

Public Sentiment on Interfaith Marriage: (A Netnography Study of the Cretivox YouTube Video 'Suami Kristen, Istri Islam')

Anastasia Winanti Riesardhy¹

¹Departemen Ilmu Sosial dan Ilmu Komunikasi, Universitas Indonesia, Jakarta, Indonesia

e-mail: _anastasia.winanti@ui.ac.id^{1*}

*Corresponding author

ABSTRACT :

Indonesia's diversity creates opportunities for interfaith marriages. Although these marriages cannot be legally registered in Indonesia, their prevalence is increasing. This controversy stems from the belief that marriage is a private matter and shouldn't be regulated by the state. This study aims to describe public sentiment towards interfaith marriage through the Cretivox YouTube video "Suami Kristen, Istri Islam." In communication, interaction in social media, in this case commenting on YouTube videos, falls into the category of computer mediated communication (CMC). CMC theory is a type of integrable communication in which two or more people can only communicate or exchange information through a computer or referring to any kind of communication in which computer technology is used as a medium to connect individuals or groups of people to talk to each other. In research using CMC theory, Netnography is the most suitable approach where netnography is defined as a qualitative research methodology that adapts ethnographic research techniques to study the culture and community that occurs in CMC. This research found that public sentiment is generally positive, though some responses disagree. Some public argue against interfaith marriages, citing contradictions with Islamic values, while others oppose them as a precaution. Some comments shared their own interfaith marriage experiences, and some expressed hesitation or plans to enter such marriages.

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INTRODUCTION

The diverse ethnicities, languages, cultures, and religions in Indonesia can lead to varied social relationships, sometimes resulting in interfaith marriages (Erwinsyahbana, 2019). In general, Law No. 1/1974 about Marriage complicates interfaith marriages in Indonesia. While the law doesn't explicitly forbid interfaith marriages, its articles' differing interpretations create

a legal ambiguity that permits such marriages to be registered at the Civil Registry Office. Recent regulations on interfaith marriages are outlined in the Circular Letter of the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court (SEMA) 2/2023, which provides guidelines for judges on handling applications for registering marriages between different religions and beliefs. According to SEMA 2/2023, issued in July 2023, the court should not approve such applications, thereby preventing the state from registering interfaith marriages.

There are also instances where courts have approved requests for interfaith marriage registration. For example, a court in North Jakarta approved the application of a Catholic man, GA, and a Protestant woman, RY. Their request was granted by Judge Yuli Effendi on August 8, 2023, allowing them to register their interfaith marriage at the North Jakarta Population and Civil Registry Office and ordering the office staff to process their registration (Saputra,2023). SEMA 2/2023 is viewed as a starting point for the erosion of the legal allowance for interfaith marriages, marking a regression for the Supreme Court and evidence of state interference in private matter (Puspitasari,2024).

In fact, the number of marriages between couples of different religions in Indonesia has increased every year. From data compiled by the Indonesian Conference on Religion and Peace (ICRP), there are at least 1,645 interfaith couples who have married. This data was collected from 2005 to July 2023. ICRP Program Director Achmad Nurcholis believes that the occurrence of marriage between two different religions is a consequence of Indonesia being a country of pluralism. While the data on the Supreme Court Decision Directory page, there are at least 73 copies of decisions on interfaith marriages spread throughout Indonesia. From this data, the city of Surakarta appears to be the city whose people have submitted the most applications. The application for civil registration at the Surakarta District Court (PN) in 2007 was also the first in Indonesia. When viewed from the religion of the married couple, Islam-Christian couples are the most numerous, the portion reaching 68 percent. Followed by Islam-Catholic, which is 30 percent and the other two percent is done by Christian-Catholic couples (Pratama, 2022).

With the occurrence of interfaith marriages in society despite the legal contradictions in Indonesia, the topic of interfaith marriage continues to be discussed. There have been many previous studies on interfaith marriage. Both in terms of law (Nandapratwi et al., 2022), human rights (Betlehn, 2022) and in the social realm (Wen Li et al., 2018) as well as in terms of Islamic law (Nasir, 2022). Meanwhile, this research raises public sentiment related to interfaith marriage. Specifically, this research tries to find out how public sentiment towards interfaith marriage through Creativox's YouTube video 'Suami Kristen, Istri Islam'. Academically, this research can complement research related to the perspective of interfaith marriage in Indonesia, and encourage a variety of research related to public sentiment on social media. A number of previous studies that have examined interfaith marriages, most of which have not touched directly on public sentiment related to the issue.

YouTube is the most frequently accessed social media in the world at 88% (Katadata, 2019). The YouTube application was also the most popular media application in Indonesia, as more than a third of internet users in Indonesia actively use YouTube (CNN, 2018). YouTube

media is not only used as a place for creators but YouTube is used as a place for viewers to express opinions about things made by creators (Yacob, 2019). The anonymity on YouTube allows citizens to freely express their opinions, emotions, and even political affiliations (Sanjaya & Nasvian, 2024). With this background, this study chose YouTube as the object of research. According to its official page, Cretivox itself is a startup in the field of media and digital technology based in Jakarta. Founded in early 2019, Cretivox itself stated that it was born to meet the needs of modern marketers in serving new generation audiences, namely Gen-Z and Millennials. Cretivox is often used to voice a controversial issue in a light style.

The development of communication technology opens up space for mutual interaction, where participants can communicate one person to one person, one person to many people (Kiouisis, 2002). The concept of interactivity is increasingly relevant in the digital and internet age, where technology allows easier and faster interaction between individuals and groups (Quiring & Schweiger, 2008). Interactivity is defined as interactions between objects such as individuals or groups that change actions in response to their interaction partners (Nedumkallel, 2020). Interactivity in this public sentiment includes user to user interactivity (among fellow citizens), and user to document (citizens with video uploads) (McMillan, 2002).

In other words, technological developments have not only resulted in media shifts but also shifts in media audiences who are no longer passive, but active, thus opening up opportunities for people to express their opinions as widely as possible (Puspita & Suciati, 2020). Mobile news consumption through news devices occurs more per day and is spread throughout the day so that the opportunity for interaction becomes even greater (Molyneux, 2018).

Online social networks, on the other hand, encourage individuals to dare to comment as they are (Obadimu et al., 2019). Participation on YouTube by commenting is part of the social interaction motive (Khan, 2017). Research have proven that YouTube has been a source of how users search for videos on important topics (Briones et al., 2012). YouTube is a logical source of free social web data to research (Fan & Gordon, 2014). YouTube's multiple functions and its ability to attract international and intergenerational audiences make it a valuable source of information for the study of the act of watching videos, as well as the issues portrayed in them (Thelwall, 2018). The large selection of content from a small set of themed videos (Jaspal et al., 2014) makes YouTube comments an interesting source of content analysis on a given topic (Bruns & Stieglitz, 2012).

In communication, interaction in social media, in this case commenting on YouTube videos, falls into the category of computer mediated communication (CMC). CMC theory is a type of integrable communication in which two or more people can only communicate or exchange information through a computer, a new communication technology, referring to any kind of communication in which computer technology is used as a medium to connect individuals or groups of people to talk to each other. CMC involves the use of computer software and hardware to facilitate the exchange of information between individuals or groups. Each version of CMC allows people to communicate without having to be physically in the same place. Almost everyone in the modern world does CMC on a daily basis. In fact,

this type of communication done through computers dates back to the second world war, along with the invention of digital computers in the early 60s. In research using CMC theory, Netnography is the most suitable approach where netnography is defined as a qualitative research methodology that adapts ethnographic research techniques to study the culture and community that occurs in computer-mediated communication (Kozinets, 2010).

With this background, this research wants to see the public sentiment regarding interfaith marriage through the comment section on Creativox's YouTube video 'Suami Kristen, Istri Islam'.

RESEARCH METHOD

This research was conducted with a qualitative approach using the Netnography method. This method is considered appropriate because it is often used to examine relationships and culture in communication through social media (Kozinets, 2010). This research focuses on public sentiment towards Cretivox's upload on one of the episodes on its YouTube channel titled 'Suami Kristen, Istri Islam'. To see the sentiment, the following steps were taken:

Digital Footprint and Software

The digital footprint search stage was carried out on YouTube using the keyword #PernikahanBedaAgama. After obtaining videos that are in accordance with the research objectives, the researchers then took conversation data in the comments column of the Cretivox YouTube video entitled 'Suami Kristen, Istri Islam'. The data collection used an online application-based data analysis tool, Netlytics. This application is capable of conducting cloud-based text and social network analysis that can automatically summarize textual data and find communication networks from publicly accessible social media posts. In addition, this application also makes it easy for researchers to be able to interpret data in the form of visualization of word network clusters or comments complete with information on accounts that write comments. After that, the researcher did coding with a web-based application called Taguette.

Research Stages

In accordance with the basic elements of Netnography, namely investigation, interaction, and immersion, the research stages begin with the initiation stage where researchers choose the topic #PernikahanBedaAgama. At the investigation stage, the researcher simplifies by using the hashtag #PernikahanBedaAgama in the search field. In the search process with #PernikahanBedaAgama 192 videos from 121 channels were obtained. The researcher then watched the data (scout) and conducted the selection stage (select). The criteria used in making the selection were, first, researchers eliminated videos from mainstream media channels such as MetroTVNews, TribunNews and so on. This was done because the content on these channels is news. Secondly, researchers selected videos in the form of video interviews from religious leaders. This was done because data from a religious perspective had

already been presented in the literacy in the background of the research. Third, the researcher selected videos containing the perpetrators of #PernikahanBedaAgama because these videos were in accordance with the research objectives. After making this selection, the researcher ensured that the data selected was uploaded by the Cretivox channel, namely the episode entitled 'Christian Husband, Islamic Wife' with a total of 165 comments.

The researcher immerses himself (immersion) with the data under study, by conducting a review (reconnoitering) and scanning to see the general picture of the data. This activity is necessary so that the researcher does not get lost with a lot of data. This review is similar to an authorized activity, where the researcher determines the boundaries of what will be seen and observed.

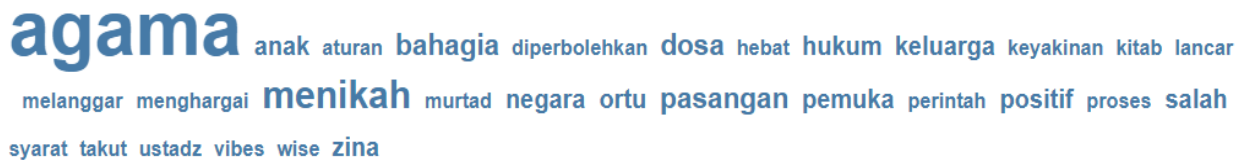
Furthermore, the immersion process is also carried out by recording what the researcher sees/reads/hears so that the research background is compiled. Then from the background, researchers use a certain point of view, perspective (researching). The perspective chosen is the concept related to news as an arena of consensus. The final process will be after the research is carried out, the researcher will reflect where in the netnography study reflection is an activity that is retrospective and personal. It is called retrospective, because through this activity researchers evaluate what is seen from the data. Reflection is also personal because this activity describes the personal meaning of the researcher which is subjective. That is, after reading the upload data under study, what meaning can be drawn by the researcher and what the researcher's interpretation of the data is (Kozinets, 2010). To strengthen this research as well as to comply with ethics, the researcher informed the sources on the video that the comments in the video content 'Suami Kristen, Istri Islam' would be used in the research.

The next stage is to combine various data related to interfaith marriage and related to public responses to the Cretivox YouTube video titled 'Suami Kristen, Istri Islam' and grouped to see which public sentiment is positive and which comments are negative. In the final stage, the researcher communicates the results of the research to the audience with a journal that will later be published (incarnation).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The research, which was conducted in November 2023, wanted to know the public sentiment on Creativox's YouTube video titled 'Suami Kristen, Istri Islam' related to interfaith marriage. At the time of the research, Creativox's YouTube *channel* had 910,000 *subscribers* and had produced 527 videos. The video 'Suami Kristen, Istri Islam' has garnered 46,709 *views* and 14,000 *likes* since April 15, 2023. Meanwhile, the number of *dislikes* seems to be deliberately not displayed by Creativox in all of their video uploads. Since appearing on the YouTube channel, this 12-minute video has received 165 comments. Of the 165 comments, only 145 comments can be retrieved by Netlytics software. Since the purpose of the study was to determine the public sentiment regarding interfaith marriage, the comments were filtered and only focused on public comments. Comments other than the public (i.e. reply comments from Creativox admin, as well as reply comments from sources on the video) were not included so that the final total of comments that were analyzed further remained 125 comments.

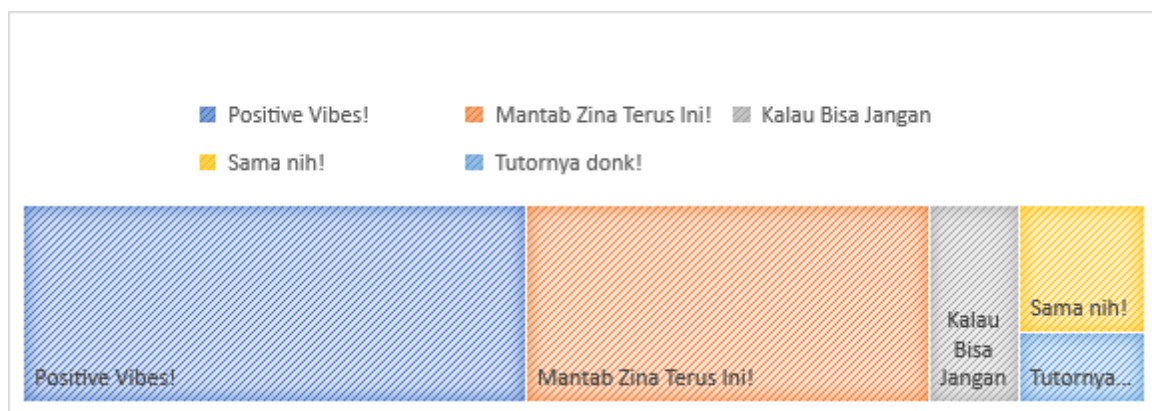
From these 125 comments, using Netlytics' *keyword and emoji extractor*, there were 1429 keywords. The 1429 keywords were then filtered to identify the most used words. The data was measured based on the frequency of the most frequently mentioned words. After eliminating emoticons, personal pronouns (I, me, you and so on) conjunctions, abbreviations, and other words that are deemed inappropriate to the theme (lalu, di, yg, dan, dll, ups, wkwk, dan sebagainya) 685 words remained which were then visualized in a *word cloud* referring to the 30 most frequently mentioned words in public comments.



Source: (Keywords from the research 'Public Sentiment on Interfaith Marriage, 2023)

Figure 1 Words Cloud that has been filtered using the Netlytics tool

Word cloud shows public sentiment that tends to be positive and which tends to be negative is categorized. The data shows that public comments tend to be positive, although it is undeniable that some have contradictory opinions because they refer to certain rules and laws. However, to go deeper, from the collection of words, the comments were then read one by one and *coded* using Taguette software. From these comments, themes can then be drawn that can be used as a common thread.



Source: (Themes analysis from the research 'Public Sentiment on Interfaith Marriage, 2023)

Figure 2 Pubic Response Themes

From the elaboration of public responses that can be seen in the word cloud (Figure 1) and then analyzing the themes that appear in public responses (Figure 2), it can be concluded that the highest response is in sentences that are positive or supportive of the couple in the 'Suami Kristen, Istri Islam' video. This positive response of 56 comments is then followed by the opposite response showed in Table 1. At least 45 comments respond to the notion that interfaith marriages are inappropriate, especially since the majority of these respondents say that interfaith marriages are against Islamic values.

Table 1 Number of responses by theme

No	TEMA	JUMLAH
1	Positive vibes! (Positive Sentiment) The public response included in this theme is a response that praises what the perpetrators of interfaith marriages say in the video. Both from the concept of thinking and the tolerance practiced. In addition, this theme also includes comments that wish their marriage will always be happy and also comments that explain that the public knows personally the speakers in the video and explain that they are indeed positive personalities. But behind the praise, there are also comments that are still included in this theme even though the response uses negative sentences. This is because the responses are 'supportive' by replying to other public slurs.	56 comments
2	Mantab zina terus ini! (Negative Sentiment) The public responses included in this theme are responses that reject the existence of interfaith marriages either by explaining the rules they understand or responding in the form of sarcastic sentences. In essence, the responses on this theme do not justify interfaith marriage.	45 comments
3	Kalau bisa jangan! (Negative Sentiment) The public responses included in this theme are responses that emphasize sentences that tend to give advice to reconsider the decision to marry different religions.	10 comments
4	Sama nih! (Positive Sentiment) The public responses included in this theme are responses that have been in an interfaith marriage, or have relatives who have been in an interfaith marriage or the public who are in an interfaith relationship but have no plans to marry.	9 comments
5	Tutornya donk! (Positive sentiment) The public responses included in this theme are those who are in an interfaith relationship and have plans to learn more about interfaith marriage.	5 comments
Total	125 comments (70 positive sentiment, 55 negative sentiment)	

Source: (Coding results from the research 'Public Sentiment on Interfaith Marriage, 2023)

Furthermore, at least 10 comments responded to interfaith marriages by making more subtle comments, suggesting that interfaith marriages should not be practiced at all as a preventive measure. The remaining nine responses stated their experiences and what they have seen related to interfaith marriages that have taken place. Meanwhile, five other comments are responses from public who will carry out or are still hesitant about interfaith

marriages. From the elaboration of the comments, it is concluded that the highest public response is to sentences that are positive or supportive of the couple in the video 'Suami Kristen, Istri Islam'. The grouping of these themes can be explained as follows: Positive Vibes!

Comments in favor of interfaith marriage were the most common. This support arises in response to the thoughts conveyed by the speakers in the video, regarding their views on continuing to do interfaith marriages. The support can be seen in the comment *"wah, hidup ini menarik banget nih untuk dinikmati so cool and wise"*. The same thing also appears in the comments *"gue suka cara berpikarnya"* dan *"pemikiran-pemikiran mereka tentang relationship bener-bener wise sih"*. Other support also emerged as responses from netizens who considered that the couple in the video were very positive and were seen as upholding each other's tolerance. Such a response is represented through the comment *"Keren sih, gpp deh dapet yang beda agama kalo pasangannya punya pemikiran kaya mas dan mbak di atas"* and the comment *"Terlepas dari agama yang aku anut, jika nikah agama tidak diperbolehkan. Namun saya sangat respect dengan toleransi keduanya untuk memahami sebuah perbedaan tidak perlu di perdebatkan"*.

The *positive vibe* theme was also chosen based on netizen responses like *"Ya ampun dua orang positive vibe, toleransinya tinggi. Keren banget sih kak. Doa dari gue semoga Langgeng hingga menuah bersama dan segera dikasih momongan. God bless kak"* dan *"Positive vibes, kedewasaan, dan toleransinya superb"*. There are even comment who respond that they also feel positive vibes from the couple *"mas mba kalian hebat I felt kalian punya positive vibes luar biasa. Semoga seluruh hal-hal baik ada buat kalian ya mas mba"*.

But despite the praise, there are also comments that are still included in this theme even though they are negative. This is because the comments in question 'support' by replying to other comments using inappropriate sentences. The response can be represented by the comments *"Istrinya keliatan bahagia jadi ente gak usah bacot"*, *"Mau channel ini ngeupload apa kek, hak dia, lu ngerasa gak suka dan merasa channel mereka upload gak jelas, silahkan pergi tanpa perlu komentar kayak kadrin kebanyakan"*, *"Ah enggak juga, itu kan politik beragama nya manusia yg saling merasa eksklusif dan saling merasa benar. Sebenarnya nikah beda agama gak ada masalah. Agama samawi ini (Yahudi, Kristen, Islam) memang dari dulu terkenal saling berkonflik satu sama lain padahal bersumber dari Tuhan yang sama"*.

Mantab Zina Terus Ini

The comments included in this theme are responses that reject the existence of interfaith marriages either by explaining the rules they understand or responses in the form of sarcastic sentences. In essence, the netizen responses on this theme state that interfaith marriage is a sin. Some examples of responses that use sarcastic language styles are represented by comments such as *"Mantab zina terus ini"*, *"Kompak yaaaaaaa, yang ga kompak agamanya ajaa wkwkwk cuakkss"* and *"biasa mas mereka senang di anggap bertoleransi, padahal emg miskin ilmu"*, *"Orang punya dosa dengan caranya masing. Mereka punya dosa karena melanggar Indonesia, perintah Tuhan, kita pun sama, punya dosa versi masing masing"*, *"Katanya sih seorang wanita Muslim menikah dengan laki-laki non-Muslim, status*

pernikahnya tidak sah dan dipandang sebagai zina seumur hidup. Tapi ya enak mau gimana cuy.... Gaasss....”.

There are also responses of disapproval from public, because it will have an impact on their children in the future. Such responses include *“Kasian anak lu kalau lu nikah beda agama”, “kasian anaknya kalau islam, tidak punya nasab bapaknya”, “Knp anaknya gk diajarin 22nya?”* also *“Innalilahi wa innailaihi rooji’un. Semoga anak cucu kita dijauhkan dari Langkah setan. Pernikahan kalian tidak sah, seumur hidup kalian dihitung sebagai perzinahan”.*

However, not all netizen responses that contradict the opinion of the speakers in the video use sarcasm. There are also responses that use polite words and explain their reasons from the knowledge they understand. Their response is represented by the comment *“Maaf kalo saya agak berbeda dalam pandangan dan pemikiran. Dalam Islam (agama yg saya anut) tidak dibenarkan pernikahan beda agama apalagi istrinya yg Islam, untuk alasan jelaskan silakan saya tidak tahu,,tapi silakan tanyakan kepada para Ustadz dan Habaib!! kecuali apabila suaminya yg muslim baru hukumny BOLEH (Mubah), akan tetapi ada syaratnya dan ketentuan yg harus di lakukan.. maaf ini hanya pandangan saya dari perspektif Islam, tanpa sama sekali mengurangi toleransi saya dengan agama lain dan apalagi mendeskriditkan agama lain..sebab saya selalu Bertoleransi dengan apapun itu baik AGAMA, SUKU ataupun BANGSA. Maaf apabila salah kata”,* also *“Cowok yang beragama Islam boleh menikahi cewek dari agama lain, sedangkan cewe beragama Islam tidak diperbolehkan menikah dengan cowok beragama lain. Karena imam (kepala keluarga) tidak bisa menuntun istrinya. Gue harap dibalik mempertahankan agama masing-masing, tahu bahwa pernikahan tersebut dilarang”.*

Kalau Bisa Jangan

The comments included in this theme are responses that emphasize sentences that tend to give advice to reconsider the decision to marry differently. These responses are represented by comments such as *“Biasanya pas sudah punya anak, permasalahan beda agama itu baru muncul... Kalau bisa, jangan dah... Krn ada kalanya, perempuan ingin dipimpin dalam beribadah.. ingin berdoa dalam 1 Iman”, “personally, kalo dr awal udah ga sejalan ga brani deket2 takut makin lama makin dalem makin jatuh cintrong, bisa bahaya haha”, “Disini dilihat deterrence telah gagal. Peraturan diciptakan jelas jelas untuk dilanggar. Yang sudah terjadi biarlah terjadi. Hormati saja HAM masing-masing warga negara. Buat ortu, mungkin, preventif, yang perlu digalakkan. Pergaulan bebas itu ya memang konsekuensi dari perkembangan jaman. Tapi saat ortu berhasil menanamkan prinsip. Maka, mau sebebas apapun pergaulannya, dia tetap di jalan yang sesuai dengan peraturan. Tapi kembali lagi. Nabi saja tidak memaksa pamannya untuk pindah muslim. Jadi ya. Ya sudah sih”.*

Sama Nih

Comments that are included in this theme are comments that have carried out marriages of different religions, or have relatives who have undergone marriages of different religions or netizens who are in relationships of different religions but have no plans to marry including *“Gw juga nikah beda agama, gak ada masalah tuh lancar2 aja”, “Aku masuk 4 tahun kak huhu*

udh mau ke tahap yg lebih serius cuma masih mau nunggu smpe tahun besok kalo masih bareng dan baik" aja nekat nikah beda agama", "Udah 5 tahun ini juga,persis,..,tapi masih tetep Bahagia" dan "undang bapak ibuku dong... udah perkawinan beda agama selama 33 thn 90".

Tutornya Donk

The netizen responses included in this theme are the responses of netizens who are in an interfaith relationship and have plans to learn more about interfaith marriage. In addition, the responses of netizens who are included in this theme are those who ask whether it is true that interfaith marriage can be done. This type of netizen is represented in the comments "mas fajarr tolong tutornya dongg", "Bagi kontak ka dian, aku mau konsul kwkwk", "Serius nanya di Indonesia bisanya nikah beda agama?".

CONCLUSION

The study found that public sentiment towards Cretivox's YouTube video 'Suami Kristen, Istri Islam' is largely positive, with 70 favorable comments. However, this is countered by at least 55 comments expressing that interfaith marriages are inappropriate, particularly noting that many netizens believe such marriages conflict with Islamic values. The comments reflect a range of views: some support interfaith marriage, evident in themes like 'Positive Vibes', 'Sama Nih' and 'Tutornya Donk'. While others oppose it, shown in themes like 'Mantab Zina Terus Ini' and 'Kalau Bisa Jangan'. Given the contentious nature of the topic, it's important to monitor the discussion, especially in Indonesia, where the majority population is Muslim.

regardless of the religions that exist in Indonesia, marriages between citizens that are held within the jurisdiction of the Indonesian state based on religious differences are not allowed. If the marriage is still forced to take place between adherents of different religions and beliefs, then the status of the marriage is invalid, or the marriage is essentially prohibited and contrary to the law. Circular Letter of the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court (SEMA) 2/2023 concerning guidelines for judges in adjudicating cases of applications for marriage registration between people of different religions and beliefs states that the court does not grant applications for marriage registration, either between people of different religions or different beliefs.

Meanwhile, in terms of human rights, interfaith marriage, Pancasila should protect plurality and diversity in Indonesia, including interfaith marriage. It is thus concluded that interfaith marriage should be respected as a fundamental human right, as stated in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR), and that Pancasila should be adaptable to protect the interests of all Indonesian citizens, including families formed through interfaith marriage.

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