructing the meaning of demonstrations. For instance, each media outlet defined humanitarian issues differently, identified distinct causal actors, provided moral evaluations grounded in Islamic values, and proposed solutions aligned with its organizational perspective. This pattern is consistent with previous research demonstrating the use of framing strategies in Islamic digital communication, particularly in shaping leadership narratives and political discourse (Nasution & Alisyah, 2024). Similar findings were also reported in studies examining political communication framing, which show that media institutions employ structured framing to construct coherent, persuasive narratives that influence public opinion (Alamsyah, 2024).

Beyond framing theory, these findings can also be understood within the broader social construction of reality. Media institutions play an essential role in constructing social meanings through ongoing processes of communication, interpretation, and institutionalization (Berger & Luckmann, 2011). In the context of Islamic online media, this process is closely connected to the integration of moral and religious values that guide audiences in interpreting humanitarian issues and political developments. Islamic media,

therefore, function not only as information providers but also as institutions that shape moral discourse and influence how audiences understand political events.

Furthermore, the findings highlight the role of Islamic media as moral interpreters in the digital public sphere. Digital Islamic media not only disseminate information but also contribute to the formation of religious authority and public moral discourse (Campbell & Evolvi, 2020; Lim, 2017). NU Online and Suara Muhammadiyah demonstrate this role by framing demonstrations through ethical and religious perspectives, guiding Muslim audiences in evaluating political developments. Through such framing practices, Islamic media contribute to shaping moral interpretations of humanitarian issues and constructing normative boundaries within public discourse.

The results also contribute to the literature on Islamic political communication by illustrating how diversity within Islamic organizations is reflected in their media communication strategies. Although Nahdlatul Ulama and Muhammadiyah are both widely recognized as moderate Islamic organizations, their media outlets differ in how they frame political and humanitarian issues. These differences reflect variations in Islamic traditions, da'wah approaches, and political engagement strategies within Indonesian Islam (Kayane, 2020). Consequently, Islamic media should not be viewed as a monolithic entity, but rather as a diverse communication landscape shaped by distinct ideological orientations and institutional values.

In the context of digital communication, this research's findings support the argument that online media accelerate the circulation of interpretive frameworks and narratives. Digital platforms enable media institutions to disseminate moral and political interpretations rapidly to large audiences, thereby increasing their influence on public opinion (Bennett & Segerberg, 2013; Heningtyas & Amali, 2024; Vargo et al., 2018). Islamic media, in particular, benefit from this digital environment by strengthening their role as moral authorities and shaping discourse on sensitive political issues, including demonstrations and humanitarian crises (Virga, 2025).

These findings are also consistent with previous research demonstrating the effectiveness of framing analysis in identifying ideological orientations and moral positions in protest coverage. Studies show that media framing of political protests often reflects systematic narrative bias, including moral evaluation and delegitimization strategies (Susánszky et al., 2022). Similarly, research on Indonesian online media indicates that protest coverage varies according to editorial values and institutional orientations, highlighting the media's strategic role in shaping public interpretation of demonstrations (Djaba & Rohmah, 2025).

In addition, studies on media credibility suggest that framing consistency and structured argumentation influence audiences' perceptions of credibility and legitimacy. Content presentation strategies and consistent framing patterns can strengthen media authority and position outlets as trusted sources of moral guidance in the digital public sphere (Setiawan & Lestari, 2025). This phenomenon aligns with the framing practices employed by NU Online and Suara Muhammadiyah, which consistently integrate moral reasoning and humanitarian narratives into their coverage.

Overall, this study demonstrates that ideological orientation, communication strategies, and institutional values strongly influence the framing of humanitarian issues in Islamic media. These findings contribute to the growing literature on Islamic digital media and political communication by illustrating how religious-based media actively participate in constructing humanitarian discourse and shaping public interpretation of political events in the digital public sphere.

CONCLUSION

This study examined how Islamic online media framed humanitarian issues in coverage of the August–September 2025 demonstrations in Indonesia, using Robert Entman’s framing model. The findings reveal that both NU Online and Suara Muhammadiyah actively constructed humanitarian discourse through the four framing elements: problem definition, causal interpretation, moral evaluation, and treatment recommendation. Although both media emphasized humanitarian concerns, they framed them differently, reflecting their organizational values and ideological orientations. NU Online tended to highlight narratives of human rights, social justice, and protection of demonstrators, while Suara Muhammadiyah emphasized social ethics, moderation, dialogue, and political stability. These findings demonstrate that Islamic online media function not only as information providers but also as moral interpreters, shaping public understanding of political demonstrations in the digital public sphere.

Theoretically, this study contributes to the development of framing theory by applying Entman’s model to Islamic organizational media and humanitarian issues in political demonstrations. It also enriches the literature on Islamic political communication by demonstrating how religious-based media construct moral discourse and humanitarian narratives. In practice, the findings offer insights for media practitioners, policymakers, and civil society organizations regarding the importance of ethical, balanced framing in reporting on political demonstrations, particularly in influential religious media that shape public opinion. This study is limited to two Islamic online media outlets and a specific period of demonstrations. Therefore, future research is recommended to expand the scope by including additional Islamic media platforms, comparing Islamic and mainstream media framing, or examining audience reception to understand the impact of framing on public perceptions. Further studies may also explore the role of social media in amplifying humanitarian discourse and analyze framing practices in different political contexts.

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