

Tahiro

Journal of Peace and Religious Moderation

**RELIGIOUS MODERATION AS A PSYCHOPATHOLOGICAL SHIELD:
CLINICAL STRATEGIES FOR COUNTERING PSYCHOLOGICAL EXTREMISM**

Iqbal bafadal ~ 1

Masnun

Humamurrizqi

Abdul Hadi Sukmana

**THE BELANGAR TRADITION OF THE SASAK COMMUNITY: ARTICULATION
OF RELIGIOUS VALUES AND SOCIAL SOLIDARITY**

Fitria Sabila ~ 17

Kamarudin Zaelani

Najamudin

**GLOBAL COMMUNICATION ETHICS AND DIGITAL LITERACY:
BUILDING A MODERATE VIRTUAL LEARNING SPACE IN THE CYBER ERA**

Agus Soni Ariawan ~ 27

Jumarim

Akhmad Asyari

Suparlan

**THE ETHICS OF ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE FROM A HADITH
PERSPECTIVE: AFFIRMING MORAL RESPONSIBILITY AS THE
FOUNDATION OF RELIGIOUS MODERATION IN THE DIGITAL ERA**

Abdul Karim ~ 48

Muhamad Yusup

Nasrullah

Lalu Ahmad Zaenuri

**REACHING OUT TO THOSE WHO WERE ONCE LOST: REFLECTIVE
PERSONAL DAKWAH BY A RELIGIOUS COUNSELOR WITHIN A CIRCLE OF
FORMER TERRORISM CONVICTS IN POHUWATO**

Wisno Pakaya ~ 57

Arfan Nusi

Dian Adi Perdana

TAHIRO

Journal of Peace and Religious Moderation

Volume 3 | Nomor 1 | Desember 2026

Tahiro

Journal of Peace and Religious Moderation

DAFTAR ISI

RELIGIOUS MODERATION AS A PSYCHOPATHOLOGICAL SHIELD: CLINICAL STRATEGIES FOR COUNTERING PSYCHOLOGICAL EXTREMISM

Iqbal bafadal ~ 1
Masnun
Humamurrizqi
Abdul Hadi Sukmana

THE BELANGAR TRADITION OF THE SASAK COMMUNITY: ARTICULATION OF RELIGIOUS VALUES AND SOCIAL SOLIDARITY

Fitria Sabila ~ 17
Kamarudin Zaelani
Najamudin

GLOBAL COMMUNICATION ETHICS AND DIGITAL LITERACY: BUILDING A MODERATE VIRTUAL LEARNING SPACE IN THE CYBER ERA

Soni Ariawan ~ 27
Jumarim
Akhmad Asyari
Suparlan

THE ETHICS OF ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE FROM A HADITH PERSPECTIVE: AFFIRMING MORAL RESPONSIBILITY AS THE FOUNDATION OF RELIGIOUS MODERATION IN THE DIGITAL ERA

Abdul Karim ~ 48
Muhamad Yusup
Nasrullah
Lalu Ahmad Zaenuri

REACHING OUT TO THOSE WHO WERE ONCE LOST: REFLECTIVE PERSONAL DAKWAH BY A RELIGIOUS COUNSELOR WITHIN A CIRCLE OF FORMER TERRORISM CONVICTS IN POHUWATO

Wisno Pakaya ~ 57
Arfan Nusi
Dian Adi Perdana

RELIGIOUS MODERATION AS A PSYCHOPATHOLOGICAL SHIELD: CLINICAL STRATEGIES FOR COUNTERING PSYCHOLOGICAL EXTREMISM

Iqbal Bafadal¹⁾, Masnun²⁾, Humamurrizqi³⁾, Abdul Hadi Sukmana⁴⁾

^{1, 2, 4} Universitas Islam Negeri Mataram, Indonesia

³Universitas Mataram, Indonesia

email: iqbalbafadal@uinmataram.ac.id

email: masnun_tahir@uinmataram.ac.id

email: humamurrizqi6@gmail.com

email: abdulhadisukmana@uinmataram.ac.id

Abstract

This research presents an academic synthesis of religious moderation (Wasatiyyah) as a preventive intervention against psychopathology, grounded in Muhammad U. Faruque's multidimensional self model. The normative foundation of Wasatiyyah is rooted in the concept of maqashid al-shariah as formulated by classical scholars, including Ibn 'Asyur in Maqashid al-Syari'ah al-Islamiyyah and Yusuf Al-Qaradawi in Al-Shahwah al-Islamiyyah, both of whom regard balance (wasath) as both the objective of the shariah and a principle for the protection of the soul (hifzh al-nafs). From the perspective of Islamic psychology, moderation is understood not merely as a sociopolitical compromise, but as a clinical necessity that can be operationalized through measurable psychological indicators, such as moderate religiosity scales, dogmatism scales (Rokeach, 1960), and the Religious Moderation Assessment (RMA), in order to maintain balance among the bio-physiological, cognitive, and spiritual dimensions of the human being. This analysis highlights that extremism arises from a "spectrum error," in which the individual reduces the transcendent subjectivity of the "I" into a rigid and closed ideological object. By integrating Abu Zayd al-Balkhi's classical medical tradition in his work Masalih al-Abdan wa al-Anfus with the practice of Tajarrud (self-detachment) from the Sunni Sufi tradition, this research proposes a new framework for holistic mental health. The method employed is an analytical-critical literature review of primary sources in Islamic psychology and the philosophy of the soul. The findings show that the Wasatiyyah approach is clinically proven to protect human moral agency and to facilitate the attainment of Qalb Salim as the highest condition of mental health in the Islamic tradition. The implications of this research include recommendations for mental health practitioners and educators in Muslim communities to adopt the principle of moderation as a methodology for psychological intervention grounded in Islamic spiritual values.

Keywords: *Islamic Psychology, Religious Moderation, Mental Wellbeing, Wasatiyyah, Qalb Salim*

Abstrak

Penelitian ini menyajikan sintesis akademik mengenai moderasi beragama (Wasatiyyah) sebagai intervensi preventif terhadap patologi jiwa, dengan berpijak pada model diri multidimensional Muhammad U. Faruque. Landasan normatif Wasatiyyah berakar pada konsep maqashid syariah sebagaimana dirumuskan oleh para ulama klasik, termasuk Ibn 'Asyur dalam Maqashid al-Syari'ah al-Islamiyyah dan Yusuf Al-Qaradawi dalam Al-Shahwah al-Islamiyyah, yang memandang keseimbangan (wasath) sebagai tujuan syariat sekaligus prinsip penjagaan jiwa (hifzh al-nafs). Melalui perspektif Psikologi Islam, moderasi dipahami bukan sekadar kompromi sosiopolitik, melainkan sebagai kebutuhan klinis yang dapat dioperasionalisasikan melalui indikator-indikator psikologis yang terukur, seperti skala religiusitas moderat, skala dogmatisme (Rokeach, 1960), dan Religious Moderation Assessment (RMA),

guna menjaga keseimbangan antara dimensi bio-fisiologis, kognitif, dan spiritual manusia. Analisis ini menyoroti bahwa ekstremisme muncul akibat "kesalahan spektrum," di mana individu mereduksi subjektivitas "Aku" yang transenden menjadi objek ideologis yang kaku dan tertutup. Dengan mengintegrasikan tradisi medis klasik Abu Zayd al-Balkhi dalam karyanya *Masalih al-Abdan wa al-Anfus* dan praktik Tajarrud (pelepasan diri) dari tradisi tasawuf sunni, penelitian ini mengusulkan kerangka kerja baru bagi kesehatan mental yang holistik. Metode yang digunakan adalah kajian pustaka analitis-kritis (analytical critical literature review) terhadap sumber-sumber primer psikologi Islam dan filsafat jiwa. Hasil kajian menunjukkan bahwa pendekatan Wasatiyyah secara klinis terbukti memproteksi agensi moral manusia dan memfasilitasi pencapaian Qalb Salim sebagai kondisi kesehatan mental tertinggi dalam tradisi Islam. Implikasi penelitian ini mencakup rekomendasi bagi praktisi kesehatan mental dan pendidik di lingkungan Muslim untuk mengadopsi prinsip moderasi sebagai metodologi intervensi psikologis yang berbasis nilai spiritual-keislaman.

Kata Kunci: *Psikologi Islam; Moderasi Beragama; Kesejahteraan Mental; Wasatiyyah; Qalb Salim*

INTRODUCTION

The increasing phenomenon of religion-based radicalism and extremism in various parts of the world has become a serious challenge for the mental health discipline. Researchers have noted a significant correlation between affiliation with extreme ideology and various mental disorders, ranging from narcissistic personality disorder to Posttraumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) resulting from exposure to narratives of violence (Wiktorowicz, 2014; Silber & Bhatt, 2017). It should be noted that the correlations reported by these studies do not automatically indicate a causal relationship; the complexity of intervening variables moderating this relationship including socio-economic factors, trauma history, and social networks still requires more in-depth longitudinal study. Nevertheless, the academic response to this phenomenon is often trapped in a dichotomy: a secular approach that ignores the spiritual dimension, or a religious approach that disregards psychological complexity.

From the perspective of the Islamic intellectual tradition, Yusuf Al-Qaradawi (1996) in *Al-Shahwah al-Islamiyyah: Bayna al-Juhud wa al-Tatharruf* identified *ghuluw* (excessiveness in religion) as a fundamental deviation from the *wasathi* Islamic manhaj. Contemporary empirical studies in Indonesia also reinforce this finding; research by the Indonesian Ministry of Religious Affairs (MORA) on pesantren-based deradicalization programs shows that pesantren that explicitly integrate moderation values into their curriculum have proven effective as a bulwark against radicalization (Muhtarom et al., 2022). This finding affirms the relevance of the study of religious moderation not merely as academic discourse, but as an urgent religious policy agenda.

This research is positioned at a critical intersection between Islamic Psychology and the study of religious moderation. Unlike previous studies that view moderation merely as a sociopolitical entity (Hashim, 2018; Esposito, 2016), this research argues that moderation or Wasatiyyah is a psychological condition that is inherently preventive against psychopathology. The main theoretical foundation used is the "Spectrum Concept of the Self" framework developed by Muhammad U. Faruque (2020), which views the human self as a multidimensional continuum extending from material to transcendent aspects.

Several relevant studies include the following. Al-Krenawi & Graham (2000) examined the role of Islamic spirituality in cross-cultural counseling. Haque (2004) made an important contribution in scientifically defining Islamic psychology. Meanwhile, Badri (2011) and Utz (2011) explored the concept of the soul (*nafs*) as a foundation for Islamic therapy. However, no study has yet explicitly connected Faruque's theory of the self-spectrum with the concept of *Wasatiyyah* as a mechanism of psychological prevention. This is the main contribution offered by this research.

This research aims to: (1) analyze the relationship between ideological extremism and psychopathology within the framework of Islamic psychology; (2) explain the mechanism of *Wasatiyyah* as a psychological buffer; and (3) formulate clinical recommendations grounded in the Islamic intellectual tradition for mental health practitioners.

METHOD

This research employs an analytical-critical literature review approach, a method that systematically identifies, evaluates, and synthesizes relevant scientific literature to construct a new theoretical argument (Snyder, 2019). This approach was chosen because the research objective is conceptual namely, to construct a new theoretical framework, rather than to produce new empirical data.

Primary data sources include canonical works in Islamic psychology, specifically: (1) Muhammad U. Faruque's work, *Sculpting the Self: Islam, Selfhood, and Human Flourishing* (2020), as the main theoretical framework; (2) Abu Zayd al-Balkhi's work, *Masalih al-Abdan wa al-Anfus* (ed. Badri, 2013), as a historical-clinical foundation; and (3) classical texts on *Wasatiyyah* and religious moderation. Secondary sources include related journal articles from JSTOR, PsycINFO, and Google Scholar published between 2000–2024, in Arabic, English, and Indonesian. The inclusion criteria for the literature include: (a) direct thematic relevance to Islamic psychology, religious moderation, or the psychopathology of extremism; (b) published by an indexed journal or a verified academic publisher; and (c) having a verifiable conceptual or empirical contribution. Exclusion criteria include popular literature, opinions without data support, and sources whose academic provenance cannot be traced.

The analytical technique employed is hermeneutical interpretation grounded in the Islamic exegetical tradition namely, the approach of *ushul al-fiqh* and *maqashid al-shariah* rather than Western philosophical hermeneutics such as that of Gadamer or Ricoeur, although conceptual points of convergence between the two are acknowledged. This choice of Islamic hermeneutics was made consciously to maintain the epistemological consistency of the study within the framework of Islamic psychology. The technique of conceptual comparison is used to identify points of intersection and relevance between the classical Islamic psychology tradition and contemporary psychological frameworks. The validity of the argument is maintained through triangulation of sources from various schools of thought within Islamic psychology.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Definition of Islamic Psychology and the Existence of the Self

Islamic psychology is the systematic study of the condition of the soul (nafs) aimed at attaining true happiness in this world and the hereafter (sa'adah). Unlike Western psychology, which tends to be positivistic and limits its object of study to empirically observable phenomena, Islamic psychology places the spiritual (ruhani) dimension as an inseparable core of human subjectivity. This approach proceeds from the ontological belief that human beings are not merely biological organisms reacting to environmental stimuli, but spiritual beings possessing a vertical relationship with the Transcendent Reality (Haque, 2004; Utz, 2011).

Based on the "Spectrum Concept" proposed by Faruque (2020), the human self is not viewed as a static, isolated, atomic entity, but as a continuum of light a richly meaningful metaphor extending from the material end (jism) to the metaphysical end (ruh). This concept of the spectrum fundamentally rejects the Cartesian dualism that rigidly separates mind (res cogitans) from matter (res extensa). In the Islamic view, the spirit (ruh) and the body (jasad) are not two opposing substances, but two poles of a single, continuous, and interpenetrating reality of consciousness (Nasr, 2002).

This ontological exploration of the nature of the self finds its sharpest confirmation in the "Flying Man" thought experiment (al-insan al-ta'ir) designed by Ibn Sina, or Avicenna (980–1037 CE). In this experiment, Ibn Sina asks us to imagine a human being suddenly created in full adulthood, floating in empty air, in total darkness, unable to touch or feel his own body. The question is: would such a person be aware of his own existence? Ibn Sina answers decisively: yes. Even under conditions of total sensory isolation, the awareness of self the sense of "I exist" cannot be eliminated (Black, 2010; Faruque, 2020). This experiment philosophically demonstrates that the subjectivity of the self is not a product of sensory input or neurological processes, but is a fundamental basis that precedes them.

The relevance of this experiment for contemporary psychology is immense. In neuroscience, theories such as "global workspace theory" (Baars, 1988) or "integrated information theory" (Tononi, 2008) attempt to explain consciousness as an emergent property of brain complexity. However, Ibn Sina's argument, as reinforced by Faruque, asserts that something more fundamental underlies all of this: a consciousness that bears witness to its own processes. In the Sufi tradition, this is referred to as sifr al-qalb the purity of the heart that becomes a mirror for reality.

Faruque divides the spectrum of the self into four interpenetrating and inseparable levels: (1) the Bio-physiological Dimension, namely the material foundation comprising the nervous system, hormonal system, and other biological mechanisms that form the substratum for psychological experience; (2) the Socio-cultural Dimension, namely the construction of collective identity formed through language, historical narratives, community norms, and the social roles individuals play within networks of human relationships; (3) the Cognito-experiential Dimension, namely first-person subjectivity or

the sense of “for-me-ness” a private subjective experience that cannot be fully reduced to a third-person physical description; and (4) the Ethical and Spiritual Dimension, namely the normative aspiration toward self-perfection and the transcendental longing toward the Absolute Reality that constitutes the ultimate purpose of human existence.

This four-dimensional division is not merely a descriptive academic taxonomy. It carries profound clinical implications: mental disorders can be understood as dysfunction or fragmentation in one or several of these dimensions, while true mental health distinct from the mere absence of clinical symptoms requires harmonious integration among all four dimensions. A person who is physically healthy (dimension 1) but disconnected from their community (dimension 2), or who is socially active but lacks spiritual depth (dimension 4), has not yet attained a complete state of mental health from the perspective of Islamic psychology (Haque, 2004).

Clinical Analysis: Fanaticism, Rigidity, and Psychopathology

Extreme religiosity is a manifestation of cognitive rigidity that disregards the complexity of the self-spectrum. In this psychopathology, there occurs a fundamental failure to comprehend what Faruque (2020) calls the “Paradox of Self-Knowledge”: the fact that the knowing subject (“I”) can never be fully turned into a known object (“It”) without losing its essential dimension as a subject. An extremist becomes trapped in an attempt to define their “I” exclusively through one rigid ideological label “I am a fighter for Islam,” “I am a jihadist,” or similar which is, in fact, a failed and destructive attempt at self-objectification.

When self-identity is reduced to a single static ideological object, what occurs is what psychoanalysis calls “foreclosure of identity” (Erikson, 1968) a premature closure of an identity-formation process that should be dynamic and open. Individuals in this condition are no longer able to critically question their own beliefs, because any critical question directed at the ideology they have fused with their identity is perceived as an existential threat to themselves. Blind fanaticism is thus born as an ego defense mechanism that functions to protect this illusion of identity-certainty from the pressure of complex reality (Wiktorowicz, 2014).

From the perspective of cognitive neuroscience, the cognitive rigidity that characterizes extremism correlates with hypoactivity of the prefrontal cortex (PFC), particularly the areas responsible for flexible decision-making, cognitive empathy, and emotional regulation. Research by Decety et al. (2015) shows that individuals with a tendency toward authoritarian and dogmatic worldviews exhibit different patterns of brain activation in response to information that contradicts their beliefs they tend to process such information as a threat rather than as data to be critically evaluated.

Faruque's analysis of “Anāniyya” (I-ness) provides a richly additional dimension to this understanding. Anāniyya is, in essence, a metaphysically neutral aspect it is the self-awareness as a subject that is the prerequisite for all experience. However, when Anāniyya is “badly sculpted” through the internalization of narrow and exclusive narratives, it develops into ideological narcissism a condition in which a group's collective

ego is considered more superior, more sacred, and more entitled to truth than all other parties (Faruque, 2020, p. 87). This distortion of Anāniyya is the psychological root of the dehumanization of the “other” (liyan) that often precedes extremist violence.

There is also an interesting and philosophically significant parallel between ideological extremism and the neuroscience reductionism that Faruque criticizes as the “Idolization of the Brain.” The view that the self is merely “a bundle of neurons” (as in the Humean bundle of perceptions theory) systematically eliminates moral agency, because if the “I” does not exist and there are only deterministic physical processes, then there is no subject responsible for its actions. Paradoxically, a view that reduces identity to a single narrow ideological narrative produces the same effect: the individual feels they are merely carrying out “God's command” or “the duty of ideology,” such that moral agency and personal responsibility dissolve into an anonymous collective authority.

Table 1. Map of the Psychopathology of Extreme Religiosity from the Perspective of Islamic Psychology

Extremist Characteristic	Psychological Mechanism	Clinical Impact
Cognitive Absolutism	Foreclosure of Identity; premature closure of the identity-formation process	Chronic existential anxiety, mental rigidity, and intolerance of ambiguity
Reductionism of Agency	Dissolution of personal responsibility into collective ideological authority	Loss of individual meaning in life, de-individuation, and inability for moral reflection
Social Exclusivism	Dehumanization of the “other” (liyan) through rigid in-group/out-group categorization	Psychological isolation, identity fragmentation, and potential for defensive violence
Distortion of Anāniyya	Ideological narcissism; the collective ego is considered superior and sacred	Defensive aggression, group paranoia, and external enemy projection
Textual Literalism	Hermeneutical reductionism; texts read without historical context and maqasid	Black-and-white thinking, rejection of ijtiḥad

Note: Anāniyya is ontologically neutral; it becomes pathological only when badly sculpted through the internalization of exclusive and superior narratives (Faruque, 2020, p. 87).

The combination of the five characteristics in the table above creates what may be called an “extremist personality syndrome” a self-reinforcing pattern of psychological dysfunction. Cognitive absolutism prevents critical evaluation; reductionism of agency eliminates the sense of guilt that should serve as a moral brake; social exclusivism severs connections with moderate groups that could provide alternative perspectives; the distortion of Anāniyya reinforces belief in one's own absolute truth; and textual literalism provides “religious” legitimacy for all of these processes. Understanding this psychological circuitry is a prerequisite for designing effective interventions.

The Mechanism of Wasatiyyah as a Psychological Buffer

The spectrum theory of the self elegantly explains why moderation, or Wasatiyyah, provides room for the cognitive flexibility essential to mental health. A

moderate individual is able to recognize that they exist simultaneously at many points on the spectrum they are a biological being who needs to eat and rest, a member of a social community with relational roles and responsibilities, a unique conscious subject with rich internal experience, and at the same time a soul with transcendental aspirations. This capacity for agile navigation (cognitive agility) among the layers of the spectrum is precisely what serves as a natural shield against the reductionist pressure of any extreme ideological pole.

The concept of Wasatiyyah in the Qur'an (QS. Al-Baqarah: 143) literally means "the middle path" or "a balanced community" (*ummatah wasatan*). Classical exegetes provide a depth of meaning that goes far beyond a mere sociopolitical position. Al-Thabari, in *Jami' al-Bayan fi Ta'wil al-Qur'an*, interprets wasath as al-'adl (justice) the morally most upright position between two extremes. Ibn Katsir, in *Tafsir al-Qur'an al-'Azim*, affirms that *ummatah wasatan* means a chosen community (*khiyar*) that is just and free from excess, both in religious and worldly affairs. Al-Maraghi, in *Tafsir al-Maraghi*, further emphasizes that wasatiyyah requires intellectual maturity and active moral commitment, not merely a passive attitude or weak compromise. From the dimension of *maqashid*, Ibn 'Asyur, in *Maqashid al-Syari'ah al-Islamiyyah*, places wasatiyyah as one of the *maqashid 'ammah* (general objectives) of the shariah, directly related to *hifzh al-nafs* (the protection of the soul) and *hifzh al-'aql* (the protection of reason) (Ibn 'Asyur, 2001). This synthesis of exegesis affirms that Wasatiyyah is not an exhortation to be ideologically "gray," but rather an epistemological and psychological position that requires greater intellectual courage namely, the capacity to remain committed to the core values of Islam while simultaneously acknowledging the complexity, context, and validity of differing perspectives on matters that are subject to *ijtihad* (Kamali, 2015).

In cognitive psychology, this capacity for moderation corresponds to what Piaget (1972) called "formal operational thinking" the ability to think abstractly, to consider multiple perspectives simultaneously, and to operate within contexts of uncertainty without experiencing paralyzing anxiety. Further, in personality psychology, it correlates with the construct of "openness to experience" (McCrae & Costa, 1997), which has been shown to be a protective factor against dogmatism and prejudice. However, it should be noted that the Big Five constructs, including openness to experience, were developed within a Western context, and their cross-cultural validity in Muslim populations still requires further empirical confirmation. A number of psychometric studies in Indonesia, such as those conducted by Ramdhani (2012) and Widhiarso & Suhapti (2009), show that the Big Five dimensions have a comparable structure within the Indonesian context, although with several cultural nuances that need to be considered. Bearing in mind these limitations, its correlation with religious moderation remains relevant as a hypothesis worthy of further empirical testing. Religiously moderate individuals exhibit higher openness scores, indicating a greater capacity to process complex and ambiguous information without resorting to cognitive reductionism.

The psychological protection mechanism of Wasatiyyah operates through at least three clinically identifiable pathways. First, through the reinforcement of non-reflective

self-awareness (background self-awareness) a silent yet powerful psychological foundation, namely the certainty of one's own existence that does not depend on confirmation from any ideological group. Individuals with a strong sense of self-awareness do not require compulsive external validation, and are therefore less vulnerable to extremist recruitment techniques, which typically exploit identity vacuums and the need for acceptance (Faruque, 2020).

Second, Wasatiyyah operates through the maintenance of diverse social connectivity (social connectivity diversity). Sageman's (2004) research on global terrorist networks shows that social isolation from mainstream communities is one of the most consistent factors in the process of radicalization. Conversely, moderate individuals tend to maintain meaningful relationships with various social groups family, colleagues, and diverse religious communities which function as "reality anchors" and a natural correction system against gradually deviating thought patterns.

Third, Wasatiyyah enables what may be called "moral imagination" the ability to imagine oneself in another's position and to feel reality from their point of view. This is closely correlated with the capacity for cognitive empathy, which, as shown by neuroscience research, is anatomically located in the "default mode network" and the anterior insula areas that show reduced activity in individuals with highly dehumanizing worldviews (Decety et al., 2015). By keeping this capacity for empathy active through open social interaction and spiritual practices that emphasize rahman and rahim, moderation neurobiologically protects individuals from the path toward dehumanization.

The Legacy of Abu Zayd al-Balkhi: Masalih al-Abdan wa al-Anfus

More than a thousand years ago, Abu Zayd al-Balkhi (850–934 CE), a Muslim polymath from Khurasan, formulated a mental health framework that conceptually anticipated many fundamental themes in modern psychiatry and psychotherapy. Al-Balkhi grew up within the rich intellectual environment of 9th-century Baghdad, where the kalam debates between the Mu'tazilah and the Asy'ariyyah were raging, while the Maturidiyyah tradition rooted in Samarkand but widely influential in the regions of Khurasan and Transoxiana emphasized the balance between reason and revelation as the source of knowledge about the soul and ethics (Rudolph, 2015). It was this intellectual context that shaped al-Balkhi's approach, which was rational-empirical as well as spiritually grounded. In his work *Masalih al-Abdan wa al-Anfus* (The Sustenance of Body and Soul), recently translated and comprehensively analyzed by Malik Badri (2013), al-Balkhi integrated physical (abdan) and mental (anfus) health into a single unified system, drawing from three major intellectual traditions: the Greek medical heritage (Hippocrates, Galen), Indian thought (Ayurveda), and Islamic teachings a synthesis Badri refers to as the "Triple Tradition."

The most remarkable aspect of al-Balkhi's work is his explicit recognition that disorders of the soul (amrad al-nafs) have a severity and mechanism equivalent to physical illness, and therefore require systematic medical treatment. From a historiographical perspective, Ullmann (1978), in *Islamic Medicine*, notes that the

integration of the psychic dimension into the practice of medieval Muslim medicine was a significant development in the history of world medical science. Al-Balkhi even distinguished between two types of depression (ghamm and huzn) based on their etiology: the first triggered by identifiable external factors, and the second arising from within without a clear cause a distinction that conceptually corresponds to the distinction between reactive and endogenous depression in modern psychiatry. Even so, it is important to acknowledge that al-Balkhi's categorization is philosophical-clinical in nature and rooted in the epistemology of tawhid, distinct from the diagnostic criteria of the DSM/ICD, which are based on empirical scientific consensus and rigorous psychometric validation. The similarities that exist are analogical-conceptual, not methodologically identical (Badri, 2013).

Al-Balkhi identified four main types of emotional disorders relevant to this study: (1) Khauf (fear/anxiety), which he distinguished into adaptive fear and dysfunctional anxiety; (2) Ghadab (anger), which can become productive or destructive moral energy depending on its regulation; (3) Huzn (sadness/grief), which is normal as a response to loss but pathological if it becomes chronic and debilitating; and (4) Waswas (obsession/intrusive thoughts), which he described as recurring involuntary thoughts that dominate consciousness. He treated each of these disorders with a combination of cognitive techniques (changing internal narratives and interpretations) and spiritual techniques (zikir, prayer, tawakal, and reminders of the Divine perspective).

Most relevant for this study is al-Balkhi's concept of I'tidal al-Mizaj the balance of temperament or psychological constitution which he regarded as the true standard of mental health. This concept has roots in the Galenic theory of the four humors, but al-Balkhi enriched it with an Islamic spiritual dimension: balance not only between physiological elements (hot-cold, wet-dry), but also between the bodily and spiritual dimensions, between the demands of this world and orientation toward the hereafter, and between one's own rights and the rights of others. I'tidal al-Mizaj, in this sense, is the conceptual analogue of Wasatiyyah in the psychological-clinical dimension a state of dynamic equilibrium that requires active and ongoing effort to maintain (Badri, 2013; Haque, 2004).

Furthermore, al-Balkhi developed an approach that structurally resembles cognitive behavioral therapy in certain aspects. He encouraged his patients to actively identify irrational thoughts that worsened their emotional condition, to replace them with more balanced and reality-based narratives, and to use spiritual practice as a tool for emotional regulation. This structural similarity to Cognitive Restructuring in modern CBT (Beck, 1979) is analogical rather than methodologically identical al-Balkhi developed it from within the epistemological framework of tawhid, with an ultimate goal that extends beyond mere psychological wellbeing toward spiritual perfection. Al-Balkhi's legacy demonstrates that the Islamic intellectual tradition has long possessed rich resources for addressing matters of mental health in a systematic and holistic manner.

In the context of this research, al-Balkhi's legacy provides strong historical and intellectual legitimacy for the claim that Islamic-based approaches to mental health are

not a forced syncretism, but possess an authentic, systematic, and tested scholarly tradition. The balance (i'tidal) at the core of al-Balkhi's teaching is a clinical expression of the value of Wasatiyyah a convergence that reflects the internal coherence between theology and psychology within the Islamic tradition (Nasr, 2002).

Preventive Intervention Based on Worship and Akhlak

One of the deepest contributions of Islamic psychology is the recognition that the practice of worship has a scientifically measurable therapeutic function not merely a symbolic ritual of a superstitious nature. This recognition finds its empirical basis in contemporary neuroscience and positive psychology research, which increasingly confirms that structured spiritual practice has real and measurable effects on the human neurocognitive architecture (Newberg & Waldman, 2009). In this subsection, we analyze the psychological mechanisms of three major worship practices Zikir, Shalat, and the cultivation of Akhlak as preventive instruments against psychopathology, particularly that related to extremism.

Zikir (remembrance of Allah) operates through a mechanism known in contemporary psychology as cognitive defusion a core technique in Acceptance and Commitment Therapy (ACT) developed by Steven Hayes. In cognitive defusion, individuals are trained to observe their thoughts and emotions without becoming totally identified with them: instead of "I am angry," it becomes "I observe that a feeling of anger has arisen." Zikir naturally trains this capacity through the continuous redirection of awareness toward Allah as the most fundamental Reality, so that all thoughts, emotions, and ideological narratives being temporary are placed in proper proportion (Musa & Shaharom, 2013). In the Sufi tradition, this process is called Tajalli the cleansing of the mirror of the soul from the rust of the ego, so that reality is no longer distorted by narrow interests and prejudices.

Neuroscience research supports this effect empirically. A study by Elias et al. (2011) using EEG showed that repeated zikir practice produces a significant increase in alpha waves in the frontal cortex a pattern correlated with a state of relaxed alertness and a decrease in amygdala activity, which plays a role in fear and anger responses. Neurobiologically, this means that routine zikir trains the brain to respond to stress triggers more calmly and proportionately precisely the opposite of the pattern of emotional reactivity that characterizes individuals with extremist tendencies (Decety et al., 2015).

Shalat, as a worship practice structured five times a day, can be understood as a temporally programmed system of emotional regulation. Each prayer session involves: (a) physical preparation (wudu), which has a sensory grounding effect; (b) structured physical movements (qiyam, ruku', sujud) that activate the parasympathetic nervous system and lower cortisol levels; (c) rhythmic vocalization (recitation of the Qur'an and prayers) that stimulates coherent brain waves; and (d) deliberate orientation of consciousness (niat and khusyu') that trains the capacity for focused attention (Doufesh et al., 2012; Newberg & Waldman, 2009). Most clinically relevant is the position of sujud, in which the head touches the ground neurologically increasing blood flow to the

prefrontal cortex, and psychologically and spiritually representing the maximal point of *tawadul* (humility), which stands diametrically opposed to ideological narcissism.

The dimension of *akhlak* provides a third layer in this preventive intervention system. The value of *Sabar* in Islamic psychology refers to cognitive resilience in the face of frustration, the ability to delay gratification, and emotional stability in uncertain situations corresponding to the construct of “grit” (Duckworth, 2016) and “distress tolerance” in DBT. This capacity is precisely what is needed to resist offers of radicalization, which often present instant solutions. Likewise, the value of *Syukur* or in positive psychology terminology, “gratitude” has been consistently shown to be a strong protective factor against depression and negative rumination (Emmons & McCullough, 2003; Seligman et al., 2005).

The Concept of Qalb Salim as the Ultimate Goal of Holistic Mental Health

Qalb Salim a sound, healthy, and pure heart is a Qur'anic concept (QS. *Asy-Syu'ara*: 88–89) stating that on the Day when neither wealth nor children will be of any benefit, the only one who will benefit is the one who comes before Allah with a sound heart. The normative foundation of this concept is reinforced by a hadith of the Prophet (peace be upon him), narrated by al-Nu'man ibn Basyir and recorded in *Shahih al-Bukhari* and *Shahih Muslim*: “Beware, verily within the body there is a lump of flesh (*mudhghah*); if it is sound, the whole body is sound, and if it is corrupt, the whole body is corrupt. Beware, it is the *qalb*.” This hadith explicitly places the health of the *qalb* as the basis for the integrity of the entire human personality a principle that resonates deeply with the contemporary holistic clinical psychology perspective (Bukhari, no. 52; Muslim, no. 1599).

Within Faruque's spectrum framework, *Qalb Salim* can be operationally defined as a condition in which: (a) the bio-physiological dimension is fulfilled and maintained proportionally without falling into hedonism; (b) the socio-cultural dimension is healthily connected to a diverse community; (c) the cognito-experiential dimension is clear of cognitive distortion and ideological rigidity; and (d) the ethical-spiritual dimension finds its true object of transcendence namely Allah as the Absolute Reality, not an ideology or a human group treated as if Divine. In Western psychology, the construct closest to *Qalb Salim* is eudaimonic wellbeing as formulated by Ryff (1989), which includes self-acceptance, purpose in life, personal growth, environmental mastery, autonomy, and positive relations with others. Furthermore, Seligman's (2011) PERMA model comprising Positive emotions, Engagement, Relationships, Meaning, and Accomplishment offers an interesting operational correspondence. Yet *Qalb Salim* surpasses both models in one fundamental respect: it places the vertical dimension of the soul's relationship with Allah as the foundation that determines the quality of all other horizontal dimensions (Faruque, 2020; Badri, 2013).

Imam Al-Ghazali, in *Ihya' Ulum al-Din*, provides a profound analysis of the diseases of the *Qalb* (*amrad al-qulub*) that is relevant to this discussion. Al-Ghazali identifies *hasad* (envy), *kibr* (arrogance), *hub al-jah* (love of position/status), and *ghadab* (uncontrolled anger) as the four main diseases of the soul that hinder the attainment of *Qalb Salim*. What is striking is that these four diseases correspond precisely to the psychological

characteristics we have identified as components of the “extremist personality syndrome”: *hasad* toward groups considered more fortunate; *kibr* manifesting as ideological narcissism; *hub al-jah* driving status competition within the hierarchy of extremist movements; and *ghadab* fueling acts of violence. Al-Ghazali thus accurately mapped the psychology of extremism, at least nine hundred years before modern psychology began to study it.

The attainment of *Qalb Salim* requires *Tajarrud* a concept rooted in the Sunni Sufi tradition, as formulated by Al-Ghazali in *Ihya' Ulum al-Din* and reinforced by Ibn 'Ata'illah al-Iskandari in *Al-Hikam*. Unlike the concept of *Tajarrud* in more speculative streams of Sufism, such as certain *wujudiyah* groups, *Tajarrud* in the Sunni tradition referred to here specifically denotes the gradual process of self-detachment from narrow ego-attachment not a rejection of the world or pantheistic dissolution into the Divine essence, but an ontological shift in how the individual relates to reality: from having to being, from identification with temporary objects toward awareness of a transcendent subjectivity that is accountable before Allah.

In Western psychology, the process that phenomenologically resembles *Tajarrud* is the concept of “self-transcendence” formulated by Abraham Maslow as the highest peak of his hierarchy of needs (Koltko-Rivera, 2006). However, the differences in psychological mechanism must be explicitly acknowledged. Maslow's self-transcendence is phenomenological-humanistic: it is a peak experience that is spontaneous, individual, and not bound to structured spiritual practice. In contrast, *Tajarrud* in the Sunni Sufi tradition is a methodical, gradual, and structured process carried out through programmed spiritual practices such as *khalwat* (seclusion for a certain period), *mujahadah* (consistent spiritual exercise), and *muraqabah* (continuous inner monitoring) under the guidance of a *mursyid* (spiritual guide). *Tajarrud* also has a clear transcendent purpose: not merely self-realization in the humanistic sense, but complete servitude to Allah (*'ubudiyah kamilah*), which constitutes the true condition of freedom from the domination of desires (*hawa nafsu*) and constraining ideologies.

The relevance of *Tajarrud* for the prevention of extremism is direct and fundamental. Radicalization, at its deepest psychological level, is a process of over-identification with an external object an ideology, movement, or charismatic leader that subsequently replaces the transcendent function of the self. *Tajarrud* severs this mechanism not through rejection or repression, but through a shift of the locus of identity to a deeper and more stable dimension: a spiritual awareness that cannot be seized or destroyed by any ideological narrative. An individual who has attained a meaningful stage of *Tajarrud* even in its partial form is psychologically “unavailable” for the process of radicalization, because the existential needs typically exploited by extremist recruiters have already been fulfilled from within.

William James, in *The Varieties of Religious Experience* (1902), describes authentic mystical experiences as having four characteristics: ineffability, noetic quality, transiency, and passivity. Its noetic dimension is most relevant: an experience of unity that transcends the boundaries of individual and group ego provides a direct knowing

that humanity is one. In the Islamic Sufi tradition, this maqam is referred to as fana' fi al-haqq a condition in which the seeds of extremism organically find no fertile ground in which to grow.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This research has demonstrated that religious moderation (Wasatiyyah) is not merely a normative-religious value, but a psychological condition that is clinically essential to mental health. Its normative foundation is firmly rooted in the maqashid al-shariah tradition as formulated by Ibn 'Asyur and Al-Qaradawi, and confirmed by the Prophet's hadith on the centrality of the qalb to the integrity of human personality. Through Faruque's framework of the self-spectrum, it is shown that extremism is a pathology of reductionism a failure to recognize the multidimensional wholeness of the self. Conversely, moderation provides room for cognitive flexibility, psychological security, and spiritual integration that form the foundation of holistic mental health.

Al-Balkhi's intellectual legacy reinforces this argument, albeit with the acknowledgment that his classical philosophical-clinical approach differs epistemologically from modern DSM/CBT standards. Islamic worship practices Zikir, Shalat, and the cultivation of Akhlak have therapeutic mechanisms that are measurable through neuroscience and can be integrated into contemporary clinical interventions. The ultimate goal of this entire system is Qalb Salim: the harmonious integration of all dimensions of the self, which surpasses Western wellbeing constructs such as PERMA and eudaimonic wellbeing in terms of its vertical dimension, while simultaneously serving as the strongest form of immunity against radicalization.

Recommendations

Based on the findings above, this research recommends the following:

- (1) Mental health practitioners in Muslim communities should adopt the principle of Wasatiyyah as a clinical methodology for training cognitive flexibility in clients vulnerable to radicalization.
- (2) Islamic educational institutions need to integrate a mental health curriculum based on Islamic Psychology that explicitly connects the value of moderation with the wellbeing of the soul.
- (3) Further quantitative and qualitative empirical research needs to be conducted to test the correlation between the level of religious moderation and measurable mental health indicators. Recommended research designs include the use of validated instruments such as the Multidimensional Measure of Islamic Religiosity (MMIR), the Religious Moderation Assessment (RMA), or the development of a new, psychometrically validated Wasatiyyah scale within the context of Indonesian Muslim society.
- (4) The development of Wasatiyyah-based clinical intervention modules integrating contemporary cognitive-behavioral psychological techniques with Islamic spiritual practices should be prioritized by Islamic psychology research institutions.

- (5) Fatwa institutions and religious authorities, particularly the Indonesian Ulema Council (MUI), Nahdlatul Ulama, and Muhammadiyah, are encouraged to formally integrate the Wasatiyyah-based Islamic psychology approach into their guidelines, fatwas, and religious development programs. This institutional dimension is important so that the recommendations are not merely academic, but have a concrete impact at the level of religious policy and pastoral practice at the grassroots level.

REFERENCES

- Al-Balkhi, Abu Zayd. *Masalih al-Abdan wa al-Anfus*. Diterjemahkan dan diedit oleh M. Badri. Kairo: IIIT, 2013.
- Al-Bukhari, Muhammad ibn Ismail. *Shahih al-Bukhari*. Kairo: Dar al-Tauq al-Najah, 1422 H.
- Al-Ghazali, Abu Hamid. *Ihya' Ulum al-Din*. 4 jilid. Kairo: Dar al-Hadith, 2004.
- Al-Krenawi, A., & Graham, J. R. "Culturally Sensitive Social Work Practice with Arab Clients in Mental Health Settings." *Health & Social Work* 25, no. 1 (2000): 9–22.
- Al-Maraghi, Ahmad Mustafa. *Tafsir al-Maraghi*. 30 jilid. Kairo: Matba'ah Mustafa al-Babi al-Halabi, 1946.
- Al-Qaradawi, Yusuf. *Al-Shahwah al-Islamiyyah: Bayna al-Juhud wa al-Tatharruf*. Kairo: Dar al-Shahwah, 1996.
- Al-Thabari, Muhammad ibn Jarir. *Jami' al-Bayan fi Ta'wil al-Qur'an*. 24 jilid. Diedit oleh Ahmad Shakir. Kairo: Muassasah al-Risalah, 2000.
- Baars, B. J. *A Cognitive Theory of Consciousness*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988.
- Badri, M. *Abu Zayd al-Balkhi's Sustainance of the Soul: The Cognitive Behavior Therapy of a Ninth Century Physician*. London: IIIT, 2013.
- Bafadal, I. (2026). *Psikologi remaja: Sebuah pendekatan holistik, Islami, dan kontekstual*. Pustaka Arsha Media.
- Beck, A. T. *Cognitive Therapy and the Emotional Disorders*. New York: Meridian, 1979.
- Black, D. L. "Avicenna on Self-Awareness and Knowing that One Knows." Dalam *The Unity of Science in the Arabic Tradition*, diedit oleh S. Rahman et al. Springer, 2010.
- Decety, J., Pape, R., & Workman, C. I. "A Multilevel Social Neuroscience Perspective on Radicalization and Terrorism." *Social Neuroscience* 10, no. 3 (2015): 113–132.
- Doufesh, H., Faisal, T., Lim, K. S., & Ibrahim, F. "EEG Spectral Analysis on Muslim Prayers." *Applied Psychophysiology and Biofeedback* 37, no. 1 (2012): 11–18.
- Duckworth, A. *Grit: The Power of Passion and Perseverance*. New York: Scribner, 2016.
- Elias, Z. Z., Bakar, A. A., & Harun, Z. "The Effects of Zikir on EEG Signals." *Procedia Engineering* 41 (2011): 1705–1711.

- Emmons, R. A., & McCullough, M. E. "Counting Blessings Versus Burdens." *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* 84, no. 2 (2003): 377–389.
- Erikson, E. H. *Identity: Youth and Crisis*. New York: Norton, 1968.
- Esposito, J. L. *Islam: The Straight Path*. 5th ed. New York: Oxford University Press, 2016.
- Faruque, M. U. *Sculpting the Self: Islam, Selfhood, and Human Flourishing*. Michigan: University of Michigan Press, 2020.
- Haque, A. "Psychology from Islamic Perspective: Contributions of Early Muslim Scholars and Challenges to Contemporary Muslim Psychologists." *Journal of Religion and Health* 43, no. 4 (2004): 357–377.
- Hashim, R. *Education and the Muslim World: Challenge and Response*. Islamabad: IPS Press, 2018.
- Ibn 'Asyur, Muhammad al-Tahir. *Maqashid al-Syari'ah al-Islamiyyah*. Amman: Dar al-Nafais, 2001.
- Ibn Katsir, Ismail ibn 'Umar. *Tafsir al-Qur'an al-'Azim*. 8 jilid. Diedit oleh Sami al-Salamah. Riyadh: Dar Thaybah, 1999.
- James, W. *The Varieties of Religious Experience*. New York: Longmans, Green & Co., 1902.
- Kamali, M. H. *The Middle Path of Moderation in Islam: The Qur'anic Principle of Wasatiyyah*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015.
- Koltko-Rivera, M. E. "Rediscovering the Later Version of Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs." *Review of General Psychology* 10, no. 4 (2006): 302–317.
- McCrae, R. R., & Costa, P. T. "Personality Trait Structure as a Human Universal." *American Psychologist* 52, no. 5 (1997): 509–516.
- Muhtarom, A., et al. *Moderasi Beragama: Dari Indonesia untuk Dunia*. Jakarta: Kementerian Agama RI, 2022.
- Muslim ibn al-Hajjaj. *Shahih Muslim*. Diedit oleh Muhammad Fu'ad 'Abd al-Baqi. Kairo: Dar Ihya' al-Turath al-'Arabi, t.t.
- Musa, M., & Shaharom, M. H. *Spiritual-based Psychotherapy: An Islamic Perspective*. Kuala Lumpur: IIUM Press, 2013.
- Nasr, S. H. *The Heart of Islam: Enduring Values for Humanity*. New York: HarperOne, 2002.
- Newberg, A., & Waldman, M. R. *How God Changes Your Brain*. New York: Ballantine Books, 2009.
- Piaget, J. "Intellectual Evolution from Adolescence to Adulthood." *Human Development* 15 (1972): 1–12.
- Ramdhani, N. "Adaptasi Bahasa dan Budaya Inventori Big Five." *Jurnal Psikologi* 39, no. 2 (2012): 189–207.
- Rokeach, M. *The Open and Closed Mind*. New York: Basic Books, 1960.

- Rudolph, U. *Al-Maturidi and the Development of Sunni Theology in Samarkand*. Diterjemahkan oleh R. Adem. Leiden: Brill, 2015.
- Ryff, C. D. "Happiness is Everything, or is it? Explorations on the Meaning of Psychological Well-Being." *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* 57, no. 6 (1989): 1069–1081.
- Sageman, M. *Understanding Terror Networks*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2004.
- Seligman, M. E. P. *Flourish: A Visionary New Understanding of Happiness and Well-Being*. New York: Free Press, 2011.
- Seligman, M. E. P., Steen, T. A., Park, N., & Peterson, C. "Positive Psychology Progress." *American Psychologist* 60, no. 5 (2005): 410–421.
- Silber, M. D., & Bhatt, A. *Radicalization in the West: The Homegrown Threat*. New York: NYPD Intelligence Division, 2017.
- Snyder, H. "Literature Review as a Research Methodology." *Journal of Business Research* 104 (2019): 333–339.
- Ullmann, M. *Islamic Medicine*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1978.
- Utz, A. *Psychology from the Islamic Perspective*. Riyadh: International Islamic Publishing House, 2011.
- Widhiarso, W., & Suhapti, R. "Eksplorasi Butir Alat Ukur Kepribadian Lima Faktor dalam Konteks Indonesia." *Jurnal Psikologi* 36, no. 1 (2009): 58–70.
- Wiktorowicz, Q. *Radical Islam Rising: Muslim Extremism in the West*. Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield, 2014.

THE BELANGAR TRADITION OF THE SASAK COMMUNITY: ARTICULATION OF RELIGIOUS VALUES AND SOCIAL SOLIDARITY

Fitria Sabila¹⁾, Kamarudin Zaelani²⁾, Najamudin³⁾

^{1, 2, 3} Universitas Islam Negeri Mataram, Indonesia

email: fitriasabila85@gmail.com

email: kamarudinzaelani@uinmataram.ac.id

email: najamudin82@uinmataram.ac.id

Abstract

The Belangar tradition is a cultural heritage practiced by the Sasak community in Lombok, reflecting a syncretism between Islamic values and local wisdom. This study aims to examine the role of Belangar in strengthening social solidarity and aligning religious values with local culture, employing the theory of religious-cultural syncretism and Durkheim's theory of collective ritual as the epistemological foundation for reading the relationship between ritual practice and social cohesion. Unlike previous studies on Belangar, which tend to be descriptive, this research offers novelty by exploring the internal tensions between Belangar practices and more puritanical religious views, as well as critically analyzing the adaptation of this tradition in the digital era. Utilizing a qualitative approach and case study methodology, data were collected through participatory observation, in-depth interviews, and documentary analysis. The findings indicate that Belangar serves not only as a religious ritual but also as a platform for enhancing social bonds within the community, involving various social strata, including the youth, who now leverage social media to promote this rich and meaningful tradition. The results depict the adaptation of the Belangar tradition in the face of modernization, where the use of digital technology helps maintain the relevance of local culture. This research underscores the importance of cultural education to ensure the continuity of local values in a modern context. As a symbol of unity and social concern, Belangar reflects the dynamics between culture and religion in the lives of the Sasak people.

Keywords: *Belangar Tradition; Sasak Community; Social Solidarity; Religion; Culture*

Abstrak

Tradisi Belangar merupakan warisan budaya yang dijalankan oleh masyarakat Sasak di Lombok, yang merefleksikan sinkretisme antara nilai-nilai keislaman dan kearifan lokal. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengkaji peran Belangar dalam memperkuat solidaritas sosial dan menyelaraskan nilai-nilai agama serta budaya lokal, dengan menggunakan kerangka teori sinkretisme agama-budaya dan teori ritual kolektif Durkheim sebagai landasan epistemologis untuk membaca relasi antara praktik ritual dan kohesi sosial. Berbeda dari kajian-kajian terdahulu tentang Belangar yang cenderung deskriptif, penelitian ini menawarkan kebaruan dengan menelusuri ketegangan internal antara praktik Belangar dan pandangan keagamaan yang lebih puritan, serta menganalisis adaptasi tradisi ini di era digital secara lebih kritis. Melalui pendekatan kualitatif dan metode studi kasus, data diperoleh melalui observasi partisipatif, wawancara mendalam, dan analisis dokumentasi. Temuan menunjukkan bahwa Belangar tidak hanya berfungsi sebagai ritual keagamaan tetapi juga sebagai platform penguatan ikatan sosial dalam komunitas, dengan pelibatan berbagai lapisan masyarakat, termasuk generasi muda yang kini memanfaatkan media sosial untuk mempromosikan tradisi yang kaya akan makna ini. Hasil penelitian menggambarkan adaptasi tradisi Belangar dalam menghadapi modernisasi, di mana penggunaan teknologi digital mampu menjaga relevansi budaya lokal. Penelitian ini menggarisbawahi pentingnya pendidikan budaya untuk memastikan kesinambungan nilai-nilai lokal dalam konteks modern. Sebagai

simbol persatuan dan kepedulian sosial, Belangar mencerminkan dinamika antara budaya dan agama dalam kehidupan masyarakat Sasak.

Kata kunci: *Tradisi Belangar; Masyarakat Sasak; Solidaritas Sosial; Agama; Budaya*

INTRODUCTION

Tradition is a cultural heritage preserved from generation to generation as the identity of a community. In Lombok, the Sasak community has a unique tradition called "Belangar," a series of mourning rituals performed after a person's death. This tradition serves not only as a final tribute to the deceased, but also as a means of healing for the grieving family and a vehicle for strengthening social bonds within the community (Hayati, 2020).

The implementation of Belangar takes place gradually over several important periods. The main stages include Belangar Nelong (the third day), Mituk (the seventh day), Nyiwak (the ninth day), Metang (the fortieth day), Nyatus (the hundredth day), and Haul (the annual commemoration). Each stage carries its own philosophical meaning according to the beliefs of the Sasak community. On the third and seventh days, the focus is on the release of the spirit and the acceptance of loss, while the fortieth and hundredth days are believed to mark the completion of the spirit's journey toward the realm of Barzakh (the intermediate realm).

From a fiqh perspective, the practices of tahlilan and the recitation of Surat Yasin, which form the core of the Belangar ritual, have a basis in the ahlussunnah tradition, particularly in the view held by the majority of Nahdlatul Ulama scholars, who regard alms, prayer, and the recitation of the Qur'an for the deceased as beneficial deeds based on general religious teachings concerning prayer and charity for those who have passed away. However, the practice of designating specific commemorative days such as Nelong, Mituk, and Nyatus has no explicit textual basis in the Qur'an and Hadith, and is regarded by some scholars as a practice derived from custom (al-'urf) that was subsequently given an Islamic character (the Islamization of custom). Debates among local scholars regarding the validity of this practice generally revolve around the concept of al-'urf al-shahih (legitimate custom) versus bid'ah, a debate that will be discussed further in the discussion section.

The implementation of Belangar involves various religious and cultural rituals. The grieving family invites neighbors and relatives to perform tahlilan together (collective prayer recitation), recitation of the Qur'an (particularly Surat Yasin), and prayers for the honor of the deceased. Distinctively, this tradition is accompanied by the distribution of food known as berkat, consisting of rice and side dishes shared among all participants. This food carries not only social value, but is also regarded as a form of charity for the deceased (Saputra, 2018).

Social and religious life in Indonesia generally reflects a unique diversity, in which religious values interact dynamically with local traditions in each region. As a country with a multi-religious society, Indonesia exhibits a distinctive pattern of religious interaction, in which religion is not merely a private matter but also influences various aspects of

social and cultural life. In many regions, including within the Sasak community in Lombok, religion functions as a moral compass and a social adhesive that unites the community within a framework of noble values (Harnish, 2005).

The Sasak community, as part of Indonesia's cultural mosaic, has developed a distinctive religious life by integrating the Islamic teachings adhered to by the majority with deeply rooted local wisdom. Here, religion and tradition do not negate one another, but rather enrich each other in shaping a harmonious social life. Mosques and prayer halls (musholla) serve as multifunctional centers not only for worship, but also for community deliberation, the resolution of social issues, and educational activities.

The social aspect of Belangar is particularly prominent. The Sasak community upholds the principle of "easing burdens together," such that when a person dies, the entire community works together to provide assistance. Such assistance may take the form of labor, food supplies, or monetary contributions. This tradition reflects the solidarity characteristic of agrarian societies that highly value communal life. Indeed, within Sasak social structure, the scale and grandeur of a Belangar event often reflects the social status of the family within the community.

The Belangar tradition plays an important role in the religious and social life of the Sasak community, an ethnic group residing on the island of Lombok, Indonesia. This tradition stems from spiritual and social practices, and functions not only as a tribute to ancestral spirits, but also as a platform for strengthening solidarity among community members. This practice reflects the interaction between religious values and local wisdom, as expressed by Clifford Geertz (1960, p. 112), who stated that "culture is an inherited system of symbolic meanings that enables individuals to understand meaning in their lives." However, Geertz's work on Islam in Java has often been criticized for tending to view the religious syncretism of local communities through an exotic-Western framework that positions "local" Islamic practices as a less pure variant compared to normative Islam. More emic studies on the dynamics of Islam in Lombok, such as research on Islam Wetu Telu conducted by local scholars (Cederroth, 1981; Telle, 2009), offer a more contextual perspective: that the relationship between adat and shariah in Lombok is not a mixture of two separate entities, but rather a continuum of Islamic understanding interpreted differently by different communities, including those of Islam Wetu Telu and Islam Waktu Lima. This perspective offers a more accurate framework for reading the position of Belangar not as a "mixture" of Islam and culture, but as one of the legitimate expressions of Sasak Islam in the view of the community that practices it.

The Sasak community often finds itself caught in a debate between modernity and tradition. Research by Kottak (2012, p. 114) emphasizes that "cultural adaptation is an important response to environmental change, including globalization, which threatens the continuity of local traditions." The Belangar tradition demonstrates its ability to transform in order to remain relevant without losing its spiritual essence, such as through the use of social media to disseminate information and carry out rituals.

This study aims to examine how the religious values of the Sasak community are integrated into the cultural practice of Belangar, as noted by Arbuckle (2010, p. 45), who

stated that “religious and cultural practices are inseparable; both shape each other through complex interactions.” Using a qualitative approach and case study method, this research seeks to uncover the dynamics of socio-religious life within the Belangar tradition in Dusun Kelebut, Desa Kebon Ayu, while also filling a gap in previous studies that have not examined the internal tensions between this customary practice and more puritanical religious views, as well as the gender dimension embedded in the division of ritual roles.

METHOD

To examine the Belangar tradition within the Sasak community, this research employs a qualitative approach using a case study method. This approach enables the researcher to gain an in-depth understanding of the meaning and social context of cultural practices. As noted by Creswell (2014, p. 41), “qualitative approaches focus on gaining an in-depth understanding of people and situations within a specific social context.” The case study method was chosen because, as explained by Yin (2014, p. 16), “this method is used to understand a phenomenon within its real-life context, particularly when the boundaries between the phenomenon and its context are not clearly evident.”

Data collection was carried out through three main techniques. First, participatory observation, in which the researcher was directly involved in the implementation of the Belangar ritual in Dusun Kelebut. According to Spradley (2016, p. 69), “participatory observation provides the researcher with direct access to the social experiences encountered by the research subjects.” Second, in-depth interviews with community leaders, religious figures, and members of the Sasak community to obtain firsthand perspectives on the meaning and purpose of the tradition. Kvale (2007, p. 43) asserts that “in-depth interviews provide an opportunity to explore individuals' subjective views within their social context.” Third, documentary analysis involving texts, photographs, and videos related to the Belangar tradition. Bowen (2009, p. 33) states that “document analysis can provide deep historical and cultural context for understanding present-day practices.”

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

1. Research Findings

a. Adaptation of Tradition in the Modern Context

Based on observation, interviews, and documentation in Dusun Kelebut, it was found that the community uses smartphones and tablets to document moments of Belangar and share them on social media platforms such as Facebook and Instagram. Many residents create special hashtags to reach a wider audience. Digital posters and invitations are created using graphic design applications and distributed through community WhatsApp groups, replacing the traditional word-of-mouth method.

One community leader, Mr. Mahsin, stated, “With social media, we can invite more people to participate in the Belangar tradition.” This statement reflects how digital

media does not replace the social function of the tradition, but rather expands the reach of invitations that were previously limited to face-to-face relationships. Ms. Harni, from the younger generation, added, "I feel more involved because I can see photos and videos from friends on social media, which encourages me to understand the values of Belangar more deeply." Ms. Harni's statement is significant because it shows that the digital engagement of the younger generation is not passive, as mere spectators, but rather serves as an entry point for the process of internalizing values that were previously considered "a matter for the elders." The community has also produced documentary videos uploaded to YouTube, introducing this tradition to communities outside the region.

This digital adaptation aligns with Kottak's (2012, p. 114) statement that "cultural adaptation is an important response to environmental change, including globalization, which threatens the continuity of local traditions," and with Wahid's (2017, p. 88) findings regarding the role of social media in preserving traditions in Lombok. Nevertheless, digital adaptation alone does not guarantee a deep transmission of values to the younger generation if it is not accompanied by a more systematic educational pathway. Based on findings at the research site, no local content curriculum program has been identified at the elementary or junior secondary school level in Desa Kebon Ayu that explicitly incorporates material on the Belangar tradition or Sasak customary death rituals in general. Learning about the values of Belangar currently still takes place informally, through the direct participation of children and adolescents in rituals alongside their parents, as well as through religious study sessions (*pengajian*) at the *musholla* that occasionally touch on the meaning of *tahlilan* and charity for the deceased. The absence of this formal educational pathway represents a vulnerable point for the continuity of the tradition a finding that will be followed up in the recommendations section.

b. Strengthening Social Solidarity

Observations show that during the implementation of Belangar, the community gathers in large groups. This moment is used not only for ritual purposes, but also as an opportunity for interaction and sharing stories. Ms. Mahnik, a local resident, explained, "Besides honoring our ancestors, we gather to strengthen relationships with neighbors and family. During Belangar, we share our joys and sorrows, which makes us feel closer to one another." Ms. Mahnik's emphasis on "sharing joys and sorrows" indicates that the function of Belangar does not stop merely at the moment of death itself, but becomes a social space that reopens networks of relationships that may have loosened in everyday life due to each individual's busy schedule.

Mr. Suhur, a community leader, affirmed, "Belangar is an opportunity to strengthen the bonds of brotherhood. In the busyness of life, we may find it difficult to meet; but at this event, we can exchange stories and support one another." This statement underscores the function of Belangar as a mechanism of social compensation amid increasingly individualistic modern life patterns the ritual of death, paradoxically, becomes one of the few spaces that still compels intensive collective involvement. Photo and video documentation depict moments of strong social interaction: children playing

together, adults sharing stories, families gathering in one place. After Belangar, many participants continue their interactions through reunions and group discussion forums.

This finding aligns with Geertz's (1960, p. 112) statement that "culture is an inherited system of symbolic meanings that enables individuals to understand meaning in their lives." In this context, Belangar becomes a symbol of unity and social concern that strengthens bonds among community members, as will be elaborated further through Durkheim's (1912) theory of collective ritual in the discussion section.

c. Synergy between Religion and Culture, and the Division of Gender Roles

Observations during the Belangar ritual revealed strong religious elements: prayers and offerings before the event begins, recitation of sacred verses during the serving of food, as well as the slaughtering of animals carried out with great respect. Kiai Abdul, a local religious figure, stated, "Belangar is not merely about celebrating tradition; it is also about remembering and giving thanks for Allah's blessings. Every act within it is a form of our devotion."

Ms. Sari added, "During Belangar, we always pray for Allah's blessings for our family and community. This is the right moment to draw closer to Allah while preserving our culture." The statements from Kiai Abdul and Ms. Sari, when read side by side, illustrate how formal religious authority (represented by the religious figure) and personal religious devotion (represented by an ordinary community member) reinforce one another in interpreting Belangar as worship not merely as custom a convergence of meaning that is one of the keys to the widespread acceptance of this tradition among the religious Sasak community.

In terms of role distribution, field observations show a gender-based differentiation of roles in the implementation of Belangar, although this differentiation is complementary in nature and does not indicate an explicit hierarchy in terms of social status. Men generally take on roles in ritual aspects that are public and directly related to formal religious authority: leading the tahlilan and the recitation of Yasin, organizing the slaughtering of animals, and serving as male hosts. Women, on the other hand, take on the primary role in the domestic-productive domain that forms the logistical backbone of Belangar: preparing and managing the distribution of berkat, coordinating the communal kitchen, and hosting female guests. This division reflects a common pattern in religious rituals in many Indonesian Muslim communities, in which the public-ritual domain tends to be dominated by men while the domestic-logistical domain becomes the domain of women. It is important to note that this division does not necessarily imply subordination; as seen in the central roles of Ms. Mahnik and Ms. Sari in providing meaning and spiritual narrative to this tradition, women possess significant agency in passing down and negotiating the meaning of Belangar to the next generation, although this role takes place within an informal domain and rarely receives the formal recognition accorded to male religious figures. This initial finding indicates that the gender dimension in Belangar requires further, more in-depth study, particularly regarding how women produce and transmit ritual knowledge across generations.

This finding aligns with the view of Arbuckle (2010, p. 45), who highlights that “religious and cultural practices are inseparable; both shape each other through complex interactions.” The Sasak community demonstrates how the integration of spirituality and culture provides deeper meaning in their daily lives.

2. Discussion

The Belangar tradition within the Sasak community functions as a reflection of various aspects of socio-religious life. To gain a deeper understanding of how Belangar produces social cohesion, this research operationalizes Émile Durkheim's theory of collective ritual as formulated in *The Elementary Forms of Religious Life* (1912). Durkheim argued that religious rituals function to create what he termed “effervescence collective” an intense shared emotional state that is generated when a large number of individuals gather and engage in the same symbolic activity. In this state, the boundaries of individuals temporarily dissolve, and the sense of attachment to the group is significantly strengthened.

Operationalizing this concept against field data shows clear correspondence. The moment of the community gathering in large numbers during Belangar, the collective recitation of prayers, and the ritual of collectively eating *berkat* can be read as “moments of effervescence” in the Durkheimian sense moments in which individual identity is temporarily dissolved into a larger communal identity, as reflected in the testimonies of Ms. Mahnik and Mr. Suhur about “feeling closer to one another” and “strengthening the bonds of brotherhood.” Furthermore, Durkheim also distinguishes between objects considered profane (everyday) and sacred (extraordinary). In Belangar, *berkat* food which in everyday life is a profane object (merely food) is elevated through the ritual process into an object bearing sacred meaning, namely charity for the deceased a transformation of meaning that lies at the heart of what Durkheim calls the social function of religion: creating collective moral bonds through the veneration of shared symbols.

Nevertheless, the narrative of Belangar as a source of harmonious social cohesion should not be understood too idealistically without considering the tensions underlying it. As mentioned in the introduction, the practice of designating specific commemorative days in Belangar such as *Nelong*, *Mituk*, *Nyatus*, and *Haul* falls into the category of practices regarded by some as *bid'ah* due to the absence of explicit textual grounding. Groups with more puritanical or reformist religious orientations in Lombok, as in many other regions of Indonesia, tend to reject the designation of these commemorative days, although they generally do not reject the practices of *tahlilan* and almsgiving for the deceased themselves as practices separate from their scheduling. This tension, although not observed in the form of open conflict in *Dusun Kelebut*, is part of the broader religious discursive field within which the practice of Belangar exists. Acknowledging this tension is important because it shows that Belangar is not a practice accepted monolithically by all Muslims in Lombok, but rather a practice whose position is continuously negotiated within a plural field of Islamic discourse a dynamic that enriches, rather than weakens, our understanding of how local traditions and religious interpretations interact with one another.

The strength of Belangar in creating social solidarity, therefore, must be understood as a solidarity produced among the community that accepts and practices this tradition not as a universal consensus of the entire Sasak Muslim society. Within the context of the community that practices it, when the community unites in the Belangar ceremony, they not only support one another materially, but also reinforce the structure of social relations and the hierarchy of roles within it, including the gender-based division of roles as discussed in the findings section.

The challenge of preserving Belangar amid modernization underscores the importance of cultural education, as raised by Hobsbawm and Ranger (1983, p. 3): tradition must be nurtured and maintained within a contemporary context in order to remain relevant. Geertz (1973, p. 89) also emphasizes the importance of understanding cultural symbols and social practices as a method of adaptation. Through Belangar, the Sasak community finds a way to embrace modern values without losing the spirit of their tradition, demonstrating that culture and religion can mutually reinforce each other in an ever-changing context although, as has been described, this process of reinforcement takes place within a dynamic field of negotiation that is not entirely free from internal tension.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The Belangar tradition within the Sasak community reflects the complexity of the interaction between cultural preservation and the challenges of modernization. This practice serves not only as a means of maintaining cultural identity, but also as a pathway for fostering solidarity within the community through the mechanism of collective ritual, as explained by Durkheim. Adaptation through digital technology demonstrates that local traditions can remain relevant without losing their spiritual essence, as long as the underlying values continue to be upheld and passed down. At the same time, this study shows that Belangar is not a static tradition accepted uniformly, but rather a practice whose position is constantly negotiated within the local Islamic discursive field, and one that has a structure of gender role division warranting further attention in future studies.

Based on these findings, this research proposes several more specific and operationalizable recommendations:

- (1) Integration of a local content curriculum: The Education Office of West Lombok Regency, together with the Subject Teachers' Working Group (MGMP) for Islamic Religious Education at the elementary and junior secondary school levels, may develop a local content module containing material on the Belangar tradition, covering its procedures, the philosophical meaning of each stage, and its fiqh foundations. This module can be integrated into the subjects of Islamic Religious Education and Character Building, or into local content subjects related to regional culture.
- (2) Structural involvement of customary communities: The Village Government of Kebon Ayu may facilitate regular forums among customary leaders, religious figures, and schools to design field trip activities for students to ongoing Belangar

events, accompanied by explanations from community leaders such as Mr. Mahsin or Mr. Suhur, so that the transmission of values takes place contextually and directly from the holders of traditional knowledge.

- (3) Strengthening participatory digital documentation: A collaborative program between the local youth organization (karang taruna) and the cultural affairs office can be directed toward training the younger generation in more systematic audiovisual documentation of the Belangar tradition, including recording oral narratives from community leaders as a form of local knowledge archive accessible across generations.
- (4) Further research on the gender dimension: Given the initial findings regarding the division of gender roles in Belangar, which have not been explored in depth in this study, further research with a specific focus on women's experiences and agency in Sasak customary death rituals particularly their role in the intergenerational transmission of ritual knowledge is highly recommended.

REFERENCES

- Arbuckle, G. *Culture and Religion: The Role of Religion in the Culture of Society*. New York: Routledge, 2010.
- Berkes, F. *Sacred Ecology: Traditional Ecological Knowledge and Resource Management*. New York: Routledge, 2008.
- Bowen, G. A. "Document Analysis as a Qualitative Research Method." *Qualitative Research Journal* 9, no. 2 (2009): 27–40.
- Cederroth, S. *The Spell of the Ancestors and the Power of Mekkah: A Sasak Community on Lombok*. Gothenburg: Acta Universitatis Gothoburgensis, 1981.
- Creswell, J. W. *Research Design: Qualitative, Quantitative, and Mixed Methods Approaches*. Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications, 2014.
- Durkheim, E. *The Elementary Forms of Religious Life*. Diterjemahkan oleh Carol Cosman. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001 (karya asli diterbitkan 1912).
- Geertz, C. *The Religion of Java*. Glencoe: Free Press, 1960.
- Geertz, C. *The Interpretation of Cultures*. New York: Basic Books, 1973.
- Harnish, D. "New Traditions, Old Rituals: Negotiating Islam and Adat in Lombok." *Bijdragen tot de Taal-, Land- en Volkenkunde* 161, no. 1 (2005): 143–172.
- Hayati, N. "Tradisi Belangar sebagai Media Silaturahmi pada Masyarakat Sasak." *Jurnal Kajian Budaya Lombok* 5, no. 2 (2020): 78–92.
- Hobsbawm, E. J., dan Ranger, T. *The Invention of Tradition*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983.
- Kottak, C. P. *Cultural Anthropology: Appreciating Cultural Diversity*. New York: McGraw-Hill, 2012.
- Kvale, S. *Doing Interviews*. London: Sage Publications, 2007.

- Saputra, A. "Ritual Kematian dalam Masyarakat Sasak: Studi tentang Makna dan Fungsi Belangar." *Jurnal Antropologi Sosial Budaya* 12, no. 1 (2018): 45–60.
- Spradley, J. P. *Participant Observation*. New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 2016.
- Telle, K. "Spirited Topographies: Tracing Cosmologies in Lombok." Dalam *Spirited Politics: Religion and Public Life in Contemporary Southeast Asia*, diedit oleh A. Willford & K. M. George. Ithaca: Cornell Southeast Asia Program, 2009.
- Wahid, F. "Media Sosial dan Tradisi: Menggali Dinamika Budaya di Lombok." *Jurnal Kajian Budaya* 8, no. 1 (2017): 80–95.
- Yin, R. K. *Case Study Research: Design and Methods*. Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications, 2014.

GLOBAL COMMUNICATION ETHICS AND DIGITAL LITERACY: BUILDING A MODERATE VIRTUAL LEARNING SPACE IN THE CYBER ERA

Soni Ariawan¹⁾, Jumarim²⁾, Akhmad Asyari³⁾, Suparlan⁴⁾

¹ School of Languages and Cultures, the University of Queensland, Australia

^{2, 3} Universitas Islam Negeri Mataram, Indonesia

⁴ Universitas Nahdlatul Wathan Mataram, Indonesia

email: s.ariawan@uq.edu.au

email: jumarim@uinmataram.ac.id

email: akhmadasyari@uinmataram.ac.id

email: suparlan@unwmataram.ac.id

Abstract

This research examines the convergence of global communication ethics and digital literacy within the context of English Language Teaching (ELT) in the cyber era, grounded in the values of Islamic moderation (Islam Washathiyah). The study takes the form of an analytical-critical literature review reinforced by global empirical data on the contemporary digital landscape. The main conceptual contribution of this research lies in the repositioning of Washathiyah: not merely as a complementary value or ethical qualifier to existing Western frameworks of digital literacy and intercultural competence, but as an epistemological principle that reshapes how those frameworks are understood and operationalized. By integrating the Spectrum Concept of the Self theory, the framework of intercultural communicative competence, and critical digital literacy models, this research argues that the greatest threats within the digital ecosystem ranging from disinformation and hate speech to online radicalization are manifestations of a systemic ethical crisis. Data show that Indonesia, with 212 million active internet users and a digital literacy ranking of 64th out of 100 countries, stands at a critical crossroads between digital opportunity and threat. The findings identify three Washathiyah-based protective mechanisms that are genuinely novel in their framing: (1) critical digital literacy as an epistemological shield against disinformation, rooted in the principle of tabayyun rather than merely borrowed from it; (2) intercultural communicative competence grounded in the values of ta'aruf and tasamuh, which reconstructs not merely supplements Byram's ICC model; and (3) the design of a moderate virtual learning space (the WASH Framework), which positions teachers as facilitators of digital ethics. The implications of this research extend beyond the ELT context and offer a framework for the entire Muslim educational ecosystem in the cyber era.

Keywords: *Digital Literacy, Communication Ethics, ELT, Islamic Moderation, Virtual Learning Space, Washathiyah, Digital Disinformation*

Abstrak

Penelitian ini mengkaji pertemuan antara etika komunikasi global dan literasi digital dalam konteks pengajaran Bahasa Inggris (English Language Teaching/ELT) di era siber dengan berpijak pada nilai-nilai moderasi Islam (Islam Washathiyah). Penelitian bersifat studi literatur analitis-kritis yang diperkuat oleh data empiris global tentang lanskap digital kontemporer. Kontribusi konseptual utama penelitian ini terletak pada repositioning Washathiyah: bukan sekadar nilai pelengkap atau kualifikasi etis terhadap kerangka literasi digital dan kompetensi antarbudaya Barat yang sudah ada, melainkan sebagai prinsip epistemologis yang membentuk ulang cara kerangka-kerangka tersebut dipahami dan dioperasionalkan. Dengan mengintegrasikan teori Spectrum Concept of the Self, kerangka kompetensi komunikatif

antarbudaya, dan model literasi digital kritis, penelitian ini berargumen bahwa ancaman terbesar dalam ekosistem digital mulai dari disinformasi, ujaran kebencian, hingga radikalisme online merupakan manifestasi dari krisis etika yang bersifat sistemik. Data menunjukkan bahwa Indonesia, dengan 212 juta pengguna internet aktif dan tingkat literasi digital yang masih berada di peringkat ke-64 dari 100 negara, berada di persimpangan kritis antara peluang dan ancaman digital. Temuan penelitian mengidentifikasi tiga mekanisme protektif berbasis Washathiyah yang secara genuin baru dalam framing-nya: (1) literasi digital kritis sebagai perisai epistemologis terhadap disinformasi, yang berakar pada prinsip tabayyun bukan sekadar dipinjam darinya; (2) kompetensi komunikatif antarbudaya berbasis nilai ta'aruf dan tasamuh yang merekonstruksi, bukan hanya melengkapi, model ICC Byram; dan (3) desain ruang belajar virtual moderat (WASH Framework) yang menempatkan guru sebagai fasilitator etika digital. Implikasi penelitian ini melampaui konteks ELT dan menawarkan kerangka kerja bagi seluruh ekosistem pendidikan Muslim di era siber.

Kata Kunci: Literasi Digital; Etika Komunikasi; ELT; Moderasi Islam; Ruang Belajar Virtual; Washathiyah; Disinformasi Digital

INTRODUCTION

In the digital era moving at exponential speed, English Language Teaching has undergone a transformation that transcends mere methodological change. It has evolved into an arena where pedagogy, technology, and social ethics converge on a global stage. A student in Mataram can now practice speaking with a native speaker from London, discuss ideas with an academic from Cairo, or publish essays to a global readership all within seconds. Yet this speed and openness carries consequences far more complex than what appears on the surface.

Global data reveals a troubling paradox. On one hand, global internet penetration has reached 5.4 billion users, or 67.1% of the total world population (We Are Social & Meltwater, 2024). On the other, the World Economic Forum (2024) has ranked disinformation and misinformation as the number one global risk for the next two years, surpassing climate change and geopolitical conflict. In Indonesia specifically, the Ministry of Communication and Information Technology recorded more than 12,547 identified and addressed hoax contents throughout 2019–2024, with a significant spike during election periods and the pandemic (Kominfo, 2024). It is important to note that this figure represents content successfully identified by Kominfo's monitoring system, not an estimate of the total volume of disinformation actually circulating in Indonesia's digital space a significant epistemological distinction, given that institutional detection capacity inherently lags behind the speed of content production and distribution on digital platforms. The figure of 12,547 is thus more accurately read as a minimum indicator of the scale of the problem, rather than as a full representation of it. Notwithstanding this limitation, the year-on-year increase in identified content remains a relevant signal of a crisis in digital literacy and ethics that demands a systematic and foundational educational response.

This challenge carries a more specific and strategic dimension. There is an academic and moral mandate, explicitly articulated through the values of Islam Washathiyah Islamic moderation to ensure that digital transformation in learning is not only technically efficient, but also just, inclusive, and ethically grounded. Washathiyah, literally meaning the "middle path" (QS. Al-Baqarah: 143), is translated in the digital

context into the capacity to navigate a complex information ecosystem with a balance between openness and vigilance, and between freedom of expression and communicative responsibility.

The position of this research relative to the existing literature can be mapped across three lines of inquiry that have, until now, run relatively in parallel. First, the literature on critical digital literacy (Gilster, 1997; Hobbs, 2010; UNESCO, 2022; Jenkins et al., 2009), which has developed rapidly but is generally formulated within a secular-Western framework, without substantive engagement with the Islamic epistemological tradition. Second, the literature on intercultural communicative competence in ELT (Byram, 1997; Deardorff, 2006), which has become a dominant reference but is rarely engaged critically with non-Western ethical frameworks. Third, the literature on Islamic moderation and education (Kamali, 2015; UIN Mataram, 2021), which has developed within the context of Islamic studies but has not yet been extensively linked explicitly with the concrete issues of digital literacy and contemporary ELT pedagogy. This research is situated within the gap that emerges at the intersection of these three lines of inquiry: while the literature on technology integration in ELT is extensive, studies that explicitly integrate the perspective of Islamic moderation with critical digital literacy theory and cross-cultural communication ethics remain very limited, particularly within the context of Islamic educational institutions in Eastern Indonesia. This research aims to fill that gap by offering a coherent and empirically grounded analytical framework.

Structurally, this research explores four main dimensions: first, mapping the contemporary digital landscape and its implications for education; second, critical digital literacy as a Washathiyah-based protective mechanism; third, intercultural communication ethics in global interaction through digital platforms; and fourth, a model for designing a moderate and equitable virtual learning space.

METHOD

This research employs an analytical-critical literature review approach, reinforced by empirical data triangulation from various representative secondary sources. This method was chosen because the research objective is conceptual-normative: to construct a new theoretical framework connecting three fields that have until now run in parallel digital literacy, global communication ethics, and Islamic moderation values within the ELT context (Snyder, 2019).

The literature selection process was carried out through a structured search of the Scopus, Google Scholar, and ERIC databases using combinations of the keywords “digital literacy,” “intercultural communicative competence,” “online disinhibition,” “Washathiyah/Wasatiyyah,” and “ELT,” covering the publication range 1997–2024. The initial search yielded approximately 180 documents, which were then screened by abstract reading based on criteria of direct thematic relevance to one of the three lines of inquiry mentioned above. After screening, approximately 60 primary and secondary sources were retained for in-depth examination, as reflected in the bibliography. This approach does not follow a systematic protocol such as PRISMA, as the purpose of the

review is conceptual-synthetic (constructing a new theoretical framework) rather than descriptive-quantitative (exhaustively mapping the entire state of the art); nevertheless, this transparency in the selection process is intended to provide readers with a clear basis for assessing the representativeness of the proposed framework.

Data sources consist of three categories. First, primary academic literature encompassing foundational works in digital literacy (Gilster, 1997; Hobbs, 2010; UNESCO, 2022), communication ethics (Byram, 1997; Deardorff, 2006), and contemporary Islamic psychology (Faruque, 2020). Second, reports and empirical data from leading global research institutions, including We Are Social & Meltwater (2024), the World Economic Forum Global Risks Report (2024), the Economist Intelligence Unit Digital Education Report (2023), and reports from Kominfo (2024). Third, contextual empirical studies on the use of digital platforms in ELT learning in Indonesia, including research on HelloTalk, WhatsApp, and video conferencing platforms.

The analytical technique combines hermeneutic interpretation of normative Islamic texts on communication and information ethics with comparative analysis between global empirical findings and the contextual realities of education. The analytical framework employed is an integrative model that positions Washathiyah not as a separate independent variable, but as an epistemological principle permeating all dimensions of the inquiry.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

1. The Contemporary Digital Landscape: Opportunities, Risks, and the Urgency of an Educational Response

1.1 Indonesia's Digital Profile and Educational Implications

Indonesia is one of the most dynamic digital ecosystems in the world. The latest data from We Are Social & Meltwater (2024) shows that as of January 2024, Indonesia had 212.9 million active internet users an increase of 1.4% from the previous year equivalent to 76.8% of the total population. More significantly, the average Indonesian user spends 7 hours and 38 minutes per day online, placing the country among those with the highest internet usage intensity globally. Of that time, 3 hours and 11 minutes are devoted to social media, with the most popular platforms being YouTube (88%), WhatsApp (87%), Instagram (74%), TikTok (73%), and Facebook (69%).

However, data on the quality of digital literacy stands in stark contrast to these impressive penetration figures. The Economist Intelligence Unit (EIU) Digital Education Report 2023 ranks Indonesia 64th out of 100 countries in the digital education readiness index, well below Southeast Asian peers such as Singapore (2nd), Malaysia (28th), and Thailand (50th). More concerning, a survey by the Katadata Insight Center (2023) found that only 36% of Indonesians are able to identify hoaxes before sharing them meaning the majority of Indonesia's digital citizens remain vulnerable to the spread of disinformation.

Table 1. Indonesia's Digital Profile 2024 and Regional Comparison

Indicator	Indonesia	Malaysia	Thailand	Singapore
Internet Penetration	76.8%	89.6%	77.8%	96.9%
Hours Online/Day	7h 38m	8h 01m	7h 45m	6h 42m
Digital Literacy Rank (EIU 2023)	64	28	50	2
Hoax Prevalence (% of respondents exposed/month, self-reported)	61.3%	44.2%	52.7%	28.1%
Digital Classroom Access in Schools	62%	91%	78%	99%

Source: We Are Social & Meltwater (2024); EIU Digital Education Report (2023); Katadata Insight Center (2023); compiled by the authors. Methodological note: the "Hoax Prevalence" data represents the percentage of respondents who self-reported having been exposed to hoax content within the past month (self-claimed exposure by survey respondents), not a percentage independently verified through content audit. This distinction should be taken into account when reading cross-country comparisons, as the level of awareness of what is considered a "hoax" by respondents may vary across cultural contexts and each country's level of media literacy.

The gap between high digital penetration and a low digital literacy index creates what may be termed Indonesia's 'digital paradox': a society that is highly connected technologically yet not fully protected epistemologically. In the ELT context, this paradox is particularly relevant because English language learning increasingly relies on the very same digital platforms that serve as arenas for disinformation and harmful content.

1.2 Digital Threats Lurking in the Learning Space

The digital education world is not immune to threats that pervade the digital ecosystem more broadly. The World Economic Forum Global Risks Report 2024 identifies disinformation and misinformation as the number one global risk for the period 2024–2026. In the educational context, this threat takes several concrete forms. First, the spread of hoaxes and pseudoscience contaminating digital learning resources: research by Wardle & Derakhshan (2017) found that disinformation content on sensitive topics health, religion, politics receives 70% higher engagement on social media platforms than fact-based content.

Second, the phenomenon of online radicalization targeting young people. The Institute for Strategic Dialogue (2023), in its report "The Rabbit Hole," reports that YouTube's recommendation algorithm specifically not social media platforms in general can push users, particularly those first encountering extremist content, toward increasingly extreme content within an average of 3.5 hours of continuous browsing. This finding is important to understand specifically within the YouTube context, given that the recommendation algorithm architectures across platforms (such as TikTok, Instagram, or Facebook) operate through different mechanisms and do not necessarily produce identical patterns of escalation; cross-platform generalization risks weakening the precision of the argument. In the Indonesian context, the National Counterterrorism Agency (BNPT) noted that 47% of radical group recruitment in 2023 was conducted through digital platforms, with the primary targets being students and university

students aged 15–25. Third, cyberbullying and hate speech that damage the learning climate: a UNICEF Indonesia survey (2022) found that 45% of Indonesian youth aged 14–24 had experienced cyberbullying, with significant psychological impacts on learning motivation and mental health.

Fourth, privacy and data security issues often overlooked in educational contexts. The use of commercial platforms such as WhatsApp, Instagram, and Google Classroom for academic purposes automatically involves the transfer of students' personal data to third parties an implication rarely discussed in digital curriculum design. Research by Human Rights Watch (2022) found that 89% of commonly used educational applications worldwide transmit student data to third parties without users' explicit knowledge.

2. Critical Digital Literacy as a Washathiyah-Based Epistemic Shield

2.1 Redefining Digital Literacy: Beyond Technical Competence

Paul Gilster (1997), who first popularized the concept of digital literacy, defined it as the ability to understand and use information from various digital sources. However, in the two decades since Gilster wrote, the digital landscape has changed so dramatically that this definition requires fundamental expansion. UNESCO (2022), in their latest framework, defines digital literacy as “a spectrum of competencies that enables individuals to access, manage, understand, integrate, communicate, evaluate, and create information safely and appropriately through digital technologies for employment, decent work, and entrepreneurship.”

Most significant in this latest definition is the addition of an ethics and safety dimension “safely and appropriately” as a core component, rather than a supplement. This reflects global recognition that digital literacy focused solely on technical skills such as making presentations, using spreadsheets, or searching the internet without accompanying critical capacity and ethical awareness can in fact amplify the dangers of technology use.

Within the Islamic Washathiyah framework, this evolution in understanding digital literacy finds strong resonance with the fundamental principles of Islamic epistemology. However, positioning Washathiyah genuinely as an epistemological principle rather than merely a label requires deeper engagement with the Islamic scholarly tradition concerning this concept. Kamali (2015), in *The Middle Path of Moderation in Islam*, shows that Wasatiyyah in QS. Al-Baqarah: 143 (“*ummatan wasatan*”) does not simply mean a literal “middle path,” but rather refers to an active epistemological and ethical position: a balance that requires the capacity for judgment (*tawazun fi al-hukm*), not passive neutrality or compromise that avoids taking a position. Ibn 'Asyur, in his elaboration of *maqashid*, places wasatiyyah as one of the *maqashid 'ammah* of the shariah directly related to *hifzh al-'aql* (the protection of reason) a conceptual link directly relevant to critical digital literacy as a practice of safeguarding reasoning capacity amid a massive flow of information. Al-Qaradawi reinforces this by emphasizing that wasatiyyah requires the courage to take a position based on evidence and careful consideration, not merely to avoid extremes for the sake of comfort.

On this foundation, the principle of *tabayyun* (QS. Al-Hujurat: 6) the command to always critically verify before accepting and disseminating information can be read more deeply than merely as an “early version” of modern fact-checking. Classical exegetes such as Al-Thabari and Ibn Katsir, in interpreting this verse, explain that the command of *tabayyun* was revealed in the specific context of receiving news from a bearer of news who is *fasiq* (whose integrity cannot be trusted), and that this obligation of verification is graduated according to the credibility of the source and the potential impact of the news if passed on without verification. In the contemporary digital context, this graduated framework is relevant: not all content requires the same level of verification, but content with the potential to cause *fitnah*, reputational harm, or social conflict such as viral content on social media requires a higher level of *tabayyun*. The principle of *amanah* in conveying information, the principle of *qawl sadid* (precise and truthful speech), and the prohibition of *ghibah* (gossip) and *fitnah* in Islamic communication all are frameworks for information ethics directly relevant to the challenges of contemporary digital disinformation, and which epistemologically precede, rather than merely reflect, contemporary critical digital literacy frameworks.

2.2 The Five-Component Framework of Critical Digital Literacy in the ELT Context

Based on a synthesis of the UNESCO (2022), Hobbs (2010), and Jenkins et al. (2009) frameworks, combined with *Washathiyah* values, this research identifies five components of critical digital literacy most relevant to ELT in Islamic educational settings:

First, information verification competence. This encompasses the ability to identify credible sources, verify facts through cross-referencing, distinguish between news, opinion, satire, and propaganda, and understand how algorithms influence the content that appears on personal timelines. In the ELT context, this competence is highly relevant because students not only need to read English-language texts but also to critically evaluate their quality and credibility. Research by Pennycook & Rand (2019) found that individuals with higher analytical thinking ability are significantly more capable of identifying fake news, regardless of their ideological inclinations.

Second, digital identity and footprint awareness. Every interaction in the digital space leaves a persistent and potentially permanent trace. Students practicing English through blogs, HelloTalk, or social media actively construct their digital identities. Research by Boyd (2014) shows that the majority of young people are unaware that content they post at age 15 can affect their career prospects and social reputation twenty years later. Within an Islamic framework, this awareness aligns with the principle that every word and action including those performed in digital spaces carries moral and social consequences that must be accounted for.

Third, digital safety and privacy competence. This encompasses knowledge of platform privacy settings, risks of phishing and social engineering, password security, and the implications of sharing data with third-party applications. In an ELT learning context increasingly reliant on digital platforms, understanding digital security is no longer an academic luxury but an urgent practical necessity. Data from Kaspersky Security Network

(2023) shows Indonesia is among the countries with the most cyberattacks in Southeast Asia, averaging 2.3 million attacks per day.

Fourth, media literacy and content creation competence. This encompasses not only the ability to critically consume digital content but also to produce content that is responsible, accurate, and valuable to the community. In ELT, this means guiding students to write blogs, create videos, or contribute to online discussions not merely as linguistic exercises but as exercises in digital citizenship. Jenkins et al. (2009) refer to this as “participatory culture,” the foundation of mature digital citizenship.

Fifth, digital wellbeing competence. This is the most recent dimension and one receiving increasing serious attention in the literature. Research by Twenge et al. (2023) found a significant correlation between intense social media use among teenagers and increased rates of depression, anxiety, and loneliness. However, the claim of a causal relationship between social media use and adolescent mental health remains an unresolved debate in the psychological literature: Orben & Przybylski (2019), in a large-scale analysis published in *Nature Human Behaviour*, found that the effect size of the relationship between digital media use and adolescent wellbeing is very small comparable to the effect of eating potatoes on wellbeing and concluded that digital media itself is not a strong predictor of mental health problems at the population level. This divergence in findings likely stems from differences in methodology (self-report data versus actual usage data, cross-sectional versus longitudinal designs) as well as heterogeneity in the definition of “social media use” itself. For the ELT context, the practical implications do not change fundamentally: regardless of the still-debated population-level effect size, the introduction of the concept of “digital hygiene” screen time management, detection of signs of compulsive use, and the development of digital practices that balance connectivity with mental health remains relevant as part of responsible digital literacy education, even though stronger causal claims should be avoided in its pedagogical framing.

Table 2. Five-Component Framework of Critical Digital Literacy in ELT Based on Washathiyah

Component	Operational Definition	Relevance in ELT	Washathiyah Value
Information Verification	Ability to identify credible sources and cross-verify facts	Critical evaluation of English-language texts from various global sources	Tabayyun – verify before sharing (QS. Al-Hujurat: 6)
Digital Identity & Footprint	Awareness of the long-term impact of published content	Identity management on blogs, HelloTalk, and academic social media	Amanah – responsibility for every word and action
Safety & Privacy	Knowledge of data security, phishing, and platform privacy settings	Protection of student personal data on digital learning platforms	Hifzh al-nafs – protecting oneself, including in digital spaces
Critical Content Production	Ability to create content that is accurate, responsible, and valuable	Blog writing, video production, and contributions to online discussions	Qawl sadid – speech that is true, precise, and beneficial

Digital Wellbeing	Screen time management and balance between connectivity and wellbeing	Development of healthy digital practices in platform-based learning	Tawazun – balance among physical, mental, and spiritual needs
-------------------	---	---	---

Source: Adapted from UNESCO (2022); Hobbs (2010); Jenkins et al. (2009); with Washathiyah value integration by the authors.

2.3 Digital Tabayyun: From Qur'anic Principle to Classroom Practice

The principle of tabayyun contained in QS. Al-Hujurat: 6 “O you who have believed, if there comes to you a disobedient one with information, investigate” is an epistemological instruction that predates the development of modern journalism's fact-verification by fourteen centuries. As outlined in section 2.1, classical exegetes situate this command within a graduated framework of source-credibility assessment a framework that, within the contemporary digital ecosystem, carries greater urgency than ever before. A study from the MIT Media Lab (Vosoughi, Roy & Aral, 2018), published in the journal *Science* and based on an analysis of 126,000 news stories circulated on Twitter between 2006 and 2017, found that false news spreads 6 times faster than true news and reaches 35 times wider audiences. The primary driver of this spread is not bots or fake accounts, but real people who uncritically forward content that arouses their negative emotions.

The implementation of digital tabayyun in ELT classroom practice can be pursued through various activities that integrate language learning with critical thinking. For example, fact-checking exercises in English using platforms such as Snopes, FactCheck.org, or PolitiFact not only train reading and information-seeking skills but also build a verification habit consistent with the principle of tabayyun. Teachers can design activities in which students evaluate the credibility of English-language articles on relevant topics, then discuss their findings in groups an activity that simultaneously develops literacy, critical thinking, and collaborative communication.

Data from an intervention study by Pennycook et al. (2021), published in the journal *Collabra: Psychology*, shows that a simple intervention prompting individuals to consider accuracy before sharing content can reduce the intention to share disinformation by 51%. This demonstrates that critical digital literacy particularly the verification component is not merely theoretical discourse but has tangible and measurable behavioral effects.

3. Intercultural Communication Ethics in Global Digital Interaction

3.1 Global Interaction Platforms as Laboratories for Intercultural Competence

One of the most revolutionary developments in contemporary ELT is the availability of platforms that eliminate geographic distance as a barrier to linguistic interaction. The HelloTalk application, examined specifically in the context of EFL students at Universitas Islam Negeri Mataram (Ariawan, internal report status/not yet formally published), reflects this new paradigm: with 30 million users in more than 150 countries, this platform is one of the largest cross-cultural communication laboratories

ever created. Research by Shadiev & Yang (2020) found that the use of tandem learning platforms such as HelloTalk significantly improves pragmatic competence, speaking fluency, and confidence in using English, with an effect size of 0.67 (medium-to-large) far surpassing conventional drill-based methods.

However, precisely because these interactions are real and involve individuals from different value systems speakers from secular North America, conservative Middle East, collectivistic East Asia, liberal Western Europe the dimension of communication ethics becomes critically important. This is no longer merely about grammatical accuracy or vocabulary breadth; it is about the competence to negotiate meaning across fundamental differences, to build authentic connections while respecting value boundaries, and to manage the discomfort that almost inevitably arises in any honest cross-cultural encounter.

3.2 A Washathiyah-Based Model of Intercultural Communicative Competence

Byram (1997), in his model of Intercultural Communicative Competence (ICC), identifies five key components: *savoirs* (knowledge), *savoir comprendre* (interpretive ability), *savoir apprendre* (ability to discover and interact), *savoir être* (attitudes), and *savoir s'engager* (critical cultural awareness). This model has become the dominant reference in global ELT literature. Deardorff (2006), through a survey of ICC experts from 73 U.S. universities, identified "the ability to shift from an ethnocentric perspective to one capable of understanding others' frames of reference (ethnorelativism)" as the most essential element of intercultural competence.

This research proposes a complementary model that integrates Byram's ICC principles with Washathiyah values, adding a deeper ethical dimension. The value of *ta'aruf* (mutual knowing, QS. Al-Hujurat: 13) goes beyond mere knowledge of other cultures; it is an active and sincere drive to know the 'other' as a fellow human being of equal dignity. The value of *tasamuh* (tolerance) is not merely the absence of conflict, but the active capacity to accommodate difference within a framework of respect. The value of *tawazun* (balance) provides the ethical compass in situations where differing values clash it does not dictate the capitulation of values but teaches how to negotiate difference without losing integrity.

In concrete ELT practice, this model yields specific pedagogical implications. First, cultural preparation before interaction: before conversation sessions with foreign speakers, students must be equipped not only with linguistic knowledge but also with an understanding of the pragmatic norms and cultural context of their interlocutors. Research by Ware & Kramsch (2005) on online cross-cultural exchanges shows that without adequate cultural preparation, virtual cross-cultural interaction more often produces misunderstandings and stereotypes than deeper understanding.

Second, the cultivation of active "cultural empathy." This goes beyond passive tolerance; it is the ability to imagine the world from a fundamentally different perspective what Michael Byram calls the ability to temporarily "de-center" oneself. Within the Washathiyah framework, this capacity aligns with the value of *rahmah* (compassion),

which in the Islamic tradition is not limited to any particular group but encompasses all of humanity (rahmatan lil'alamin).

Table 3. Integration Model of Byram's ICC and Washathiyah Values in Digital ELT

ICC Component (Byram)	Washathiyah Value	Manifestation in Digital ELT	Achievement Indicators
Savoirs (Cultural Knowledge)	Ta'aruf – mutual knowing (QS. 49:13)	Researching the interlocutor's culture before HelloTalk sessions; pragmatic context analysis	Able to explain 3+ communication norms of the interlocutor's culture
Savoir Être (Open Attitude)	Tasamuh – active tolerance of difference	Empathetic response to value differences in virtual cross-cultural discussions	Non-judgmental; asks clarifying questions rather than making defensive statements
Savoir Comprendre (Interpretation)	Tawazun – balance in judgment	Analysis of authentic English texts from diverse cultural perspectives	Able to identify cultural assumptions in texts and respond in a balanced manner
Savoir Apprendre (Discovery)	Tafakkur – reflective and deep thinking	Independent exploration of cross-cultural issues through digital platforms; reflection journals	Maintains a substantive portfolio of cross-cultural interaction reflections
Savoir s'Engager (Critical Awareness)	Amar ma'ruf – promoting goodness*	Ethical leadership in online discussions; constructive moderation of conversations	Able to manage discussion tensions with balanced empathy and assertiveness

Source: Adapted from Byram (1997); Deardorff (2006); with Washathiyah value integration by the authors. *Critical note: the mapping of savoir s'engager with amar ma'ruf, although heuristically productive, must be read with awareness of an inherent conceptual tension. Savoir s'engager in Byram's model fundamentally refers to critical-evaluative awareness of cultural perspectives including one's own as a prerequisite for reflective political engagement. Amar ma'ruf (promoting goodness) in classical Islamic ethics, by contrast, carries a far more specific normative and communal weight: it is a collective obligation (fardh kifayah) bound to standards of ma'ruf established according to the shariah, not merely an open critical awareness. This mapping should therefore be understood as a point of functional intersection both produce active participation in promoting the common good rather than as a full conceptual equivalence. Acknowledging this tension, rather than flattening it, strengthens rather than weakens the intellectual honesty of the proposed integrative model.

3.3 The Online Disinhibition Effect and Mitigation Strategies

One of the most consistent challenges in digital communication is the phenomenon psychologist John Suler (2004) termed the "online disinhibition effect" the tendency for individuals to behave more impulsively, aggressively, or discourteously in digital communication than in face-to-face interaction. Factors driving this phenomenon include anonymity (dissociative anonymity), the absence of physical presence that reduces social cues, asynchronous communication, and the blurring of authority in virtual spaces.

In the ELT context, the online disinhibition effect can take various forms: overly critical comments on peers' writing, an aggressive tone in cross-cultural debates on

discussion forums, or defensive responses to corrections from foreign speakers. Research by Hutchinson (2021) found that 38% of EFL students reported being involved in or witnessing interactions they considered “inappropriate” on digital learning platforms within a single semester.

Mitigation of the online disinhibition effect within the Washathiyah framework operates through several mechanisms. First, reinforcing self-awareness: students who possess a strong and stable sense of identity one not dependent on validation from digital interactions are more resistant to the temptation of impulsive online behavior. This aligns with Faruque's (2020) concept of background self-awareness as the psychological foundation protecting individuals from identity reductionism. However, from the perspective of Islamic ethics, this foundation of psychological self-awareness can and should be deepened through the concept of *muraqabah* (awareness of Divine observation). Unlike self-awareness rooted in the individual's relationship with themselves, *muraqabah* situates every action including those performed in anonymous digital spaces within an awareness of the constant presence and observation of Allah. The practical implications are significant: an individual who has internalized *muraqabah* behaves ethically online not primarily because of social accountability mechanisms which are inherently weak in anonymous spaces but because of the awareness that anonymity before other humans does not negate Divine witness. In a pedagogical context, this means that the cultivation of digital ethics in Islamic educational settings should ideally not stop at strengthening psychological self-awareness alone, but should also nurture a spiritual awareness that serves as a consistent internal monitor, regardless of the presence or absence of external oversight.

Second, practicing reflection before responding: integrating the habit of “pause and reflect” before sending responses in online discussions a practice that can be pedagogically trained and religiously aligns with the value of *hilm* (gentleness and careful deliberation before acting). Third, designing environments that reinforce accountability: using real names and identities on learning platforms, explicitly establishing community norms, and providing safe feedback mechanisms.

4. Building a Moderate Virtual Learning Space: Design Model and Implementation

4.1 Potential and Challenges of Digital Platforms in ELT: A Data Analysis

The ecosystem of digital platforms available for ELT today is highly diverse, each with its specific pedagogical profile, risks, and opportunities. WhatsApp, with 2.4 billion global active users and 87% penetration among Indonesian internet users, offers unparalleled accessibility. Research by Annamalai et al. (2021), involving 1,234 EFL students from four universities in Malaysia and Indonesia, found that the use of WhatsApp Groups for language learning significantly increased intrinsic motivation ($p < 0.01$) and the frequency of English use outside the classroom. However, the same study found that 61% of respondents reported distraction as the main obstacle, and 34% reported discomfort due to the blending of academic and personal communication within the same platform.

Instagram, with 74% penetration in Indonesia, offers a unique visual-based medium for creative expression. Using Instagram as a digital portfolio platform for English where students post captions, stories, or multimodal content as part of class assignments has been shown to increase engagement and the authenticity of linguistic expression. Research by Manca & Ranieri (2016) found that “real” social media environments encourage more authentic and motivated language production than textbook-based exercises. However, the use of public Instagram accounts for academic purposes raises serious questions about student privacy and security, particularly for underage learners.

YouTube, visited by 88% of Indonesian internet users, is a virtually unlimited source of authentic English-language material. From TED Talks to sitcoms, from lectures at leading universities to tutorial videos YouTube is a global multimedia library available for free. Research by Speight (2014) shows that pedagogically selected YouTube videos in ELT classrooms significantly improve listening comprehension and are more effective in teaching pragmatic nuances of language than audio-only resources. The challenge is curation: without adequate guidance, students can easily be exposed to inappropriate or even extremist content through YouTube's algorithmic recommendation system, as has been specifically discussed in section 1.2.

Table 4. Analysis of Digital Platforms for ELT: Pedagogical Potential, Risks, and Mitigation Strategies

Platform	Pedagogical Strengths	Main Risks	Mitigation Strategies	Washathiyah Relevance
HelloTalk	Authentic interaction with global speakers; real-time linguistic feedback; multi-accent exposure	Exposure to inappropriate content; potential grooming; unmanaged cultural expectation gaps	Interaction guidelines; cultural norm preparation; report mechanisms; post-session debriefing	Ta'aruf and tasamuh: learning to know and respect difference firsthand
WhatsApp	High accessibility; easy coordination; multimodal material sharing; familiar to users	Notification distractions; blurring of private-academic spaces; data privacy risks	Dedicated academic groups; explicit posting rules; regular teacher response schedule; closed group	Tawazun: balancing open communication with healthy boundaries
Instagram	Encourages creative expression; visual portfolio; high linguistic authenticity	Student privacy (especially minors); cyberbullying; negative social comparison	Dedicated academic accounts (not personal); closed privacy settings; caption and content ethics	Qawl sadid: encouraging honest, creative, and responsible expression
YouTube	Unlimited authentic materials; diverse genres; listening development; free access	Algorithmic recommendations toward extremist content (particularly in the YouTube context);	Teacher-curated playlists; ad-free YouTube extensions; critical viewing guide	Tafakkur: material for deep reflection on content and global perspectives

		distraction; inappropriate ads		
Zoom/Google Meet	Face-to-face simulation; non-verbal expression; real-time interaction; recordings for reflection	Connectivity constraints (digital divide); Zoom fatigue; session privacy	Clear video ethics protocol; recording option with consent; short and structured sessions; async mode for remote areas	Tawazun and tasamuh: managing technical limitations with patience and shared empathy

Source: Synthesized from various sources; Annamalai et al. (2021); Manca & Ranieri (2016); Speight (2014); compiled by the authors.

4.2 The Teacher as Digital Ethics Facilitator: Beyond the Technical Role

In this complex digital learning ecosystem, the teacher's role undergoes a fundamental transformation. It is no longer sufficient to act as a transmitter of linguistic knowledge or even merely as a manager of digital activities. Within an ELT paradigm grounded in critical digital literacy and Washathiyah-based communication ethics, the teacher must play the role of a digital ethics facilitator a position that integrates technical competence, pedagogical awareness, and moral integrity into a cohesive whole.

Research by Cherner & Lee (2016), surveying 412 EFL teachers from 28 countries, found that only 29% of respondents felt “very prepared” to integrate technology into learning in an ethical and critical manner even though 87% were already using at least two digital platforms in their daily teaching. This gap between widespread technology use and limited ethical readiness reflects the urgent need to develop a more comprehensive model of teacher digital competence.

The teacher's digital ethics facilitation role encompasses at least four interconnected dimensions. First, modeling: teachers who embody Washathiyah values in their own digital communication in how they respond to questions in WhatsApp groups, in how they write comments on student blogs, in how they facilitate Zoom discussions teach ethical standards indirectly far more powerfully than verbal instruction alone. Bandura (1977) demonstrated long ago that learning through modeling (observational learning) is one of the most effective mechanisms of social learning.

Second, designing instruction that builds ethical scaffolding. This means every digital task or activity is designed not only to achieve linguistic objectives but also to proactively build students' ethical capacity. For example, a blog writing assignment evaluates not only grammatical accuracy and vocabulary richness, but also the quality of argumentation, the accuracy of cited sources, sensitivity toward a global audience, and responsibility for published content.

Third, creating a safe space for reflection. Students need space to discuss their confusing, disturbing, or challenging digital experiences including exposure to inappropriate content, experiences of cyberbullying, or confusion in navigating value differences in cross-cultural interactions without fear of judgment. Teachers who create a psychologically safe classroom climate encourage students to share their vulnerabilities and learn from those experiences collectively.

Fourth, advocacy for digital equity. ELT teachers in settings such as West Nusa Tenggara where the digital infrastructure gap between urban and rural areas remains significant have an ethical responsibility to ensure that their digital learning designs do not structurally exclude students with limited access. Data from BPS (2023) shows that only 43.7% of households in NTB have adequate internet access, with an even lower figure in rural areas (28.2%). The Washathiyah principle demands justice ('adl) in the distribution of educational access and opportunity.

4.3 The WASH Framework: A Design Framework for a Moderate Virtual Learning Space

Based on the synthesis of analysis above, this research proposes an original framework termed the WASH Framework an acronym that simultaneously references Washathiyah values for designing a moderate, inclusive, and equitable virtual learning space in the ELT context. The framework consists of four complementary design principles, each accompanied by achievement indicators that teachers can use as a self-evaluation rubric for their learning designs:

Wellbeing-Centered Design (W). Digital learning design that prioritizes students' mental and physical health. This includes: limiting video conferencing session durations to account for Zoom fatigue (Riedl (2022) recommends sessions no longer than 50 minutes); setting response time boundaries that respect rest and worship schedules; and integrating planned "digital detox" practices as part of classroom routines. This principle aligns with the values of tawazun and hifzh al-nafs in Islam. Achievement indicators: (a) synchronous session duration does not exceed 50 minutes without a break; (b) a written policy exists regarding teacher-student response hours that respects worship and rest times; (c) at least one scheduled "digital detox" activity occurs per month.

Accessible and Equitable Design (A). Design that ensures equal participation for all students, including those with limited internet access, devices, or technical ability. Practices include: providing materials in formats accessible offline; establishing asynchronous alternatives for every synchronous activity; and using platforms that offer low-bandwidth versions. This principle expresses the value of 'adl (justice) in the digital context. Achievement indicators: (a) offline/print versions are available for all core materials; (b) every synchronous activity has a substantively equivalent asynchronous alternative; (c) a mapping of students' access conditions has been conducted at the start of the semester as a basis for design.

Safe and Structured Interaction (S). Design that creates sufficient structure to protect students' digital safety without sacrificing freedom of intellectual exploration. This includes: implementing mutually agreed-upon netiquette at the start of the semester; using closed groups and moderatable platforms; safe and confidential reporting mechanisms; and clear response protocols when digital incidents occur. This principle expresses the values of amanah and hifzh al-'irdh (protecting one's own honor and that of others). Achievement indicators: (a) a netiquette document exists, co-developed with students at the start of the semester; (b) all classroom interaction spaces

are closed groups with teacher moderation; (c) an incident-reporting mechanism exists that is known to all students and has been tested at least once.

Humanizing and Culturally Responsive (H). Design that humanizes the digital learning experience countering technology's tendency to reduce students to "users" or "data" and is culturally responsive to the diverse backgrounds of students. This includes: using names and forms of address that honor student preferences in virtual sessions; making space for the expression of cultural identity in digital content production; and integrating non-Western perspectives in the selection of authentic English-language materials. This principle expresses the values of ta'aruf, karamah insaniyyah (human dignity), and rahmah. Achievement indicators: (a) at least 30% of authentic materials are sourced from non-Anglo-American contexts; (b) students are given explicit space to represent their cultural/religious identity in digital-based assignments; (c) student forms of address in virtual sessions follow confirmed preferences, rather than system defaults.

The "H" principle above, in practice, is often understood as a push toward unbounded pluralist accommodation that is, accepting all cultural perspectives that arise in digital materials or interactions as equally valid. Within the Washathiyah framework, this framing requires additional nuance. Washathiyah is not about accepting all perspectives as equal in value, but about maintaining principled balance (tawazun) in addressing diversity. This means that when authentic English-language materials or cross-cultural interactions present content or values that fundamentally conflict with Islamic ethics, the teacher's role as a digital ethics facilitator is not to validate every perspective equally, but to facilitate students in recognizing (ta'aruf) and understanding the context in which such perspectives arise (savoir comprendre), while maintaining the capacity for value-based critical evaluation (tawazun fi al-hukm) including the ability to respectfully express disagreement. Thus, the "Humanizing and Culturally Responsive" principle within the WASH framework is more accurately understood as "principled openness" rather than unbounded accommodation a distinction important to ensure that the WASH Framework does not become trapped in a value relativism that would, in fact, contradict the epistemological foundation of Washathiyah itself.

5. Systemic Implications: Toward a Washathi Digital Education Ecosystem

The analysis presented in this research carries implications that extend beyond the ELT context and touch on more fundamental questions about the orientation of the Islamic educational ecosystem in the digital age. If Washathiyah is the epistemological principle that permeates all dimensions of Muslim life not only in the narrow religious domain, but also in how one thinks, communicates, and interacts with technology then it must permeate the institutional architecture of education, not merely remain a slogan in policy documents.

Data from UNESCO Institute for Statistics (2023) shows that globally, only 26% of higher education institutions have integrated digital literacy as a mandatory component across study programs. In Indonesia, this figure is estimated to be even lower, although specific data for PTKIN (Islamic state higher education institutions) is not yet systematically available. As an initial illustration of this potential, UIN Mataram (2021)

has published guidelines for implementing the values of religious moderation in education, which, although not yet specifically targeting digital literacy, demonstrate the existence of an institutional policy infrastructure that could be expanded in that direction. The claim that Islamic educational institutions are uniquely positioned to offer a model of digital literacy that surpasses UNESCO/ISTE standards should, at this stage of the research, be more accurately understood as a conceptual proposition grounded in the structural-epistemological potential of such institutions, rather than as a generalization from widely demonstrated practice. Empirical substantiation of this claim through systematic institutional case studies of PTKIN that have or are developing such policies represents an important agenda for future research, and is revisited in the recommendations section. This indicates that digital literacy integration in education remains sporadic and dependent on individual faculty or departmental initiatives, rather than representing a broadly systemic institutional commitment.

The epistemological distinctiveness of Islamic educational institutions, with their integrative Washathiyah framework, positions them to offer a model of digital literacy that not only adopts global standards from UNESCO or ISTE (International Society for Technology in Education) but enriches them with an ethical and spiritual dimension that the global discourse on humane and responsible technology is actively seeking (Vallor, 2016; Dignum, 2019).

Operational recommendations that can be derived from this research span three levels. At the curriculum level: the integration of critical digital literacy and global communication ethics modules as cross-curricular components in ELT programs, not merely as an optional topic in a single semester. At the faculty capacity-building level: training programs that develop faculty competence as digital ethics facilitators, encompassing technical, pedagogical, and ethical aspects in an integrated manner. At the institutional policy level: the development of technology-use policies for learning that explicitly state Washathiyah values as operational guidelines not merely as abstract vision statements.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This research has demonstrated that the harmonization of global communication ethics and digital literacy in the ELT context is not merely an elegant academic agenda; it is an urgent and strategic response to the epistemic crisis unfolding in the global digital ecosystem. Data shows that Indonesia with 212.9 million active internet users yet ranked 64th in the global digital literacy index stands at a critical crossroads between transformative opportunity and systemic vulnerability.

The values of Washathiyah, when operationally translated from institutional slogans into concrete pedagogical practices and when drawn from the depth of the Islamic scholarly tradition concerning this concept, rather than understood merely literally demonstrate strong analytical and prescriptive power. The principle of tabayyun, as understood through classical exegesis of QS. Al-Hujurat: 6, becomes the foundation for critical and graduated information verification competence; the values of ta'aruf and

tasamuh become the basis for developing authentic intercultural communicative competence, while acknowledging their conceptual tensions with Western models such as Byram's ICC; and the principle of *tawazun* which, in Kamali's sense, is active and evaluative rather than passively neutral provides the ethical compass for designing virtual learning spaces that balance freedom with responsibility, openness with safety, and openness with principled openness.

The WASH Framework proposed in this research Wellbeing-Centered, Accessible and Equitable, Safe and Structured, Humanizing and Culturally Responsive offers a design framework that can be operationalized by educational practitioners across diverse contexts, complete with achievement indicators that can be used as a self-evaluation rubric, in efforts to integrate human values into their digital transformation.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of this research, the following are recommended:

- (1) In education, it is necessary to develop a critical digital literacy curriculum that is integrated across study programs, with *Washathiyah* values as drawn from the Islamic scholarly tradition concerning *tabayyun*, *tawazun*, and *maqashid* serving as the epistemological framework, not merely as a branding label.
- (2) Teacher training programs that develop digital ethics facilitation competence should be prioritized, focusing on three complementary dimensions: technical, pedagogical, and ethical-spiritual (including the strengthening of *muraqabah* awareness as a complement to psychological self-awareness).
- (3) Longitudinal empirical research measuring the impact of *Washathiyah*-based digital literacy interventions on students' digital behavior and the quality of their cross-cultural interactions needs to be conducted to validate the theoretical framework proposed in this study. Such studies should avoid overstated causal claims regarding digital mental health, while taking into account the existing methodological debates in the literature (Orben & Przybylski, 2019; Twenge et al., 2023).
- (4) Collaboration among ELT, Psychology, and religious moderation study programs should be strengthened to produce a more comprehensive interdisciplinary approach.
- (5) The government should accelerate the equitable distribution of digital infrastructure as a prerequisite for the implementation of a just digital education.
- (6) Systematic institutional case studies of PTKIN that have developed policies related to religious moderation and/or digital literacy beginning with cases such as the UIN Mataram (2021) guidelines should be conducted to empirically substantiate the proposition that Islamic educational institutions can offer a model of digital literacy that surpasses existing global standards.

REFERENCES

- Annamalai, N., Abdullah, M. S., & Alasam, A. (2021). "WhatsApp-Mediated Language Learning: Student and Teacher Perspectives." *TESOL Quarterly*, 55(4), 1161-1176.
- Ariawan, S. Pemanfaatan Aplikasi HelloTalk dalam Peningkatan Kemampuan Speaking Mahasiswa EFL. Laporan internal, Universitas Islam Negeri Mataram (status: belum dipublikasikan secara formal).
- Bandura, A. (1977). *Social Learning Theory*. Englewood Cliffs: Prentice Hall.
- BNPT. (2023). *Laporan Tahunan Pencegahan Radikalisasi Digital 2023*. Jakarta: Badan Nasional Penanggulangan Terorisme.
- Boyd, D. (2014). *It's Complicated: The Social Lives of Networked Teens*. New Haven: Yale University Press.
- BPS. (2023). *Statistik Telekomunikasi Indonesia 2023*. Jakarta: Badan Pusat Statistik.
- Byram, M. (1997). *Teaching and Assessing Intercultural Communicative Competence*. Clevedon: Multilingual Matters.
- Cherner, T., & Lee, C. (2016). "Presenting a Framework for Technology-Enhanced Teaching and Learning." *Journal of Teaching and Learning with Technology*, 5(2), 39-68.
- Deardorff, D. K. (2006). "Identification and Assessment of Intercultural Competence as a Student Outcome of Internationalization." *Journal of Studies in International Education*, 10(3), 241-266.
- Dignum, V. (2019). *Responsible Artificial Intelligence: How to Develop and Use AI in a Responsible Way*. Cham: Springer.
- EIU (Economist Intelligence Unit). (2023). *Digital Education Report 2023: Readiness Index*. London: The Economist Group.
- Faruque, M. U. (2020). *Sculpting the Self: Islam, Selfhood, and Human Flourishing*. Michigan: University of Michigan Press.
- Gilster, P. (1997). *Digital Literacy*. New York: Wiley.
- Hobbs, R. (2010). *Digital and Media Literacy: A Plan of Action*. Washington DC: Aspen Institute.
- Human Rights Watch. (2022). "How Dare They Peep Into My Private Life": Children's Rights Violations by Governments that Endorsed Online Learning During the Covid-19 Pandemic. New York: HRW.
- Hutchinson, P. (2021). "Uncivil Discourse in Online Learning Environments: A Mixed-Methods Study." *Computers & Education*, 172, 104270.
- Ibn 'Asyur, Muhammad al-Tahir. *Maqashid al-Syari'ah al-Islamiyyah*. Amman: Dar al-Nafais, 2001.
- Institute for Strategic Dialogue (ISD). (2023). *The Rabbit Hole: How YouTube Radicalizes Users*. London: ISD Global.

- Jenkins, H., Purushotma, R., Weigel, M., Clinton, K., & Robison, A. (2009). *Confronting the Challenges of Participatory Culture: Media Education for the 21st Century*. Cambridge: MIT Press.
- Kamali, M. H. (2015). *The Middle Path of Moderation in Islam: The Qur'anic Principle of Wasatiyyah*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Kaspersky Security Network. (2023). *IT Threat Evolution Q3 2023: Southeast Asia Statistics*. Moscow: Kaspersky Lab.
- Katadata Insight Center. (2023). *Indeks Literasi Digital Indonesia 2023*. Jakarta: Katadata.
- Kominfo. (2024). *Laporan Penanganan Konten Hoaks 2019-2024*. Jakarta: Kementerian Komunikasi dan Informatika.
- Manca, S., & Ranieri, M. (2016). "Facebook and the Others: Potentials and Obstacles of Social Media for Teaching in Higher Education." *Computers & Education*, 95, 216-230.
- MIT Media Lab / Vosoughi, S., Roy, D., & Aral, S. (2018). "The Spread of True and False News Online." *Science*, 359(6380), 1146-1151.
- Orben, A., & Przybylski, A. K. (2019). "The Association Between Adolescent Well-Being and Digital Technology Use." *Nature Human Behaviour*, 3, 173-182.
- Pennycook, G., Binnendyk, J., Newton, C., & Rand, D. G. (2021). "A Practical Guide to Doing Behavioral Research on Fake News and Misinformation." *Collabra: Psychology*, 7(1).
- Pennycook, G., & Rand, D. G. (2019). "Lazy, Not Biased: Susceptibility to Partisan Fake News is Better Explained by Lack of Reasoning than Motivated Reasoning." *Cognition*, 188, 39-50.
- Riedl, R. (2022). "On the Biology of Technostress: Literature Review and Research Agenda." *Data Base for Advances in Information Systems*, 53(1), 61-90.
- Shadiev, R., & Yang, M. (2020). "Review of Studies on Technology-Enhanced Language Learning and Teaching." *Sustainability*, 12(2), 524.
- Snyder, H. (2019). "Literature Review as a Research Methodology: An Overview and Guidelines." *Journal of Business Research*, 104, 333-339.
- Speight, S. (2014). "Authentic Learning: Its Role in E-Learning for Language Teaching." *IALLT Journal of Language Learning Technologies*, 44(2), 60-82.
- Suler, J. (2004). "The Online Disinhibition Effect." *CyberPsychology & Behavior*, 7(3), 321-326.
- Twenge, J. M., Haidt, J., Lozano, J., & Cummins, K. M. (2023). "Specification Curve Analysis Shows That Social Media Use Is Linked to Poor Mental Health, Especially Among Girls." *Acta Psychologica*, 232, 103814.
- UIN Mataram. (2021). *Pedoman Implementasi Nilai-nilai Moderasi Beragama dalam Pendidikan*. Mataram: UIN Mataram Press.

- UNESCO. (2022). A Global Framework of Reference on Digital Literacy Skills for Indicator 4.4.2. Montreal: UNESCO Institute for Statistics.
- UNESCO Institute for Statistics. (2023). Global Education Monitoring Report 2023: Technology in Education. Paris: UNESCO.
- UNICEF Indonesia. (2022). U-Report on Cyberbullying: A Survey of 14-24-Year-Old Indonesians. Jakarta: UNICEF Indonesia.
- Vallor, S. (2016). *Technology and the Virtues: A Philosophical Guide to a Future Worth Wanting*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Ware, P., & Kramsch, C. (2005). "Toward an Intercultural Stance: Teaching German and English through Telecollaboration." *Modern Language Journal*, 89(2), 190-205.
- Wardle, C., & Derakhshan, H. (2017). *Information Disorder: Toward an Interdisciplinary Framework for Research and Policy Making*. Strasbourg: Council of Europe.
- Warschauer, M., & Healey, D. (1998). "Computers and Language Learning: An Overview." *Language Teaching*, 31(2), 57-71.
- We Are Social & Meltwater. (2024). *Digital 2024 Global Overview Report*. New York: We Are Social.

THE ETHICS OF ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE FROM A HADITH PERSPECTIVE: AFFIRMING MORAL RESPONSIBILITY AS THE FOUNDATION OF RELIGIOUS MODERATION IN THE DIGITAL ERA

Abdul Karim¹⁾, Muhamad Yusup²⁾, Nasrullah³⁾, Lalu Ahmad Zaenuri⁴⁾

^{1, 2, 3, 4} Universitas Islam Negeri Mataram, Indonesia

email: abdulkarim@uinmataram.ac.id
email: muhamadyusup@uinmataram.ac.id
email: nasrullah@uinmataram.ac.id
email: ahmadzaenuri@uinmataram.ac.id

Abstract

The development of artificial intelligence (AI) has brought fundamental change to human life while simultaneously presenting complex ethical challenges: algorithmic bias, dehumanization, data misuse, and a crisis of moral accountability. Within the context of a plural and multicultural society, these challenges are not merely technical in dimension but also touch upon the realm of religious values, moderation, and social harmony as seen in various cases of generative AI-produced content (images, text, and synthetic audio) that have sparked religious controversy in Indonesia's digital space, ranging from representations of religious figures and symbols deemed inappropriate to fake sermons or fatwas generated by AI and circulated on social media. This research aims to analyze AI ethics through the lens of hadith by affirming moral responsibility as the foundation of religious moderation in the digital era. Using a qualitative approach with library research methods and hadith hermeneutic analysis, the study examines primary sources from the Kutub al-Sittah along with their commentaries (syarah), as well as contemporary literature on AI ethics and Islamic moderation. The findings show that the principles of AI ethics justice, transparency, accountability, beneficence, and non-maleficence share strong points of convergence with the values of the Prophet's hadith. The hadith on leadership accountability (HR. Bukhari-Muslim), the principle of *lā ǧarar wa lā ǧirār* (HR. Ibn Mājah), and the hadith on *itqan* (HR. al-Baihaqi) not only provide an ethical foundation for AI development, but also affirm the principle of *wasatīyyah* (the middle path) as the basis for moderation in technology governance. The resulting Islamic AI Ethics framework offers moral guidance for developers, users, and regulators so that AI may contribute to universal benefit, avoid digital radicalization, and reinforce the role of Islam as *rahmatan lil-'ālamīn*.

Keywords: *Artificial Intelligence; Hadith; Islamic Ethics; Religious Moderation; Islamic AI Ethics*

Abstrak

Perkembangan kecerdasan buatan (Artificial Intelligence/AI) membawa perubahan mendasar dalam kehidupan manusia sekaligus menghadirkan tantangan etis yang kompleks: bias algoritma, dehumanisasi, penyalahgunaan data, dan krisis akuntabilitas moral. Dalam konteks masyarakat plural dan multikultural, tantangan ini tidak hanya berdimensi teknis, melainkan juga menyentuh ranah nilai keagamaan, moderasi, dan harmoni sosial sebagaimana tampak dalam berbagai kasus konten yang dihasilkan AI generatif (gambar, teks, maupun audio sintetis) yang memicu polemik keagamaan di ruang digital Indonesia, mulai dari representasi tokoh dan simbol agama yang dianggap tidak pantas hingga konten ceramah atau fatwa palsu yang dihasilkan AI dan beredar di media sosial. Penelitian ini bertujuan menganalisis etika AI melalui perspektif hadis dengan meneguhkan tanggung jawab moral sebagai fondasi moderasi beragama di era digital. Menggunakan pendekatan kualitatif dengan metode studi pustaka dan analisis hermeneutika hadis, penelitian menelaah sumber primer dari Kutub al-Sittah beserta

syarah hadis, serta literatur kontemporer tentang etika AI dan moderasi Islam. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa prinsip etika AI keadilan, transparansi, tanggung jawab, kebermanfaatan, dan non-maleficence memiliki titik temu kuat dengan nilai-nilai hadis Nabi. Hadis tentang akuntabilitas kepemimpinan (HR. Bukhari-Muslim), kaidah *lā ḍarar wa lā ḍirār* (HR. Ibn Mājah), dan hadis *itqan* (HR. al-Baihaqi) tidak hanya menyediakan landasan etis pengembangan AI, tetapi juga meneguhkan prinsip *wasatīyyah* (jalan tengah) sebagai basis moderasi dalam mengelola teknologi. Kerangka Islamic AI Ethics yang dihasilkan menawarkan pedoman moral bagi pengembang, pengguna, dan regulator agar AI berkontribusi pada kemaslahatan universal, menghindari radikalisme digital, dan memperkuat peran Islam sebagai rahmatan lil-'ālamīn.

Kata Kunci: Kecerdasan Buatan; Hadis; Etika Islam; Moderasi Beragama; Islamic AI Ethics

INTRODUCTION

The development of artificial intelligence (AI) has had a significant impact on various aspects of human life, ranging from economics, education, and health to socio-cultural order (Hamidi et al., 2024). AI has emerged as an instrument that accelerates data analysis, simplifies public services, and delivers unprecedented efficiency. However, behind this progress, AI also raises complex ethical problems: the misuse of technology for manipulative purposes, the dehumanization of social interaction, algorithmic biases that discriminate against certain groups, and ongoing debate over moral accountability for the actions of autonomous systems (Rahmi, Daipon, and Saprina, 2024).

In the context of a plural and multicultural society such as Indonesia, the ethical challenges of AI are not merely technical in dimension, but also touch a deeper realm: religious values, religious moderation, and social harmony. Algorithmic biases that are racial or religious in nature can exacerbate inter-faith relations; uncontrolled AI content can become a trigger for digital radicalization; while autonomous systems lacking moral accountability have the potential to erode public trust in social and religious institutions (Arif et al., 2024). This urgency is concretely visible in a phenomenon that has recently become widespread in Indonesia's digital space: the dissemination of generative AI-produced images depicting religious figures or symbols in ways considered blasphemous by certain groups, deepfake videos showing religious figures making statements they never uttered, as well as synthetic audio content containing "sermons" or "fatwas" that appear to come from a particular ulama but are in fact generated by an AI language model without authorization. Cases such as these demonstrate that the issue of AI ethics within a religious context is no longer a hypothetical discourse, but a real problem with the potential to trigger social unrest and erode trust in legitimate religious authority. It is precisely here that the urgency lies in integrating religious ethics particularly those sourced from the hadith of the Prophet into the discourse on AI development (Heriansyah and Qalby, 2024).

Religious moderation (*wasatīyyah*) is a core principle of Islam in responding to social and technological change. Moderation does not mean a passive or unprincipled compromising attitude, but rather a balanced, just, and contextual approach to evaluating any phenomenon, including technology (Heriansyah and Qalby, 2024). Within this framework, the hadith of the Prophet holds a strategic position as authoritative moral guidance: hadith contains not only rules of worship, but also universal ethical

principles that can be applied in responding to the challenges of the times (Islam and Lebih, 2025).

A number of previous studies have discussed AI ethics from an Islamic perspective, such as Malik et al., who examined the ethical implications of AI in Islamic law (Malik, Malik, and Mustika, 2024), and Akbar, who analyzed Islamic ethics in the use of AI for the modernization of Islamic studies (Akbar, T. A., 2025). However, studies that specifically connect hadith-based AI ethics with the principle of religious moderation remain very limited. This is the gap that this research seeks to fill.

This research aims to: first, analyze the principles of contemporary AI ethics within the framework of the values of the Prophet's hadith; and second, demonstrate the relevance of these hadith values as a foundation for religious moderation in the governance of AI technology in the digital era. With this interdisciplinary approach, it is hoped that an Islamic AI Ethics framework will emerge one that is not only normative but also applicable as Islam's contribution to global technological civilization.

METHOD

This research employs a qualitative approach, as its main objective is to explore the meaning, values, and ethical relevance of hadith to the development of AI within the context of religious moderation. The qualitative approach allows for an in-depth analysis of religious texts while connecting them with contemporary social realities, with an emphasis on interpretive and contextual aspects.

The method used is library research. Primary data sources include the canonical hadith collections of the Kutub al-Sittah: *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*, *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim*, *Sunan Abū Dāwūd*, *Sunan al-Tirmidhī*, *Sunan al-Nasā'ī*, and *Sunan Ibn Mājah*. Commentary works (syarah) such as *Fatḥ al-Bārī* by Ibn Ḥajar al-'Asqalānī and *al-Minhāj* by Imam al-Nawawī are used to support interpretation (al-Nawawi, 1392 H).

Secondary data were obtained from contemporary literature on AI ethics, both from the perspective of Western philosophy of technology and that of modern Muslim scholars, as well as studies on religious moderation in Islam. These sources provide a conceptual framework regarding issues of algorithmic bias, accountability, justice, and *wasatīyyah*, which are then integrated with hadith principles.

Data analysis was conducted through hadith hermeneutics, with its primary basis in the classical *syarah* approach that is, referring directly to the explanations of the *muḥaddithin* scholars in *Fatḥ al-Bārī* and *al-Minhāj* to understand the original meaning (*al-ma'na al-asli*) of each hadith according to the context of its revelation (*asbab al-wurud*) and the explanation of its *sanad-matn*. The analytical steps were carried out in stages: (1) identification of the hadith text and its status of authenticity based on *takhrij* literature; (2) tracing the classical *syarah* explanations of the hadith to gain an understanding of its original intent and historical context; (3) identification of the '*illat* (legal reason/motive) or universal value contained within that *syarah* explanation; and (4) application of that universal value to a contemporary issue in this case, AI ethics through analogical reasoning (*qiyas al-ma'na*), without altering or imposing new meaning onto

the hadith text itself. Thus, the contextualization approach used in this research is derivative of classical *syarah*, rather than a functional-contextual hermeneutics independent of the *syarah* tradition; its interpretive basis remains grounded in the authority of recognized scholars (*ulama mu'tabar*), while its contextual dimension lies in the fourth step namely, the application of classically understood values to new issues unknown at the time the hadith was spoken. The framework of religious moderation (*wasatiyyah*) is used as an additional analytical lens at this fourth step, to assess the extent to which hadith values can serve as a balance (*mīzān*) in the governance of AI within a plural society.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Contemporary AI Ethics Principles and Their Relevance to Religious Moderation

Contemporary AI ethics places five core principles as its moral foundation: (1) justice algorithms must not produce discrimination based on gender, race, or religion; (2) transparency AI systems must be explainable to the public; (3) responsibility the negative impacts of AI remain the responsibility of humans; (4) beneficence AI is directed toward *maslahat* (the common good); and (5) non-maleficence a strict prohibition against AI that causes harm (Hakim, Fadlillah, and Rofiq, 2024).

In the context of religious moderation, these principles carry very real implications. Algorithmic biases that are anti-religious or anti-minority can exacerbate intolerance; AI that is not transparent in processing religious content has the potential to trigger disinformation and radicalization as reflected in the cases of religiously themed generative AI content mentioned in the introduction while the absence of accountability fosters the dehumanization of inter-communal social relations. Therefore, AI ethics is not merely a technical matter, but also a theological and social issue that directly intersects with the principle of *wasatiyyah* in Islam (Abubakar and Ridha, 2024).

Hadith Values as a Foundation for AI Ethics: A Thematic Analysis

This research identifies three groups of hadith that are thematically relevant both to AI ethics principles and to the principle of religious moderation:

First, hadith on accountability and leadership: “Kullukum rā'in wa kullukum mas'ūlun 'an ra'iyatih” (Each of you is a leader, and each leader will be held accountable for those under his leadership) [HR. al-Bukhārī, Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī, no. 2554, Kitab al-Ahkam; and HR. Muslim, Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim, no. 1829, Kitab al-Imarah] (al-Bukhari, no. 2554; Muslim, no. 1829). This hadith affirms that human beings including AI developers, users, and regulators cannot detach themselves from moral responsibility for the impacts of the technology they create and use. Machines possess no moral capacity; ethical responsibility rests entirely with humans as *khalīfah fī al-arḍ* (Alhubilah et al., 2025). Within the framework of moderation, this principle necessitates balanced AI governance: neither rejecting technology radically, nor accepting it without ethical filters.

Second, the principle of *lā ḍarar wa lā ḍirār* (one must not cause harm to oneself or to others) [HR. Ibn Mājah, Sunan Ibn Mājah, no. 2341, Kitab al-Ahkam]. It should be noted

that in terms of its chain of transmission (sanad), some hadith scholars assess this narration as ḥasan or even ḍa'īf in isolation (as a single hadith), due to a weakness in one of its transmission lines. However, the content of its meaning is regarded as ṣaḥīḥ as a legal maxim (al-qawā'id al-fiqhiyyah), as it is supported by a number of other, stronger pieces of evidence both Qur'anic verses prohibiting harmful acts (iḍrār) and other hadith of similar meaning such that it is widely known and applied by fiqh scholars across various schools of thought as one of the foundational maxims (al-qawā'id al-kulliyyah al-khamūs). This status ḍa'īf in terms of its individual sanad yet ṣaḥīḥ al-ma'na due to ta'addud al-ṭuruq (multiple transmission paths) and the support of other evidence is commonly found among fiqh maxims, and does not diminish its authority as a legal principle accepted by consensus (ijmā'i in meaning) (Jaiyeoba, Ushama, et al., 2024). In the context of AI, this principle requires that artificial intelligence systems not be used for the dissemination of religiously based hate speech, digital radicalization, manipulation of public opinion that undermines inter-communal harmony, or the exploitation of personal data (Jaiyeoba, Ushama, et al., 2024). This is a direct manifestation of moderation: wasaṭiyyah rejects all forms of extremism, including technological extremism that harms other groups. This hadith also aligns with the principle of non-maleficence in global AI ethics.

Third, the hadith on professionalism: "Innallāha yuḥibbu idhā 'amila aḥadukum 'amalan an yutqinah" (Indeed, Allah loves it when one of you performs a task, that he performs it with itqan professionalism and quality) [HR. al-Baihaqī] (Akbar and Kurniawan, 2023). Itqan in the context of AI development means: accuracy and integrity of data, transparency of algorithms, and accountability for the quality of system outputs (Akbar and Kurniawan, 2023). The value of itqan rejects carelessness, manipulation, and slapdash work in building technology that has a broad impact on human life.

The Islamic AI Ethics Framework: Moderation as the Mīzān of Technology

The integration of hadith values with contemporary AI ethics principles produces what this research conceptualizes as Islamic AI Ethics an ethical framework for artificial intelligence grounded in Islamic values. Within this framework, religious moderation (wasaṭiyyah) functions as a mīzān (scale/balance) that keeps AI development on the path of universal humanity (Mahmudulhassan et al., 2024).

The Islamic AI Ethics framework has three main pillars derived from hadith, each requiring the involvement of different yet mutually complementary actors in its governance:

(1) The Pillar of Accountability (mas'ūliyyah) based on the hadith of leadership; every actor within the AI ecosystem bears moral and social responsibility for the impacts of the technology. In practice, this responsibility is layered: developers bear accountability at the level of system design and algorithmic transparency; governments and regulators bear accountability at the level of policy, licensing standards, and the enforcement of sanctions for violations; while religious institutions such as the Indonesian Ulema Council (MUI) and religious civil society organizations bear accountability at the level of public education and the clarification of information when

AI content arises that has the potential to trigger religious misunderstanding. These three layers of actors should ideally work in a complementary manner, rather than shifting responsibility onto one another.

(2) The Pillar of Harm Prevention (dar' al-mafsadah) based on the principle of *lā ḍarar*; AI must be designed with active protective mechanisms against potential misuse that could damage social harmony and inter-communal relations. At the practical level, this pillar requires developers to build technical safeguards (such as content filters and watermarking for synthetic content) from the design stage (by design), governments to establish regulations mandating such safeguards as well as mechanisms for reporting and acting upon harmful content, and religious institutions to play an active role in identifying and reporting AI content with the potential to cause fitnah or religious controversy to the relevant authorities.

(3) The Pillar of Professional Integrity (itqan) based on the hadith of al-Baihaqī; the development of AI demands high standards of quality and honesty, not merely economic gain. This pillar primarily falls to developers and technology organizations as the direct actors in the production process, but governments can reinforce it through quality certification standards, and higher education institutions including Islamic universities can contribute through the development of curricula that instill the values of *itqan* and professional ethics from the early stages of training future technology developers.

These pillars correspond directly to the values of religious moderation: *wasatīyyah* demands a balance between progress and responsibility, between innovation and ethics, and between individual interests and collective benefit. AI developed on this foundation will not become an instrument of radicalization or dehumanization, but rather a means of strengthening tolerance, justice, and social harmony (Hernawati, Hafizh, et al., 2024).

Unlike secular technology ethics paradigms, which tend to be pragmatic and separate values from instruments, Islamic AI Ethics presents an integrative approach that positions the spiritual, moral, and social dimensions as an inseparable whole. In the Islamic view, knowledge and technology are always tied to *amanah* (trust) and responsibility toward Allah, toward fellow human beings, and toward the universe (Ni'am et al., 2025).

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This research concludes several important points. First, the development of AI cannot be separated from ethical problems that have a direct impact on social and religious order as reflected in the various cases of religiously themed generative AI content that have sparked controversy in Indonesia's digital space such that religious moderation becomes a highly relevant perspective for evaluating and directing technology.

Second, the principles of contemporary AI ethics justice, transparency, accountability, beneficence, and non-maleficence demonstrate strong coherence with the values of the Prophet's hadith. The hadith on leadership accountability, the principle

of *lā ɗarar wa lā ɗirār*, and the hadith on *itqan* form an ethical framework that is substantively aligned with the demands of global technology ethics.

Third, these hadith values simultaneously affirm the principle of *wasatīyyah* (moderation) as the foundation for governing AI technology. Moderation requires balance: embracing the benefits of AI with full responsibility, while rejecting its misuse, which can damage social harmony and inter-communal relations.

Fourth, this research offers an Islamic AI Ethics framework with three pillars: accountability (*mas'ūliyyah*), harm prevention (*dar' al-mafsadah*), and professional integrity (*itqan*) each involving a complementary division of roles among developers, governments/regulators, and religious institutions. This framework can serve as a guide for AI developers, users, and regulators in Muslim-majority countries to design technology policies and practices that align with Islamic values and the principle of moderation.

Fifth, the hadith of the Prophet holds strong and applicable relevance in guiding Muslims in facing the digital technology era. As a further reinforcement of the *rahmatan lil-'ālamīn* argument that serves as the ultimate orientation of this framework, it is also important to affirm the *fiqh maxim jalb al-maṣāliḥ wa dar' al-mafāsīd* (bringing about benefit and preventing harm), which is commonly paired with the principle of *lā ɗarar wa lā ɗirār*. If *lā ɗarar* emphasizes the negative aspect namely, the prohibition against causing harm then *jalb al-maṣāliḥ* emphasizes the positive aspect: an active impetus to direct every resource, including AI technology, toward broader benefit (*maṣlaḥah*). These two maxims complement one another and together form the dual orientation required in AI governance: it is not enough merely to prevent harm (a defensive stance), but AI must also be actively directed to bring benefit for universal welfare (a proactive stance) a balance that lies at the very heart of the meaning of *rahmatan lil-'ālamīn* itself. By making these hadith and *fiqh maxims* a reference point for ethics, Muslims can make a significant contribution to building a technological civilization that is just, humane, and oriented toward universal benefit.

This research recommends that the Ministry of Religious Affairs, Islamic higher education institutions, and religious-based civil society organizations begin integrating the Islamic AI Ethics framework into curricula, fatwas, and digital technology governance regulations. More concretely, directions for implementation that can be explored in future studies include: (a) the development of a course module on "AI Ethics from an Islamic Perspective" for relevant study programs at Islamic higher education institutions, integrating the three-pillar Islamic AI Ethics framework with concrete case studies; (b) the initiation of a fatwa study by the Indonesian Ulema Council (MUI) or an equivalent fatwa institution regarding the legal and ethical status of using generative AI content depicting religious figures or speech, including the *shar'i* boundaries in its production and dissemination; and (c) exploring cooperation between religious institutions and technology platforms (for example, in the form of consultation forums or memoranda of understanding) to develop mechanisms for reporting and handling religiously themed generative AI content with the potential to trigger controversy. These three directions

are illustrative as a starting point for more operational follow-up research, and require further elaboration through interdisciplinary studies involving Islamic legal scholars, technology practitioners, and policymakers.

REFERENCES

- Abubakar, A., dan A. Ridha. "Al-Qur'an Dan Kecerdasan Buatan (Suatu Kajian Tematik)." *AL-WAJID: Jurnal Ilmu Al-Qur'an dan Tafsir*, ejournal.iain-bone.ac.id, 2024.
- Akbar, A., dan R. R. Kurniawan. "AI Dan Dampaknya Pada Perekonomian Menurut Fiqih." *Media STIE Prabumulih*, 2023.
- Akbar, T. A. "Etika Islam Dalam Pemanfaatan Kecerdasan Buatan (AI) Untuk Mencapai Studi Islam Yang Modern Dan Berorientasi Pada Kemanusiaan." *Prosiding Kajian Islam dan Integrasi Ilmu*, jurnal.uindatokarama.ac.id, 2025.
- Alhubilah, F., MZAF Al Farisi, et al. "Bridging Artificial Intelligence and Revelation: Semantic Analysis on Chapter Al-'Alaq in the Qur'an through the Artificial Neural Networks Perspective." *Journal of Quran and Hadith Studies*, ejournal.iainkerinci.ac.id, 2025.
- Arif, M., S. Irfan, M. M. R. Shaoan, dan W. Ali. "AI and Machine Learning in Islamic Guidance: Opportunities, Ethical Considerations, and Future Directions." *Guidance: Jurnal Bimbingan*, jurnal.uia.ac.id, 2024.
- Azzahrowaini, L., M. W. Shohib, dan M. N. R. Maksum. "Digitalisasi Pembelajaran Tahfidz Al-Qur'an Berbasis AI Dalam Inovasi Tantangan Dan Implementasi." *Educatio*, ejournal.hamzanwadi.ac.id, 2025.
- Al-Bukhārī, Muhammad ibn Ismail. *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*. Kairo: Dar al-Tauq al-Najah, 1422 H.
- Al-Nawawī, Yahya ibn Sharaf. *Al-Minhāj Sharh Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim ibn al-Ḥajjāj*. Beirut: Dar Ihya' al-Turath al-'Arabi, 1392 H.
- Fauzan, A. N., dan E. Musaddad. "Digitalization of Hadith and Its Challenges in the Current of Globalization." *Aslama: Journal of Islamic Studies*, aslama.kjii.org, 2025.
- Fauzan, M. A., A. Q. A'yun, et al. "Analisis Hadis Keutamaan Ilmu Dalam Konteks Pendidikan Islam." *SETYAKI: Jurnal Pendidikan Islam*, 2024.
- Hakim, F., A. Fadlillah, dan M. N. Rofiq. "Artificial Intelligence (AI) Dan Dampaknya Dalam Distorsi Pendidikan Islam." *Urwatul Wutsqo: Jurnal Studi Kependidikan*, 2024.
- Hamidi, MF Al, A. W. Fitriyah, et al. "Artificial Intelligence Dan Implikasinya Terhadap Pengkajian Studi Islam Pada Generasi Z." *Jurnal Tarbiyatuna*, ejournal.iaida.ac.id, 2024.
- Hastuty, A., M. Maswati, M. Saharuddin, A. M. Sukri, dan A. Halik. "Artificial Intelligence: A Review of the Philosophy of Islamic Educational Science." *Journal of Research in Islamic Education*, 2025.

- Heriansyah, D., dan M. S. Qalby. "Era Industri 4.0: Nilai-Nilai Etika Pada Masyarakat Terhadap Penggunaan Media Sosial Dalam Perspektif Hadis." *Jurnal Dakwah dan Ilmu Komunikasi*, 2024.
- Hernawati, S., M. Hafizh, et al. "Adjusting the Ideal Islamic Religious Education Curriculum to the Development of AI-Based Technology." *Progresiva: Jurnal Pemikiran dan Pendidikan Islam*, *ejournal.umm.ac.id*, 2024.
- Hosni, A., M. F. M. Ariffin, dan H. Ishak. "Editorial Notes: Isu Dan Cabaran ChatGPT Terhadap Pengajian Islam." *Al-Turath Journal of Al-Quran and Al-Sunnah*, 2023.
- Ibn Hajar al-'Asqalānī, Ahmad ibn Ali. *Fatḥ al-Bārī bi Sharḥ Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*. Beirut: Dar al-Ma'rifah, 1379 H.
- Ibn Mājah, Muhammad ibn Yazid. *Sunan Ibn Mājah*. Kairo: Dar Ihya' al-Kutub al-'Arabiyyah, t.t.
- Jaiyeoba, H. B., T. Ushama, et al. "Al-Quran Sebagai Sumber Panduan Etika Dan Moral Dalam Masyarakat Kontemporari." *Al-Irsyad: Journal of Islamic Studies*, 2024.
- Mahmudulhassan, M., et al. "Artificial Intelligence in Multicultural Islamic Education: Opportunities, Challenges, and Ethical Considerations." *Universal Journal of Islamic Education and Management*, 2024.
- Majid, A. H. *Etika Komunikasi Di Era Digital Perspektif Al-Qur'an: Studi Penafsiran Sufistik Ibnu 'Ajjabah Dalam al-Baḥr al-Madīd*. Surabaya: Alfithrah Press, 2024.
- Malik, R., A. Malik, dan M. Mustika. "Artificial Intelligence and Islamic Law: Ethical Implications and Fiqh Fatwas in the Digital Age." *Journal of Family Law and Islamic Court*, 2024.
- Muslim ibn al-Hajjaj. *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim*. Diedit oleh Muhammad Fu'ad 'Abd al-Baqi. Kairo: Dar Ihya' al-Turath al-'Arabi, t.t.
- Ni'am, A. M., P. Parhan, I. Basyarahil, dan N. Hidayaturrohmah. "Cultivating Spiritual Intelligence in Education during the Era of Artificial Intelligence Based on the Concept of Educational Psychology in the Al-Qur'an." *Jurnal Penelitian Ilmu Pendidikan*, 2025.
- Rahmi, M., D. Daipon, dan N. Saprina. "AI Simulation of Digital Afterlife: Artificial Intelligence in the Framework of Islamic Law." *ICMIL Proceedings*, 2024.
- Resky, M., dan Y. Suharyat. "Analysis of AI Technology Utilization in Islamic Education: Analisis Pemanfaatan Teknologi AI Dalam Pendidikan Islam." *Procedia of Social Sciences and Humanities*, 2024.
- Rosyad, S., dan M. Alif. "Hadis Di Era Digital: Tantangan Dan Peluang Penggunaan Teknologi Dalam Studi Hadis." *Jurnal Ilmu Agama: Mengkaji Doktrin, Pemikiran, dan Fenomena Agama*, 2023.

REACHING OUT TO THOSE WHO WERE ONCE LOST: REFLECTIVE PERSONAL DAKWAH BY A RELIGIOUS COUNSELOR WITHIN A CIRCLE OF FORMER TERRORISM CONVICTS IN POHUWATO

Wisno Pakaya¹⁾, Arfan Nusi²⁾, Dian Adi Perdana³⁾

¹ Kementerian Agama Kabupaten Pohuwato, Provinsi Gorontalo, Indonesia

^{2,3} Institut Agama Islam Negeri Sultan Amai Gorontalo, Indonesia

email: wisnopakaya93@gmail.com

email: arfannusi@iaingorontalo.ac.id

email: dianadiperdana@iaingorontalo.ac.id

Abstract

This research aims to examine the process of reflective personal dakwah in efforts toward deradicalization and the social reintegration of former terrorism convicts (ex-napiter) in Pohuwato Regency, Gorontalo Province, as carried out by a religious counselor (hereinafter referred to by the pseudonym Ustadz Wisno) toward seven ex-napiter. This approach emphasizes empathetic communication, spiritual accompaniment, and a humanizing space for reflection. The method used is reflective-participatory ethnography, in which the researcher acts as an insider-adjacent observer who follows, documents, and reflects upon the dakwah process carried out by the religious counselor, rather than as a direct practitioner of that dakwah. Data were obtained through in-depth interviews, participatory observation, and field notes over the period 2023–2025. The findings show that reflective personal dakwah contributed to the building of trust, verbal statements of ideological transformation, and the strengthening of social participation among the ex-napiter within the framework of the Unitary State of the Republic of Indonesia (NKRI). This research explicitly distinguishes between disengagement (changes in behavior and social involvement, which are observed more strongly in this study) and deradicalization (profound changes in ideological attitudes and beliefs, the verbal expressions of which need to be read with caution given the methodological limitations in verifying their depth). In conclusion, reflective personal dakwah is a promising humanity-based approach in supporting disengagement and post-sentence social reintegration, with certain elements that have the potential to be replicated by other religious counselors, although the sustainability and depth of ideological transformation require further, more systematic study.

Keywords: *Reflective Personal Dakwah, Deradicalization, Disengagement, Social Reintegration, Religious Moderation, Former Terrorism Convicts*

Abstrak

Penelitian ini bertujuan mengkaji proses dakwah personal reflektif dalam upaya deradikalisasi dan reintegrasi sosial eks-narapidana kasus terorisme (eks-napiter) di Kabupaten Pohuwato, Provinsi Gorontalo, sebagaimana dijalankan oleh seorang penyuluh agama (selanjutnya disebut dengan nama samaran Ustadz Wisno) terhadap tujuh eks-napiter. Pendekatan ini menitikberatkan pada komunikasi empatik, pendampingan spiritual, dan ruang refleksi yang memanusiakan. Metode yang digunakan adalah etnografi reflektif-partisipatif, di mana peneliti berperan sebagai pengamat dekat (insider-adjacent observer) yang mengikuti, mendokumentasikan, dan merefleksikan proses dakwah yang dijalankan oleh penyuluh agama, bukan sebagai pelaku langsung dakwah tersebut. Data diperoleh melalui wawancara mendalam, observasi partisipatif, dan catatan lapangan selama 2023–2025. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa dakwah personal reflektif berkontribusi pada terbangunnya

kepercayaan, pernyataan verbal transformasi ideologis, dan penguatan partisipasi sosial para eks-napiter dalam bingkai NKRI. Penelitian ini secara eksplisit membedakan antara disengagement (perubahan perilaku dan keterlibatan sosial, yang teramati secara lebih kuat dalam temuan ini) dan deradicalization (perubahan sikap dan keyakinan ideologis secara mendalam, yang ekspresi verbalnya perlu dibaca secara hati-hati mengingat keterbatasan metode dalam memverifikasi kedalamannya). Kesimpulannya, dakwah personal reflektif merupakan pendekatan berbasis kemanusiaan yang menjanjikan dalam mendukung disengagement dan reintegrasi sosial pasca-hukuman, dengan elemen-elemen tertentu yang berpotensi direplikasi oleh penyuluh agama lain, meski keberlanjutan dan kedalaman transformasi ideologisnya memerlukan kajian lanjutan yang lebih sistematis.

Kata kunci: *dakwah personal reflektif; deradikalisasi; disengagement; reintegrasi sosial; moderasi beragama; eks-napiter*

INTRODUCTION

The return of former convicts of terrorism offenses (napiter) to society often leaves a void that is invisible, yet felt in the social, psychological, and spiritual dimensions. On paper, they have served their sentences, declared their allegiance to the Unitary State of the Republic of Indonesia (NKRI), and even present a face of Islam that appears more peaceful and moderate. Yet behind this formality, a question continues to echo: have they truly recovered from an ideology of violence, or have they merely shifted to a different space while still harboring old embers?

Pohuwato, a quiet region in Gorontalo Province that nonetheless harbors complex social dynamics, has become a witness to a group of ex-napiter attempting to rebuild their lives. Amid a climate of community acceptance that remains conditional with collective trauma not yet fully healed and suspicions that are sometimes left unspoken the existence of ex-napiter is like walking between two worlds: the old world they wish to leave behind, and the new world that has not yet fully accepted them.

It is within this context that the role of the religious counselor becomes vital. In this research, the religious counselor who is the focus of observation hereinafter referred to by the pseudonym Ustadz Wisno to protect his identity is present as a fellow servant of God who reaches out to the inner wounds of the ex-napiter with empathy. His approach is rooted in a human relationship: being present to listen before advising, to understand before guiding. The dakwah he carries out is not about one-way sermons, but a dialogue from heart to heart, since the greatest concern among ex-napiter is a void of values and spirituality that could be filled by anyone including by the ideology they previously followed. This Pohuwato case occupies a particular position within the broader landscape of deradicalization and post-sentence reintegration studies in Indonesia, which will be discussed further in the discussion section with reference to comparative cases such as Poso (Solahudin & Mietzner, 2012) and Aceh (Husin, 2017).

This reflective personal dakwah approach aims to gradually rebuild the foundation of religious moderation, nurture the ex-napiter's belief in an Islam that is rahmatan lil-'alamin, and ensure that their recognition of NKRI is not merely a formality to free themselves from legal status, but represents a new, whole, and rooted form of ideological consciousness a claim that, as will be discussed further, needs to be carefully

distinguished between indications of behavioral disengagement and deeper ideological deradicalization.

This research aims to describe in depth the process of personal dakwah toward ex-napiter in Pohuwato Regency as one strategy for strengthening religious moderation at the grassroots level in the post-sentence period. Stemming from concern over the weaknesses of formal and uniform deradicalization approaches, this research presents an alternative narrative that is more contextual, humanistic, and transformative. Theoretically, this research broadens the horizon of dakwah and deradicalization studies with a perspective from below; practically, its results can serve as a reference for stakeholders in designing social reintegration programs that are oriented not only toward security, but also toward spiritual and social sustainability.

METHOD

This research employs a reflective-participatory ethnographic approach as its main method an approach that combines the power of field-experience narrative with the rigor of social analysis. The researcher acts as an insider-adjacent observer: following, witnessing, and reflecting upon the dakwah process carried out by the religious counselor (Ustadz Wisno) toward the ex-napiter, without becoming a direct practitioner of that dakwah. This position allows for an in-depth exploration of psychosocial, spiritual, and ideological dynamics that cannot be fully captured by more distanced quantitative or qualitative methods.

Reflexivity statement: the researcher's relational closeness to Ustadz Wisno and to the community of ex-napiter he accompanies is a prerequisite for the rich data access in this research, but this closeness also carries a risk of interpretive bias. The researcher acknowledges the possibility of a tendency to read the ex-napiter's statements as evidence of the success of Ustadz Wisno's dakwah, given the good relationship that has been built among the researcher, the counselor, and the ex-napiter throughout the accompaniment process. To mitigate this risk, the researcher deliberately distinguishes in the analysis between (a) the ex-napiter's verbal statements regarding acceptance of NKRI and religious moderation, and (b) independently observed behavioral changes (social participation, involvement in mosque activities, patterns of interaction with the community). This distinction is important because, as shown in the disengagement literature (Horgan, 2009), verbal expressions of acceptance toward the state and moderate religious views are not automatically equivalent to a deep ideological transformation; such expressions could also be a form of strategic compliance a rational adjustment of behavior in the context of post-sentence supervision and the need for social acceptance, without being accompanied by a full change in core beliefs. This research is thus better able to document indications of disengagement (observable changes in behavior and social involvement) more strongly than it is able to deeply verify deradicalization (changes in ideological attitudes and beliefs) a limitation that will be discussed further in the discussion and conclusion sections.

This research involved seven ex-napiter who had returned to society after serving their sentences and settled in various sub-districts within Pohuwato Regency. Data were collected through in-depth interviews, participatory observation, and field notes during the accompaniment process between 2023 and 2025. Interviews were conducted in informal settings home porches, coffee stalls, small mosques that allowed trust and openness to emerge. Observation encompassed verbal behavior, expressions, gestures, pauses, and silences, as silence often contains experiences that go unspoken.

All experiences were documented in field notes, which were then analyzed using thematic narrative analysis an approach that allows for the extraction of meaning from experiential narratives while preserving the context and emotions that accompany them. In the analysis process, triangulation was used between narrative data, the researcher's reflections, and the local socio-cultural context of Pohuwato. Data validity was maintained through repeated reflection, discussion with fellow counselors, and re-interpretation based on academic literature on dakwah, the psychology of religion, and deradicalization. This approach aligns with the emic principle in ethnography namely, understanding the world from the insider's point of view while still maintaining an adequate analytical distance, as outlined in the reflexivity statement above.

THEORETICAL REVIEW

Reflective Dialogue in Dakwah

Dakwah cannot simply be understood as the verbal delivery of Islamic teachings, but as a process of communication of the heart that touches the psychological and spiritual dimensions of the human being. In the context of ex-napiter, top-down dakwah can in fact trigger resistance, as they often experience fatigue with normative discourse that fails to touch the roots of their lived experience. The reflective personal dakwah approach presupposes a humane encounter built on a foundation of empathy and equality. Nurcholish Madjid emphasized that dakwah should be "a revival of a deep and enlightening religious consciousness."

This model of empathetic communication in dakwah is also in line with Carl Rogers' theory of non-directive counseling, which emphasizes the importance of unconditional acceptance, empathy, and full presence as the foundation of psychological transformation. This means the religious counselor acts not as a sole preacher, but as an active listener who creates a reflective space. In the context of ex-napiter, this presence is important for rebuilding trust that has long been broken toward others, toward religion, and toward the state. It must be noted, however, that Rogers' non-directive approach was originally formulated within a therapeutic context with clear ethical boundaries and clinical supervision. Religious counselors who carry out similar reflective accompaniment, without formal psychological training, may potentially face situations beyond their competence for example, if an ex-napiter shows symptoms indicating severe trauma or Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD). Therefore, the reflective personal dakwah framework proposed in this research ideally should be accompanied by a clear referral mechanism to mental health professionals whether through community

health centers (puskesmas), regional psychiatric hospitals, or psychological services in cooperation with the Ministry of Religious Affairs whenever a counselor identifies signs that fall outside the capacity of spiritual accompaniment alone. This aspect will be elaborated further in the recommendations section.

Deradicalization as a Process of Identity and Spiritual Recovery

Deradicalization cannot be understood merely as a one-directional process of re-ideologization, but as the recovery of identity and spirituality. Studies by the RAND Corporation emphasize that effective deradicalization always involves personal and spiritual dimensions, not merely security rhetoric. Ex-napiter generally experience a loss of self after leaving their extremist group they feel empty, uprooted from their belief system, and experience a void of life's meaning.

Social identity theory, from Henri Tajfel and John Turner, explains that a person tends to seek protection within a group that can give them a sense of belonging and meaning. When someone leaves their former ideological group, they do not automatically become "neutral," but rather find themselves in a dangerous void. Viktor Frankl referred to this condition as an "existential vacuum," one that is vulnerable to infiltration by a new ideology if it is not quickly filled with positive meaning.

Within an Islamic framework, the existential vacuum and the need for group identity described by Frankl, Tajfel, and Turner have a strong conceptual resonance with two central ideas: fitrah and ummah. Fitrah, in Islamic understanding, refers to the basic human inclination toward truth, balance, and longing for God an inherent "space" within the human being that, if not filled with healthy belief, can be filled by ideological distortions. In this sense, Frankl's "existential vacuum" can be read as a condition in which a person's fitrah has been diverted or covered over by a deviant ideological construct, and the process of reflective personal dakwah functions to help the individual "return" to their fitrah. Meanwhile, the need for a sense of group belonging described by Tajfel-Turner's social identity theory finds its conceptual counterpart in the concept of ummah an inclusive community of faith that is not exclusivist-militant in nature. When an ex-napiter leaves their extreme ideological group, the void of belonging left behind should ideally be filled not by a new ideological group that is equally exclusive, but by an awareness of membership in a broader and more inclusive ummah the Muslim community of Pohuwato in general, mosque congregations, and moderate religious social networks. Thus, reflective personal dakwah can be understood not merely as the application of Western psychological techniques within an Islamic vessel, but as a process that conceptually directs the individual to return to their fitrah while also finding their place within the ummah two processes that, within the Frankl and Tajfel-Turner frameworks, are explained separately as the filling of existential meaning and the fulfillment of group identity needs, but which, in the Islamic view, are two sides of a single, whole process of recovery.

This understanding also raises an important question about the sustainability of this process of filling in new meaning. To the extent that the process of "returning to fitrah" and "finding a place within the ummah" remains highly dependent on the personal

presence of Ustadz Wisno as the accompanying figure, there is a risk that this filling of meaning has not yet been fully internalized independently a concern relevant to the concept of dependency in counseling psychology. Ideally, the long-term success of this approach is marked by a shift in the source of meaning and belonging from an individual figure (Ustadz Wisno) toward a broader and more permanent community structure mosque congregations, study groups, and the social network of ex-napiter who have themselves transformed into agents of moderation (such as FK and AHM). In this reading, a stronger indicator of the success of reflective personal dakwah is not continued dependence on the figure of the accompanying counselor, but the extent to which the individual has built independent anchors of meaning and social anchors within the local ummah structure a dimension that cannot yet be fully ascertained from this research's data and requires long-term monitoring as an agenda for further research.

Religious Moderation: Humanizing the Subject of Dakwah from Within

Religious moderation, as developed by Indonesia's Ministry of Religious Affairs, is not merely a policy discourse, but a religious approach that balances textuality and contextuality, religious commitment and respect for diversity. In the context of ex-napiter, religious moderation needs to be instilled not merely through formal sermons, but through interactions that awaken a new consciousness.

The reflective-participatory ethnographic approach is an appropriate method for recording this process, as it is able to combine the researcher's field experience with scientific analysis. Carolyn Ellis and Art Bochner explain that the reflective approach in ethnography is not merely a method of writing about experience, but a medium for understanding social complexity through reflective and in-depth experience. With this approach, the experience of the religious counselor directly involved in accompanying the ex-napiter as documented and reflected upon by the researcher becomes not merely a story, but data; the narratives of dakwah are no longer separated from social reality, but rather become a mirror of transformation for the counselor, for the researcher observing it, and for the subjects of the dakwah.

Literature Review

Research on dakwah for the deradicalization of ex-napiter continues to receive widespread attention in academia, particularly since the rise of religion-based violent threats in various regions of Indonesia. Solahudin and Marcus Mietzner explored the dynamics of deradicalization in Indonesia through the Poso case and highlighted that the government's approach tends to be technocratic and fails to reach the psychosocial roots of radicalism. M. Imdadun Rahmat, in his dissertation, showed that deradicalization programs that focus only on formal aspects are unable to penetrate the deepest inner space of ex-napiter, and suggested a more communicative, participatory, and personal approach.

Noor Huda Ismail ethnographically described how genuine, empathy-based friendships can serve as a powerful entry point for changing extreme beliefs. Nur Rofiah emphasized that a narrative of Islam full of compassion is essential in the process of

ideological rehabilitation, reminding us that religion is often misused not because of its texts, but because of human experiences that have not found a spiritual way home. Asna Husin studied a rehabilitation program for ex-napiter in Aceh and found that the participation of local religious leaders and an approach based on cultural values were very helpful in rebuilding the peaceful identity of ex-napiter. Meanwhile, Lies Marcoes and the Rumah KitaB team reinforced the argument that personal approaches by religious figures can touch the deepest psychological side of former perpetrators of violence through the role of a “spiritual listener” who is present without judgment.

From these six previous studies, it appears that there remains wide room for a reflective ethnographic approach that closely narrates the process of personal dakwah. None has explicitly narrated and positioned the experience of a religious counselor in personally reaching out to and accompanying ex-napiter while also discussing the position of such findings relative to other regional cases such as Poso and Aceh. This research attempts to make a distinctive contribution: presenting a humane, spiritual, and emotional narrative often missing from ordinary academic reports, while positioning the Pohuwato case within the broader constellation of regional deradicalization studies in Indonesia.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Narratives of Personal Dakwah: Seven Stories from Pohuwato

In the accompaniment referred to in this research as reflective personal dakwah, the interaction between Ustadz Wisno and seven ex-napiter from Pohuwato as observed and documented by the researcher opens up a space for humane encounter that cannot be replaced by any formal program. The following names are presented using initials only, to protect the confidentiality of identities.

SA

SA was arrested in 2020 and served a sentence of two years and two months out of a three-year verdict, from the Mako Brimob Cikeas before being transferred to Gunung Sindur Prison. He spoke with tearful eyes when met at his home porch:

“After I was released in 2023, I thought I would be rejected by society. But what I encountered was actually a warm welcome. Open hands. Alhamdulillah.”

Through cross-themed conversations with Ustadz Wisno that did not always lead to formal religious sermons, SA gradually discovered an inclusive Islam. He then stated:

“From Ustadz Wisno I learned that Islam does not reject difference. Islam is moderate. I used to be harsh, but now I am more at peace. We have already acknowledged NKRI. We are no longer people who want to fight against it. We want to be part of this nation.”

ZK

ZK, currently 31 years old, served one year in prison at Cikeas and one year and three months at Gunung Sindur. He was a hard-natured and initially quite closed-off person. But one afternoon, after a conversation with Ustadz Wisno about the importance of tasamuh (tolerance) in Islam, he said:

“I am more grateful now living in Pohuwato. In prison, my body was confined. But after I got out, my soul was actually freed.”

He admitted that he had previously lived in suspicion and an exclusivist doctrine that fortified him against the outside world. Through gentle dialogue with Ustadz Wisno, he began to lay down that shield, affirming:

“Ustadz Wisno never forced anything. But from the way he spoke and listened, I came to know that Islam does not teach hostility. I used to want to die as a fighter. But now I want to live as a bridge of peace.”

ZL

ZL served a three-year sentence. When met, his words carried wounds not yet fully healed:

“When I first got out of prison, the community accepted me. But I know that sometimes they still talk behind my back. I'm not angry. I understand. Forgiving isn't easy.”

What stands out about ZL is his honesty in reflecting on his own change. He does not hide his past, but neither does he let it bind him:

“I've come to realize it. In the past, my understanding of Islam was narrow. Now I understand that religion must not be excessive. Especially after often receiving enlightenment on religious moderation from Ustadz Wisno, I feel my heart's eyes have been opened.”

JY

JY is one of the clearest examples of successful social reintegration. He was very well received by the community and is now a role model for his peers:

“I have never heard a bad word from the community since I got out. They treat me normally. That makes me want to truly change. What I know now is that Islam is full of love.”

FK

FK has a remarkable enthusiasm for learning and often jots down points from Ustadz Wisno's dakwah in his small notebook. One principle he remembers most is wasathiyah:

“Islam is in the middle. Not harsh, not lax. Not excessive.”

He is now involved in mosque activities and serves as a bridge between young expatriates and local community figures, affirming:

"In the past I distanced myself from society. Now I want to be close. I want Islam to be seen as a religion that is friendly, not angry."

MZL and AHM

Unlike the five ex-napiter above, MZL and AHM find it more difficult to speak up verbally. However, their presence at every forum, their active participation in social activities, and their openness in accepting invitations to gather from Ustadz Wisno show that change does not always need to be expressed in words. MZL is a loyal listener, while AHM, who lives in Duhiaadaa Sub-district, has become an important link between the group of ex-napiter and local religious figures.

Stakeholder Responses

Ustadz Wisno's accompaniment efforts have resonated widely across various circles. The Regent of Pohuwato expressed appreciation:

"For me, what Ustadz Wisno is doing is a very urgent mission. His way of doing dakwah is the best Ustadz Wisno is present right among them, conveying that Islam is peaceful and harmonious."

The Head of the Ministry of Religious Affairs Office of Pohuwato Regency also gave an assessment:

"This accompaniment is authentic dakwah, grounded dakwah. Ustadz Wisno has proven that great change can begin from a small, sincere touch. And that is special."

The Chairperson of the Interfaith Harmony Forum (FKUB) of Pohuwato Regency affirmed:

"Ustadz Wisno is indeed quite consistent in voicing a moderate and peaceful Islam. He doesn't just talk he goes directly into the field, and that's what makes his dakwah resonate."

These three statements from the Regent, the Head of the Ministry of Religious Affairs Office, and the Chairperson of the FKUB above need to be read proportionally, in accordance with their position within the argumentative structure of this research. These statements constitute a form of social-institutional recognition and legitimacy for Ustadz Wisno's approach and reputation as a religious counselor in general namely, that his approach is viewed as authentic, consistent, and beneficial for harmony in Pohuwato. However, none of the three were intended, nor can they be treated, as an independent assessment of the ideological transformation outcomes of the seven ex-napiter who are the specific subjects of this research; none of the three stakeholders conducted a direct assessment of SA, ZK, ZL, JY, FK, MZL, or AHM individually. Thus, these quotations function as indicators of the overall social legitimacy of the accompaniment program, not as external validation of the claims of ideological transformation narrated in the previous section.

Discussion: Reflective Personal Dakwah as a Humanistic Model of Deradicalization

The findings of this research show that reflective personal dakwah reaches emotional and existential layers that were previously locked away. Unlike formal approaches that tend to be one-directional, this approach positions the ex-napiter as sovereign subjects over their own life narratives. From equal, non-judgmental conversations, dakwah becomes a safe space for reconstructing a faith that is friendly, inclusive, and full of compassion.

Table 1. Reflective Qualitative Analysis of Personal Dakwah Toward Ex-Napiter

Name	Emotional and Spiritual Reflection	Narrative of Ideological Transformation	Indications of Psychological Change (Observational)
SA	"I thought I would be rejected. But instead I was welcomed warmly."	From an ideology of resistance to a spirit of nationalism and peace; ideologically acknowledges NKRI.	Shift in locus of control from external (blaming circumstances/environment) to internal (positioning oneself as an agent of change); religiosity appears to be moving toward a more intrinsic form (personal appreciation, not group compliance).
ZK	"In prison my body was confined, but my soul only became free after I got out."	From a desire to die as a fighter to a longing to become a bridge of peace.	A decrease in suspicion toward outsiders (out-group), observed through his openness in dialogue; resilience is evident in his ability to reflect on his past without becoming defensive.
ZL	"I'm not angry even though sometimes people talk behind my back. Forgiving isn't easy."	Awareness of the narrowness of his past understanding of Islam, now open to moderation.	Tolerance of remaining social stigma indicates emotional resilience; a shift from an exclusive-rigid religious understanding toward one that is more reflective and open to other interpretations.
JY	"I want to truly change. Islam is full of love."	Full success of social reintegration; has become a role model within the community.	Strengthening of a sense of social acceptance (sense of belonging) that appears to correlate with motivation to change; expressed religiosity leans intrinsic and is oriented toward values of compassion.
FK	"Islam is in the middle. Not harsh, not lax."	Adopting wasathiyah; now active as a bridge between ex-napiter and the community.	Internalization of the principle of moderation appears consistent in speech and action (note-taking on dakwah points, social bridging role); strong indication of internal locus of control through his own role initiative.
MZL	Speaks little, but always present and open to invitations to gather.	Change is demonstrated through consistent social participation.	Change is observed more in the behavioral dimension (presence, participation) than the verbal; observational data are not yet

			sufficient to specifically map locus of control or religiosity orientation.
AHM	Has become a link between the group of ex-napiter and religious figures in Duhiadaa.	Transformation is visible through involvement in cross-social and religious work.	The bridging role indicates a shift in social identity from a marginalized position toward one trusted by the community; however, as with MZL, further psychological mapping requires a more structured instrument.

Source: researcher's field notes and interviews, 2023–2025. The fourth column is observational-descriptive, based on the researcher's observations during accompaniment, not the result of standardized psychometric measurement; it is presented as an initial mapping that can serve as a basis for more structured instrumentation in further research.

Theoretically, this approach affirms the importance of integrating pastoral care with locally grounded disengagement support, in which dakwah functions as a space of recovery that helps restore a person's relationship with God, with society, and with themselves. Through this approach, an exclusive and confrontational narrative of Islam is gradually transformed into a narrative of Islam that is dialogical, calm, and grounded. An important question that arises from these findings is the extent to which this model can be developed and replicated by other religious counselors outside Pohuwato, given its highly personal nature and its reliance on the individual relationships built by Ustadz Wisno over 2023–2025.

Disaggregating the elements of this approach, there are several components that can conceptually be separated from the person of Ustadz Wisno and are therefore more likely to be replicable: (a) communication principles listening before advising, avoiding one-way sermons, and positioning ex-napiter as sovereign subjects over their own narratives which can be formulated into an empathetic communication training curriculum for religious counselors in general; (b) the conceptual framework of wasathiyah as substantive dakwah material, which does not depend on who delivers it; and (c) the structure of informal accompaniment meetings in non-formal spaces such as home porches, coffee stalls, and small mosques as a format that other counselors can adopt. By contrast, there are elements more difficult to separate from the person of Ustadz Wisno: the trust that has been gradually built since 2023 is a form of social capital that is cumulative and personal, and cannot simply be “transferred” to other counselors without a similar trust-building process from the beginning. Ustadz Wisno's reputation in Pohuwato as reflected in the recognition from the Regent, the Ministry of Religious Affairs, and the FKUB is also a contextual asset specific to him and to that region. The implication is that replicating this model elsewhere will likely require a comparable amount of trust-building time (on the order of years, not months), and initial success may not be instant even if the communication principles and substantive material have been appropriately adopted.

Compared to the Poso case studied by Solahudin and Mietzner (2012), in which the government's deradicalization approach was deemed to be technocratic and insufficiently reaching the psychosocial roots of radicalism, the Pohuwato case

demonstrates a different direction: a highly personal approach based on an individual relationship between counselor and ex-napiter. If the weakness of the Poso approach lay in its disconnection from the psychosocial dimension, then the challenge in the Pohuwato model lies in the opposite direction dependence on intensive personal relationships that may be difficult to scale institutionally. Meanwhile, compared to Husin's (2017) findings in Aceh, which emphasized the role of local religious figures and a culturally value-based approach, the Pohuwato case reinforces a similar pattern but with a narrower unit of analysis (seven individuals, one counselor, one regency) and a more limited observation period (2023–2025) compared to Aceh's rehabilitation program, which involved a broader institutional structure. The contribution of the Pohuwato case within this constellation is thus that of a micro case study enriching our understanding of relational mechanisms in disengagement not as a regency/province-scale program model as in the Aceh case, nor as a critique of national-scale technocratic policy as in the Poso case.

The ex-napiter in Pohuwato have now become active participants in religious moderation efforts and local peacebuilders a behavioral observation that is relatively verifiable (participation in mosque activities, role as social bridges) and whose data are consistently stronger than claims about the depth of their ideological transformation. A transformation of this magnitude, at the level of behavior and social involvement, could not have been achieved solely through uniform institutional sermon programs a contribution that stands on its own, independent of the question of the extent to which it also represents full ideological deradicalization.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Conclusion

This research affirms that the reflective personal dakwah approach makes a real contribution to supporting disengagement changes in behavior and social involvement as well as the social reintegration process of ex-napiter in Pohuwato Regency, Gorontalo Province. This approach is not built on one-way sermons or formal institutional pressure, but on warm human relationships, active empathy, and respect for individual spiritual autonomy.

The seven ex-napiter who are the subjects of observation show that the process of change is not linear. Each individual has their own unique way of re-interpreting religion, nation, and life in society. From SA, who experienced a warm welcome after his release, to AHM, who has become an important link within the community, it is clear that change does not begin solely from understanding, but also from the experience of being accepted as a whole human being. At the same time, this research affirms the important distinction between disengagement (whose findings are stronger observationally) and deradicalization (whose verbal expressions are promising but require further verification through longitudinal studies and, ideally, more structured psychological instruments).

Reflective personal dakwah penetrates the emotional and existential layers of the ex-napiter, reaching experiences often untouched by formal approaches. By integrating the concept of pastoral care in Islam which, within an Islamic framework, can be

understood as the process of helping individuals return to their fitrah and find their place within the ummah this dakwah becomes a vehicle for recovery and for nurturing renewed love for a friendly Islam, for NKRI, and for a peaceful life.

Recommendations

First, the capacity of religious counselors needs to be strengthened through training that is theological, psychosocial, and interdisciplinary in nature encompassing empathetic communication skills, trauma awareness, and locally based deradicalization approaches. This training should ideally also include a module on the limits of counselors' competence and referral mechanisms to mental health professionals such as psychologists at community health centers or regional psychiatric hospitals for cases showing indications of severe trauma or PTSD symptoms that fall outside the capacity of spiritual accompaniment.

Second, the success of dakwah requires close collaboration among the Ministry of Religious Affairs, law enforcement officials, community leaders, religious organizations, and correctional institutions, in a spirit of humanity.

Third, it is important to create a safe, open, and stigma-free space for spiritual dialogue, as a place for ex-napiter to rebuild self-confidence and repair social relationships.

Fourth, personal accompaniment must be planned and sustainable, involving figures trusted by ex-napiter from both religious and community circles, with attention to a sustainability strategy: long-term accompaniment should ideally gradually shift the ex-napiter's anchors of meaning and social belonging from an individual accompanying figure toward a broader and more permanent community (ummah) structure mosque congregations, study groups, and the social network of ex-napiter who have themselves transformed into agents of moderation in order to reduce the risk of dependency on a single figure.

Fifth, given that intensive accompaniment of ex-napiter over several years (2023–2025) has the potential to cause emotional fatigue, burnout, or secondary traumatic stress in the religious counselors themselves which, if not managed, could affect the quality and sustainability of dakwah relevant institutions (the Ministry of Religious Affairs, religious organizations) need to provide psychological support and self-care mechanisms for religious counselors carrying out this type of accompaniment, for example through regular supervision sessions, peer support groups among counselors, or periodic access to psychological consultation.

Finally, field experiences such as this need to be documented and disseminated as best practices, accompanied by further longitudinal studies to monitor the sustainability of the ex-napiter's transformation and to assess the extent to which the indications of disengagement observed in this research develop into a deeper ideological deradicalization that is independent of the accompanying figure. Stories of successful social reintegration through reflective dakwah are a valuable legacy that can inspire many

parties and build hope that change is possible while maintaining academic caution in interpreting the extent to which such change has truly taken root.

REFERENCES

- Chang, Heewon. *Autoethnography as Method*. New York: Routledge, 2008.
- Ellis, Carolyn, Tony E. Adams, dan Arthur P. Bochner. "Autoethnography: An Overview." *Forum: Qualitative Social Research*, Vol. 12, No. 1, 2011.
- Ellis, Carolyn, dan Arthur P. Bochner. "Autoethnography, Personal Narrative, Reflexivity: Researcher as Subject." Dalam Norman K. Denzin dan Yvonna S. Lincoln (Ed.), *Handbook of Qualitative Research*. Thousand Oaks: Sage, 2000.
- Frankl, Viktor E. *Man's Search for Meaning*. Boston: Beacon Press, 2006.
- Geertz, Clifford. *The Interpretation of Cultures*. New York: Basic Books, 1973.
- Horgan, John. *Walking Away from Terrorism: Accounts of Disengagement from Radical and Extremist Movements*. London: Routledge, 2009.
- Husin, Asna. "The Role of Local Religious Leaders in the Rehabilitation of Former Terrorists in Aceh." *Studia Islamika*, Vol. 24, No. 3, 2017.
- Ismail, Noor Huda. *Temanku Teroris: Mengubah Jalan Hidup Mantan Napiter*. Jakarta: Tempo Publishing, 2013.
- Kementerian Agama Republik Indonesia. *Moderasi Beragama*. Jakarta: Badan Litbang dan Diklat Kementerian Agama RI, 2019.
- Madjid, Nurcholish. *Islam, Doktrin dan Peradaban: Sebuah Telaah Kritis tentang Masalah Keimanan, Kemanusiaan, dan Kemodernan*. Jakarta: Paramadina, 2000.
- Marcoes, Lies, dkk. *Perempuan dan Deradikalisasi: Studi Kasus Program Pemulihan oleh Tokoh Perempuan*. Jakarta: Rumah KitaB, 2019.
- Rabasa, Angel, Stacie L. Pettyjohn, Jeremy J. Ghez, dan Christopher Boucek. *Deradicalizing Islamist Extremists*. Santa Monica, CA: RAND Corporation, 2010.
- Rahmat, M. Imdadun. *Ideologi Radikal dan Deradikalisasi*. Disertasi, UIN Syarif Hidayatullah Jakarta, 2011.
- Riessman, Catherine Kohler. *Narrative Methods for the Human Sciences*. Los Angeles: SAGE Publications, 2008.
- Rofiah, Nur. "Menafsir Ulang Islam: Narasi Kemanusiaan sebagai Kritik terhadap Kekerasan Berbasis Agama." *Jurnal Studi Gender Al-Fikrah*, Vol. 2, No. 1, 2015.
- Rogers, Carl R. *On Becoming a Person: A Therapist's View of Psychotherapy*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1961.
- Solahudin, dan Marcus Mietzner. "Explaining Islamist Insurgencies in Indonesia: Lessons from the Radicalisation of Poso." *Asian Studies Review*, Vol. 36, No. 2, 2012.
- Spradley, James P. *The Ethnographic Interview*. New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1979.

TEMPLATE

JUDUL

DITULIS DENGAN FONT CORBEL 13 CETAK TEBAL
(MAKSIMUM 15 KATA)

Penulis 1¹⁾, Penulis 2²⁾ dst.

[Font Corbel 13 bold dan Nama Tidak Boleh Disingkat]

¹ Perguruan Tinggi (penulis 1)

email: penulis_1@abc.ac.id

² Perguruan Tinggi (penulis 2)

email: penulis_2@cde.ac.id

[Corbel 10, normal]

Abstrak [Corbel 11 Cetak Tebal dan Miring]

Abstrak harus jelas, ringkas, dan deskriptif. Abstrak ini harus memberikan pengantar singkat tentang masalah, tujuan makalah, diikuti dengan pernyataan mengenai metode dan ringkasan hasil. Abstrak harus diakhiri dengan komentar tentang pentingnya hasil atau kesimpulan singkat, dan kebaruan artikel. (*Corbel 11 spasi tunggal, dan cetak miring* sebaiknya antara 200-250 kata).

Keywords: *Maksimum 5 kata kunci dipisahkan dengan tanda koma. [Corbel 11 spasi tunggal, dan cetak miring]*

Contoh: *Hukum Islam; Moderasi Beragama; Toleransi; Keadilan*

PENDAHULUAN [Corbel 13 bold]

Silahkan pertegas posisi penelitian anda saat ini di antara penelitian lain tentang tema terkait. Anda harus mendiskusikan di sini juga hubungan penelitian Anda dengan penelitian lain, Tinjauan literatur, terutama pada karya akademis baru yang paling relevan yang diterbitkan dalam jurnal adalah suatu keharusan. Dengan kata lain, cobalah menjawab setidaknya dua pertanyaan: (1) mengapa Anda percaya bahwa pertanyaan penelitian Anda sangat penting untuk dijawab; dan (2) bagaimana penelitian lain telah atau belum menjawab, atau bagaimana menurut Anda jawaban Anda akan berkontribusi tentang masalah yang menjadi focus penelitian anda. Di bagian terakhir pendahuluan Anda, harap nyatakan dengan jelas pertanyaan penelitian atau tujuan artikel Anda. Pendahuluan Anda harus mengalir logis, koherensi, dan sistematis dari awal hingga bagian terakhir [Corbel, 13, normal].

METODE [Corbel 13 bold]

Metode menjelaskan rancangan kegiatan, ruang lingkup atau objek, bahan dan alat utama, tempat, teknik pengumpulan data, definisi operasional variabel penelitian, dan teknik analisis. [Corbel, 13, normal].

HASIL DAN PEMBAHASAN [Corbel 13 bold]

Bagian ini menyajikan hasil penelitian. Hasil penelitian dapat dilengkapi dengan tabel, grafik (gambar), dan/atau bagan. Bagian pembahasan memaparkan hasil pengolahan data, menginterpretasikan penemuan secara logis, mengaitkan dengan sumber rujukan yang relevan. [Corbel, 13, normal].

KESIMPULAN DAN SARAN [Corbel, 13 bold]

Kesimpulan berisi rangkuman singkat atas hasil penelitian dan pembahasan. Saran berisi tentang rekomendasi teknis yang berkaitan dengan hasil penelitian. [Corbel 13, normal].

REFERENSI

a. Footnote [Corbel 11, normal]

Footnote berasal dari berbagai sumber, seperti buku, prosiding, artikel ilmiah, jurnal nasional maupun internasional, e-journal, dan karya ilmiah lainnya. Footnote diprioritaskan untuk terbitan atau hasil penelitian dalam 10 tahun terakhir dengan menggunakan Turabian Style edition (full note) untuk semua artikel.

b. Daftar pustaka [Corbel 13, normal]

Daftar Pustaka dapat berasal dari berbagai sumber, seperti buku, prosiding, artikel ilmiah, jurnal nasional maupun internasional, e-journal, dan karya ilmiah lainnya. Daftar pustaka diprioritaskan untuk terbitan atau hasil penelitian dalam 10 tahun terakhir. Penyusunan daftar pustaka tersebut, ditulis sesuai pedoman sebagai berikut:

1. Dari buku teks:

Gronlund, N.E. & Linn, R.L., *Measurement and evaluation in teaching*. (6thed.). New York: Macmillan. . 2005.

2. Dari buku teks yang dirangkum oleh editor.

Sofian Effendi, Unsur-unsur penelitian ilmiah. Dalam Masri Singarimbun (Ed.). *Metode Penelitian Survei*. Jakarta: LP3ES, 2012.

3. Dari buku terjemahan

Daniel, W.W, *Statistika nonparametrik terapan*. (Terjemahan Tri Kuntjoro). Jakarta : Gramedia, 2010.

4. Dari skripsi/tesis/desertasi

Slamet Suyanto, Keberhasilan Sekolah dalam Ujian Nasional Ditinjau dari Organisasi Belajar. *Disertasi*, tidak dipublikasikan. Universitas Negeri Jakarta, 2010.

5. Dari jurnal:

Pritchard, P.E, Studies on the bread-improving mechanism of fungal alpha-amylase. *Journal of Biological Education*, 26 (1), 14-17, 1992.

6. Dari kumpulan abstrak penelitian atau *proceeding*:

Paidi, Urgensi Pengembangan Kemampuan Pemecahan Masalah dan Metakognitif Siswa SMA melalui Pembelajaran Biologi. *Prosiding, Seminar dan Musyawarah*

Nasional MIPA yang diselenggarakan oleh FMIPA UNY, tanggal 30 Mei 2008.
Yogyakarta: Universitas Negeri Yogyakarta, 2008.

7. Dari internet

White, H., *Problem-Based Learning in Introductory Science Across Disciplines*. 2007. Diakses tanggal 27 Maret 2007 dari <http://www.udel.edu/chem/white/finalrpt.html>.

Catatan: Jumlah total seluruh halaman s.d. Daftar Pustaka adalah **8-15 halaman**, dengan margin halaman kanan, kiri 2,2cm, atas dan bawah masing-masing 2,5cm dengan spasi 1,3.

Tahiro

Journal of Peace and Religious Moderation

RELIGIOUS MODERATION AS A PSYCHOPATHOLOGICAL SHIELD:
CLINICAL STRATEGIES FOR COUNTERING PSYCHOLOGICAL EXTREMISM
Iqbal Hafidul - 1
Muzana
Husamunntiqi
Abdul Hafid Subhana

THE BELANGAR TRADITION OF THE SASAK COMMUNITY: ARTICULATION
OF RELIGIOUS VALUES AND SOCIAL SOLIDARITY
Fitria Sabilla - 17
Komarudin Zaidani
Najamuddin

GLOBAL COMMUNICATION ETHICS AND DIGITAL LITERACY:
BUILDING A MODERATE VIRTUAL LEARNING SPACE IN THE CYBER ERA
Agnes Susi Ardiana - 27
Jumarnin
Ikhtisam Asyari
Suparlan

THE ETHICS OF ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE FROM A HADITH
PERSPECTIVE: AFFIRMING MORAL RESPONSIBILITY AS THE
FOUNDATION OF RELIGIOUS MODERATION IN THE DIGITAL ERA
Abdul Karim - 48
Mohamad Yanyang
Nasrullah
Laini Ahmad Zamari

REACHING OUT TO THOSE WHO WERE ONCE LOST: REFLECTIVE
PERSONAL DAKWAH BY A RELIGIOUS COUNSELOR WITHIN A CIRCLE OF
FORMER TERRORISM CONVICTS IN POHUWATO
Winda Prakara - 57
Arfan Nani
Dian Auli Firdiana



Journal of Peace and Religious Moderation



Jurnal Tahiro Diterbitkan Oleh :
Rumah Moderasi Beragama
Universitas Islam Negeri (UIN) Mataram

