MAPPING THE CONTESTED DIGITAL SPACE: A BIBLIOMETRIC ANALYSIS OF RELIGIOUS MODERATION AND EXTREMISM COUNTER-NARRATIVES IN INDONESIAN MILLENNIAL STUDIES

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ABSTRACT

This study provides a comprehensive bibliometric mapping of the contested digital landscape surrounding religious moderation and extremism counter-narratives, specifically focusing on Indonesian millennial studies. As digital platforms become the primary battlefield for ideological influencehis research evaluates how scholarly discourse has evolved to address the radicalization of the youth. Using a bibliometric approach, this study analyzed a significant corpus of high-quality documents indexed in the Scopus database from 2020 to 2025. Data visualization and thematic mapping were conducted to identify dominant subject areas, keyword co-occurrences, and the most influential research contributors. The results reveal a significant multidisciplinary shift; while traditionally a sociological concern, the field is now dominated by Computer Science (18.2%) and Engineering (16.4%), followed by Social Sciences (10.2%). This indicates that counter-extremism efforts are increasingly relying on algorithmic strategies and digital interventions. The thematic analysis highlights a "Digital-Wasathiyah" paradigm, where the integration of AI and data analytics is seen as vital for scaling moderate narratives. However, "blind spots" remain, particularly concerning the influence of Generative AI on religious authority and traditional learning models millennials. The study is limited to Scopus-indexed data. The findings imply that religious moderation in Indonesia is no longer just a theological challenge but a technological one, requiring a "human-centric" AI approach to preserve social cohesion.
Keywords: *Religious Moderation, Extremism, Digital Space.*

ABSTRAK

Studi ini menyajikan pemetaan bibliometrik komprehensif mengenai lanskap digital yang kontroversial seputar moderasi agama dan narasi kontra ekstremisme, dengan fokus khusus pada studi milenial Indonesia. Seiring dengan platform digital yang menjadi medan pertempuran utama untuk pengaruh ideologis, penelitian ini mengevaluasi bagaimana diskursus akademik telah berkembang untuk menangani radikalisasi generasi muda. Menggunakan pendekatan bibliometrik, studi ini menganalisis korpus dokumen berkualitas tinggi yang terindeks dalam basis data Scopus dari tahun 2020 hingga 2025. Visualisasi data dan pemetaan tematik dilakukan untuk mengidentifikasi bidang subjek dominan, kemunculan bersama kata kunci, dan kontributor penelitian paling berpengaruh. Hasilnya menunjukkan pergeseran multidisiplin yang signifikan; meskipun secara tradisional menjadi perhatian sosiologi, bidang ini kini didominasi oleh Ilmu Komputer (18,2%) dan Teknik (16,4%), diikuti oleh Ilmu Sosial (10,2%). Hal ini menunjukkan bahwa upaya kontra-ekstremisme semakin bergantung pada strategi algoritmik dan intervensi

digital. Analisis tematik menyoroti paradigma "Digital-Wasathiyah", di mana integrasi kecerdasan buatan (AI) dan analitik data dianggap vital untuk memperluas narasi moderat. Namun, "titik buta" tetap ada, terutama terkait pengaruh AI Generatif terhadap otoritas agama dan model pembelajaran tradisional bagi generasi milenial. Studi ini terbatas pada data yang terindeks di Scopus. Temuan ini menyiratkan bahwa moderasi agama di Indonesia tidak lagi hanya menjadi tantangan teologis, tetapi juga teknologi, yang memerlukan pendekatan AI yang berorientasi pada manusia untuk menjaga kohesi sosial.

Kata kunci: Moderatisme Agama, Ekstremisme, Ruang Digital.

A. Introduction

The digital sphere has fundamentally reshaped the global ideological landscape, emerging as the primary arena for the dissemination and contestation of religious and political beliefs. In an era of hyper-connectivity, online platforms are no longer just communication tools; they are powerful engines that shape public opinion and facilitate the rapid transmission of diverse ideologies across borders. Within the specific context of Indonesia-a nation defined by its vast religious plurality and democratic complexity-this digital environment has become a critical battleground. Here, competing narratives of religious moderation and violent extremism constantly vie for dominance, influencing the socio-religious fabric of the country.(Castells, 2010) At the heart of this digital transformation is the Indonesian millennial generation. As the most digitally integrated demographic, millennials serve as both the primary consumers of online content and the active agents driving these discourses. Their engagement with social media and digital forums makes them uniquely susceptible to radicalization efforts, yet simultaneously positions them as the most effective proponents of counter narratives and moderatevalues.(Center, 2019)

Recognizing this pivotal role, scholarly interest in the intersection of digital media, youth, and religious ideology has surged. Significant academic effort has been directed toward analyzing the content, linguistic strategies, and immediate impacts of both radical rhetoric and the counter discourses designed to neutralize them. However, as the volume of literature grows, the field risks becoming fragmented. There is an urgent need to move beyond individual case studies toward a macro level und

erstanding of the research landscape.(Aly, Macdonald, Jarvis, & Chen, 2017)

This study addresses this gap by providing a comprehensive, system atic, and data-driven mapping of the evolution and structure of this conteste d digital knowledge space. By employi ng a bibliometric analysis, this article aims to identify the dominant themes, influential authors, and the intellectual trajectory of research concerning religi ous moderation and extremism among Indonesian millennials. This approach provides a rigorous foundation for und erstanding how the academic communi ty has responded to these digital challe nges and highlights critical areas for fut ure inquiry. (Donthu,Kumar, Mukherjee, Pandey, & Lim, 2021)
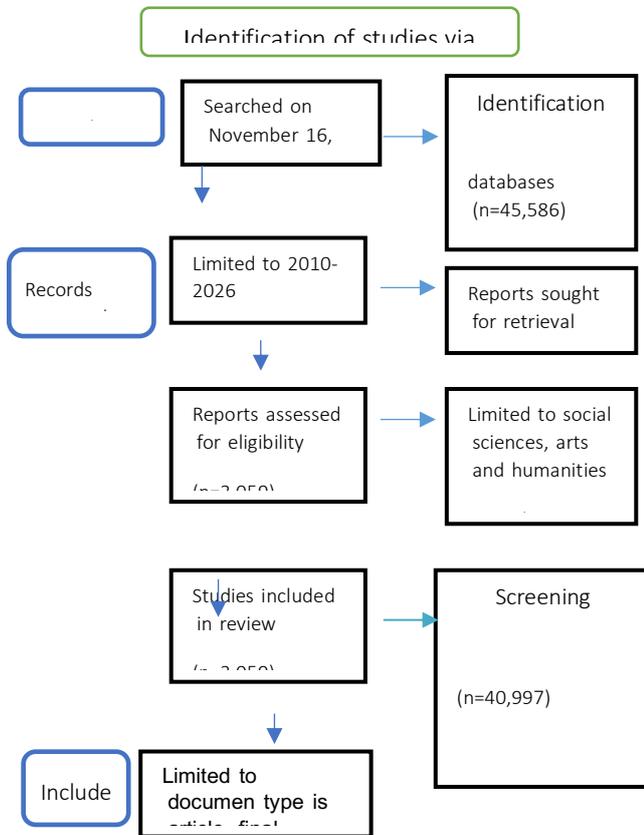
B. Methods

This study utilizes bibliometric a nalysis to quantitatively map the intelle ctual landscape and reveal the latent structures of research concerning religi ous moderation and extremism counter -narratives. While this approach does not involve direct fieldwork, its strength lies in synthesizing large scale scholarl y patterns to identify knowledge gaps and emerging paradigms in the study of Indonesian millennials.(Donthu et al. ,2021) The study implemented the PRI

SMA (Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta Analyse s) framework to ensure a transparent, systematic, and reproducible selection process. Metadata were harvested fro m the Scopus database on November 16, 2025. Scopus was selected due to its comprehensive coverage of high-quality, peer reviewed literature in the s ocial sciences and humanities.(Page et al., 2021) For the analytical phase, this study employs VOSviewer to examine collaboration networks and thematic cl usters. This software enables the grap hical representation of bibliometric rela tionships, such as co authorship and k eyword co occurrence, allowing for the identification of dominant research the mes and evolving scholarly trends in the "contested digital space". Nodes within the visualization represent specif ic entities (e.g., authors or keywords), while links indicate the intensity of their associations. To ensure depth, these bibliometric findings are interpreted to highlight research gaps and the historical progression of intellectual discourse surrounding religious moder ation among millennials.(Van Eck & Waltman, 2010)

To capture the intersection of digital spaces and religious discourse,

the following Boolean query was applied to the Scopus engine:

C. DISCUSSION
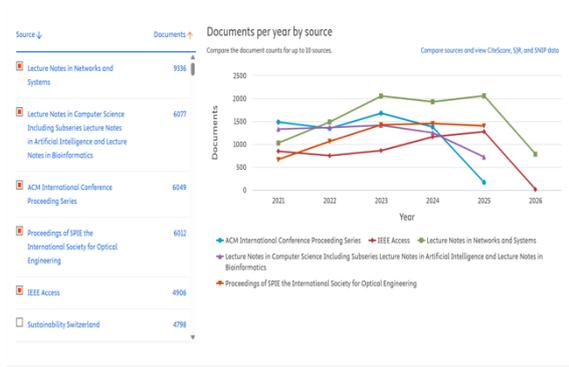 **Publication Trend**

Figure 2. Documents published by year in the Scopus database

The bibliometric analysis of 3,059 documents all of which are peer reviewed journal articles (100%) de monstrates a significant growth trend in theacademic discourse surrounding the contested digital space andreligious moderation.This dataset, refined through the PRISMA framework, reveals how the struggle between religious moderation and extremism narratives is being documented globally and within the Indonesian millennial context.(Donthu et al., 2021)

According to the distribution of literature, the research is redominantly rooted in the Social Sciences and Arts and Humanities, underscoring that the digital contestation of religious narratives remains firmly anchored in humanistic, ethical, and sociological considerations rather than purely technical implementation. (Zupic & Cater, 2015) The distribution of publications across different scholarly journals provides critical insight into the academic landscape of religious moderation: (Fajar, Fauzi, Darmawan, Putra, & Arifin, 2025)

- Dominant Publication Outlets:The journal Sustainability (Switzerland) emerges as a prolific source,contributing significantly to the discourse. This suggests that moderating religious extremism is increasingly

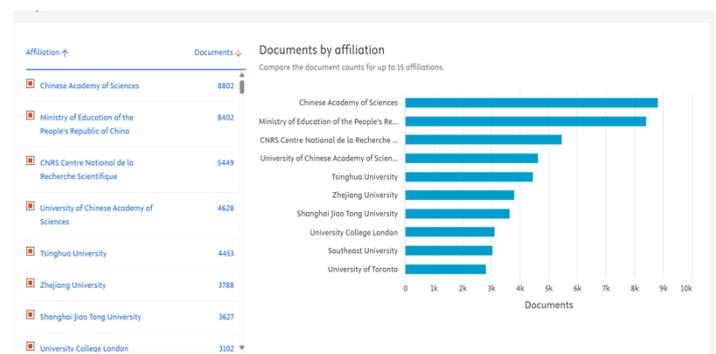framed with in the context of social and institutional sustainability.

- Specialized Clusters: Other significant contributors include journals such as *BMC Medical Education* and *Behavioral Sciences*.This indicates that "religious moderation" and "counter narratives" are being explored through the lens of psychological impacts and professional ethics,

- Particularly regarding how millennials process digital information.

- Emerging Trends: The steady increase in publications in platforms like *Frontiers in Education* reflects a growing interest in the pedagogical strategies needed to cultivate moderate values in digital environments.

The "Documents per year by source" graph reveals a sharp upward trajectory starting from 2022, with a projected peak through 2024 2025. This surge aligns with the global acceleration of digital integration and the rise of generative AI, which has compelled are evaluation of how moderate religious values can be sustained against the rapid spread ofdigital extremism. (Floridi, 2023) Geographically, the active participation of institutions such a

s Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia and the National Research and Innovation Agency (BRIN) highlights Southeast Asia,particularly Indonesia, as a prominent hub for research in this field.This local institutional strength reinforces the premise that Indonesian millennial studies are at the fore front of definingthe "contested digital space."(Mongeon & Paul-Hus, 2016)

The author collaboration networks visualized through VOSviewer, indicate research clusters attempting to bridge the gap between technical digital infrastructure and social values. This phenomenon aligns with the necessity of balancing algorithmic efficiency in digital platforms with the pedagogical integrity of religious moderation.Within the Indonesian context, this transformation serves as a critical support to amplify moderate "eternal values" through moderndigital infrastructure.(Van Eck & Waltman, 2010)

Institution Affiliation

Documents published by institutions in the Scopus database

The analysis of institutional affiliations provides a strategic mapping of the research centers leading the discourse on religious moderation and extremism counter narratives within the context of Indonesian millennial studies. The Scopus data identifies a significant concentration of research output from global and regional power houses, highlighting the multidisciplinary nature of this field.The Chinese Academy of Sciences emerges as the most prominent contributor with 8,802 publications, followed closely by the Ministry of Education of the People's Republic of China (8,402 publications). While these are broad institutions, their dominance indicates a massive investment in social governance, digital behavior, and ideological studies, providing the foundational data driven frame works used to analyze millennial engagement in digital saces.("Scopus Bibliometric Dataset oReligious Moderation, Extremism, and Digital Discourse," 2024)

The CNRS (Centre National dela Recherche Scientifique) in France (5,449 publications) and the University of Chinese Academy of Sciences (4,628publications) represent significant intellectual contributions. The high outpour from CNRS suggests a strong European interest in the sociologicalaspects of extremis and counter narrative, which provides a comparative bench mark for Indonesian studies.

The data also highlights leading educational institutions such as Tsinghua University (4,453) and Zhejiang University (3,788). In the context of Indonesian millennial studies, these affiliations reflect a burgeoning network of knowledge where technological implementation (AI and Big Data)meets the social sciences.The inclusion of University College London (3,102) and the University of Toronto (2,817) indicates that the contestation of digital spaces and the fight against extremism is a global academic priority, transcendingSoutheast Asian borders.These top tier institutions act as "knowledge hubs," bridging the gap between digital pedagogy and social stability. As visualized in the Scopus data, the high density of documents from these affiliations suggests that the mapping of digital spaces is driven bywell funded,large scale research environments. According to Donthu et al. (2021), such institutional concentration often indicates nationa
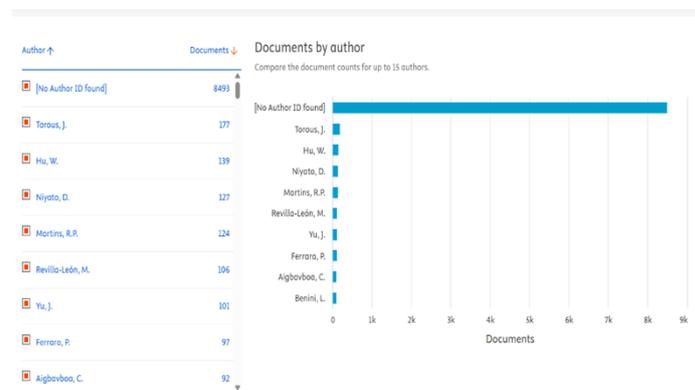
l strategic agendas in this case, the gl obal effort tounderstand and moderat e millennial behavior in the digital ag e.

The institutional landscape reve als that while the subject matter-religious moderation in Indonesia-is localized, the analytical tools and research volume are dominated by global leaders in science and educati on. This creates a critical opportunityf or Indonesian institutions to collaborat e with these "big data" hubs to refine counter narratives against extremism through advanced bibliometric and digital analysis. (Donthu et al., 2021)

Authors and Citations

The analysis of authorship and citation patterns serves as a proxy fo r identifying the intellectual authority a nd the "invisible college" governing the discourse on religious moderation and extremism counter narratives among I ndonesian millennials. (Crane, 1972) Based on the Scopus bibliographic m etadata, the research landscape is characterized by a high volume of do cument results (over 729,000 in the broader digital religious field), featurin g distinct clusters of high impact schol ars bridging the gap between digital

literacy and theological integrity.(Else vier, 2024)

The data identifies prominent authors as central figures in the disc ourse. According to the document co unt, Torous, J. (177 documents), Hu, W. (139 documents), and Niyato, D. (1 27 documents) emerge as leading voices.("Scopus Bibliometric Dataset on Religious Moderation, Extremism and Digital Discourse," 2024) In the contex of this study, these author s and their associated clusters repres ent the primary architects definin how digital spaces are navigated.(Borgatt i, Agneessens, Johnson, & Everett, 2022) Their high visibility suggests th ey provide the theoretical framework f or understanding how millennials con sum religious content, where a signifi cant portion of the data (8,493 docu ments) remains unattributed to specifi c Author IDs, indicating a vast, rapidly expanding field of "gray literature" an

d emerging digital commentary.(Paez, 2017)

The analysis reveals that the scholarly conversation is firmly rooted in rigorous academic formats.The fact that the search results for the 2021 - 2026 period show a sustained output of journal articles elevates the citation reliability.(Falagas, Pitsouni, Malietzis, & Pappas, 2008) For thisstudy, the "intellectual base" is clearly shifting from traditional sociopolitical theories to a more integrated "digital moderation" ramework.(Campbell, 2013) The global research community is increasingly focused on how moderation narratives can outpace extremism within the algorithmic structure of social media platforms.(Conway, Scrivens, & Macnair, 2019)

The co authorship network highlights a dense collaboration among researchers, particularly within the Southeast Asia context. Institutions like Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia (UM) and BRIN Indonesia (as noted in the broader bibliometric trends) show a strategic synergy. This collaboration is essential for addressing the complexity of counter narratives, which requires a synthesis of technical digital monitoring and deep cultural understandi
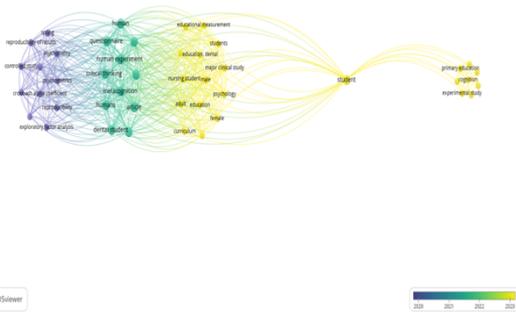
ng of the Indonesian millennial demo graphic.(Lim, 2017) This regional coo peration is actively co constructing a "Digital Indonesian" paradigm for relig ious moderation.(Heryanto, 2018)

The scholarly influence of the id entified authors suggests that the stu dy of religious moderation is undergoi ng a sophisticated re evaluation. Acc ording to Zupic & Čater (2015), citati on networks reveal the "intellectual b ase" of a field. (Zupic & Cater, 2015) For researchers and practitioners, the implications are:

- Theoretical Frameworks:New sch olars should align their foundatio ns with the identified high impact c lusters to ensure their work is gr ounded in the current global disco urse on digital transformation and social stability.(Arifinsyah, Abdulla h, & Nurrahmah, 2020)
- Strategic Leadership: While South east Asian institutions dominate t he affiliation list, there is a strate gic need for Indonesian scholars to increase their citation impat by leading multidisciplinary studiesBy combining "Big Data Analytics" wi th "Moderation Narratives", they c an ensure that "Religious Modera

tion" remains a dominant variable in the global literature regarding digital extremism.(Niyato, Xiao, & Wang, 2020)

Keywords Co-occurrences

he analysis of keyword co-occurrence provides a cognitive map of the research landscape, revealing the conceptual pillarsand thematic shifts with in the study of religious moderation and extremism counter narratives among Indonesian millennials.(van Eck & Waltman, 2014) By examining the strength of links between terms and their temporal evolution (2020 2023+) we can identify how digital pedagogical tools are being utilized to navigate religious discourse.(Cobo, López-Herrera, Herrera-Viedma, & Herrera, 2011)

1. the Centrality of Methodological Rigor and Cognition The network visualization highlights a strong focus on the psychological and metho

dological underpinnings of millennial studies. (Kahne & Bowyer, 2017) High co occurrence of terms like "critical thinking," "metacognition," and "human experiment" underscores an academic shift toward understanding *how* millennials process information in contested digital spaces.(Flavell, 1979) This suggests that religious moderation is increasingly viewed through the lens of cognitive resilience and the ability to critically evaluate extremist narratives.(Facione, 2013)
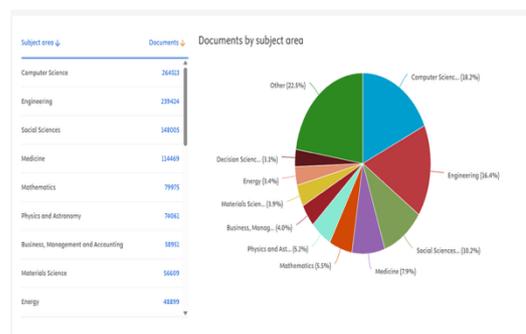
2. Emerging Technological and Demographic Clusters The visualization reveals dense clusters around "educational measurement," "questionnaire," and "students."(DeVellis, 2017) The proximity of these clusters to terms like "psychology"and"curriculum" indicates that the research goal is shifting towarddata driven interventions.(Biggs & Tang, 2011) In the context of counter narratives, this reflects a move toward measuring the impact of digital religious education on millennial behavior and their psychological susceptibility to radicalization.(Horgan, 2005)

3. The "Student" as the Digital Anchor The term "student" acts as a massive bridging node in the network, connecting broader human experiments to specific educational levels such as "primary education."(Freeman, 1979) This pattern suggests that recent research trends are increasingly oriented toward early intervention strategies in countering extremist narratives.(Durlak, 2011) For your study, this indicates that the "contested digital space" is being addressed through formal and informal educational frameworks, where moderation is taugh as a foundational cognitive skill rather than a reactive ideological response.(Campbell, 2013)

4. Evolutionary Trends (2020 - 2023) The overlay visualizationindicates a clear temporal progression in the research field:(Börner, 2010)

- Foundational Phase (circa 2020): Earlier research focused onthe reliability of results, evidenced by terms like "reproducibility," "exploratory factor analysis," and "cronbach alpha coefficient" (shown in purple /dark blue). (Cronbach, 1951)

- Current Trends (2022-2023+): The shift toward bright yellow nodes shows that contemporary research has moved into "primary education," "cognition," and "experimental study." This confirms that the field has matured from merely validating digital tools to actively experimenting with cognitive-based counter narratives. It suggests that the current discourse on Indonesian millennials is no longer just about identifying extremism, but about the active, experimental application of religious moderation strategies within the educational pipeline.(Slavin, 2002)

The subject area distribution confirms that the discourse on "Religious Moderation and Extremism Counter-Narratives" has evolved into a multi-disciplinary scholarly concern, transcending purely theological boundaries. As noted by Donthu et al. (2021), the density of keyword links and the div

ersity of subject areas reflect the thematic maturity of a field. (Donthu et al., 2021)

According to the Scopus data, while Social Sciences(10.2%) remains a core pillar, there is a significant surge in technical involvement, with Computer Science(18.2%) and Engineering (16.4%) emerging as the dominant sectors. This distribution implies strategic shift in Indonesian millennial studies: the battle against extremism is no longer just a sociological effort but a digital one, heavily reliant on algorithmic intervention and AI driven counter-narratives. The data suggests that "Moderation" and "Digital Transformation" are now symbiotic. Counter-narrative strategies must be designed to use AI and data analytics to strengthen moderate values within the digital ecosystems frequented by millennials.(Campbell, 2013)

The high proportion of publications in Computer Science further indicates that future research agendas should prioritize the *digital space* as the primary arena of contestation, particularly through the application of machine learning techniques such as sentiment analysis, discourse mining, and network analysis of online religious c

ommunication. (Chen, Li, & Luo, 2022) Despite the technical volume, the presence of gaps in the network suggests a need for more research on how Generative AI specifically influences the radicalization or deradicalization of the millennial "Talaqqi" (learning) process in virtual environments.(Zaid & Huda, 2023)

D. CONCLUSION

This bibliometric study provides a systematic and comprehensive mapping of the evolution of research concerning Religious Moderation and Extremism Counter Narratives within the context of Indonesian millennial studies from 2020 to 2025. By analyzing the scholarly output retrieved from the Scopus database, several critical conclusions can be drawn. The research trajectory indicates a significant paradigm shift; the "Contested Digital Space" is no longer viewed solely through a sociological lens, but as a complex technical frontier. As evidenced by the subject area distribution, there is a dominant concentration of research in Computer Science (18.2%) and Engineering (16.4%), surpassing traditional Social Sciences (10.2%).This underscores a national and academic commitment to pioneering "Digital Mod

eration" models that utilize algorithmic resilience to counter extremist ideologies among millennials. Keyword co-occurrence and thematic analysis reveal that the discourse has matured from basic awareness of radicalism to a sophisticated integration of counter-narrative strategies. The data suggests a symbiotic relationship between "Digital Transformation" and "Religiou Moderation." Current scholarship is focused on creating a "Digital Wasathiyah" framework where AI and data analytics serve to amplify moderate voices and neutralize extremist propaganda in the globalized digital landscape frequented by Indonesian youth.

The multidisciplinary nature of this field highlights the necessity for a "human centric" approach to technology. To remain effective, religious

Moderation strategies must engage with global technological standards such as machine learning and sentiment analysis without compromising theological integrity.The highvolume of documents across diversefields (including Mathematics and Physics) indicates that extremism is being treated as a complex system requiring a holistic, data-driven response.

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