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Youth Narratives of Moderate Islam: Study of Islamic Philosophy For Indonesian Millennials

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Abstract

This study examines the Islamic narratives faced by the Muslim millennial generation in Indonesia, a group often targeted by radical groups. Using a phenomenological approach in qualitative research, data were collected through in-depth interviews and media content analysis involving 30 millennial participants from various backgrounds, including Islamic boarding school students and social media users. This study focuses on three aspects: sources of Islamic narratives, understandings of moderation and ideal Muslim figures, and responses to moderate Islamic narratives. The study revealed a broad spectrum of Islamic narratives, ranging from radical to moderate, shaped by sources such as Islamic boarding schools, teachers, prayer groups, books, and social media. Indonesian Muslim millennials showed a strong preference for moderate Islamic leaders over Salafi figures, reflecting the appeal of narratives that promote tolerance and Pancasila values. The majority of millennials support the spread of moderate Islamic values despite exposure to a variety of narratives. This study contributes to academic discourse by providing insights into the interaction of digital media, religious education, and the formation of Islamic identity. Methodologically, this study demonstrates the effectiveness of combining phenomenological analysis and digital ethnography to understand contemporary religious narratives. These findings are relevant in designing strategies to counter radicalism and strengthen the narrative of moderate Islam in pluralistic societies.

Keywords: Narratives; Moderate Islam; Muslim Millennials.

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INTRODUCTION

The millennial generation (commonly abbreviated as millennials) will determine the future direction of society in the Industrial Revolution 4.0 era. They are deeply familiar with digital technologies, and they commonly rely on social media to connect with their peers and access information (Helmi Supriyatno 2019).

The Covid-19 pandemic has reinforced the public's reliance on social media for communication and interactions within their secondary social groups. This is also true for millennials (Zis, Effendi & Roem 2021), who have spent even more time interacting with technology (Mardetini et al. 2021). Millennials have also been highly active offline (Manggabarani, Marzuki & Mahendro 2020), in part because their social mobility and interactions are greater and more intense than those of other generations (Sugiharto & Puspitasari 2020).

Numerous radical groups have attempted to influence millennials, a situation that must be carefully monitored due to the youth of their targets (Muhanna-Matar 2017; Theriault 2019; Ljamai 2020; Marquardt 2020; Ballesté 2021; IVANOV & SIRYUKOVA 2021; Jacot et al. 2021; Zhu, Chan & Chou 2021). Young people are in the midst of searching for and actualizing themselves, and thus are easily swayed to adopt mindsets that run against Indonesia's national philosophy, Pancasila, by promoting intolerance and radicalism.

Radical movements' efforts to target youths underscore the need for government actors, academics, societal leaders, and religious leaders to carefully monitor the situation and undertake preventative action (Arifianto 2019). Such a problem is not limited to Indonesia. Saudi Arabia, for example, has also been plagued by radicalism, which is influenced by macro-social factors—state, religion, region, terrorism, unrest, democracy, corruption, human development, unemployment (youth and total), and the Arab Spring— and individual factors—low self-control, life stress events, youth unemployment, religiosity, and feelings of fear and anger (Diab M. Al-Badayneh, Rami A. Al-Assasfeh & Nisreen A. Al-Bhri 2016).

This research focuses on understanding how Islamic narratives have emerged amongst Muslim Millennials in Indonesia, including their moderate narratives, desired characteristics, and responses to moderate narratives. It explores four aspects of the narratives that have emerged amongst Indonesia's Muslim millennials; from whom do they receive these narratives, whom do they hold as exemplary Muslims, how have they responded to moderate narratives, and how have they responded to topics such as the Sunni/Shia divide, jihad, and violence.

The researchers have focused on understanding how Indonesia's Muslim millennials have responded to moderate Islamic narratives. It is necessary to consider the diverse narratives to which youths have been exposed by investigating the sources of these narratives, the understandings of moderatism and ideal Muslimhood that have emerged, and

youth's responses to moderate Islamic narratives. This will provide a foundation for carefully monitoring the activities of radical groups and designing preventative measures to protect youths from intolerance and radicalism.

This qualitative research employs a phenomenological approach, investigating a certain phenomenon to capture and understand its objective reality (de Oliveira e Silva, Lopes, and Diniz 2008). Informants were selected using purposive sampling, in accordance with criteria that were designed to facilitate the achievement of the research goals. For this research, Indonesian Muslims who were born between 1980 and 2000 were selected as informants. To ensure representativeness, informants were selected from throughout the Indonesian Archipelago, including in Singkawang, Makassar, Kuburaya, Yogyakarta, Surakarta, Madailing Natal, Jakarta, Bandung, Pekalongan, Pematang, and Pontianak. A total of 22 Muslim millennials were selected as informants.

Data for this research was analyzed in several stages: horizontalization, description of text, description of structure, and description of meaning (Nuryana, Pawito, and Utari 2019; Ravn 2021; Urcia 2021). During this investigation of Muslim millennials' response to moderate narratives, interviews with informants were transcribed and coded to uncover their experiences with the narratives of moderate Islam in Indonesia; their sources of moderate narratives; the leaders and characteristics whom they idealize; and their responses to narratives of moderate Islam. As such, questions were developed to uncover the Islamic narratives that have spread amongst Muslim millennials in Indonesia. Whence do Muslim millennials receive these narratives? Which leaders and characteristics do they idealize? How have they responded to narratives of moderate Islam? These essential statements were subsequently categorized thematically to achieve the research goals. Informants were asked to prepare a textual description of their experiences and responses to narratives of moderate Islam, as well as structurally describe how Muslim millennials have responded to such narratives. Afterward, the researchers conducted the analysis using the grand narrative theory of Jean François Lyotard to understand whether moderate narratives of Islam have continued to exist amongst Muslim millennials in Indonesia or whether such narratives have been rejected. As argued by Lyotard, grand narratives can be subsumed by the small narratives that exist within society.

DISCUSSION

1. Islamic philosophy Narrative Amongst Muslim Millenials in Indonesia

Millennial Muslims have diverse understandings of Islam. Some misunderstand Islam as containing little more than an explanation for the natural world. Some have a deep understanding of the history of Islam in Indonesia, while others do not. Few millennials have a detailed understanding of the differences between Sunni and Shia. Millennials' understandings of jihad tend to be moderate, as most view jihad in Indonesia as having been undertaken peacefully, without violence or armed conflict. Likewise, many Muslim millennials understand hijrah in a moderate sense, seeing it as a process of self-improvement through which individuals become more consistent and *istiqomah* (steadfast).

Millennials also agree that *dawah* (proselytization) activities in Indonesia should be undertaken in a refined and humanitarian manner. However, when asked about the use of violence to spread Islam, one informant (P) agreed with such an approach. Such a view, which diverges considerably from those of other millennials, shows that the seeds of misunderstanding have been sown and that the informant is vulnerable to radical ideologies. When asked about terrorism, most informants rejected and criticized the practice. However, one informant—P—described terrorism as the "act of instilling terror through any means necessary" and offered an opinion that differed from others. This informant did not reject or criticize terrorism.

Most millennial Muslims understand the concept of religious moderatism as avoiding radicalism. However, few millennials understand moderatism as following the middle path—avoiding not only radicalism but also liberalism. The majority of informants agreed with religious tolerance, except for one informant (P), who argued that tolerance was too narrow. Rather, the informant emphasized the need for patience. Such a view suggests that informant P has been influenced by liberal thought, not emphasizing the need for tolerance between human beings in all situations.

Muslim millennials' views in Indonesia fall into two categories. The majority of millennials hold that the current practice of Islam in Indonesia is appropriate. A minority of millennials, conversely, hold that the Islam currently practiced in Indonesia is not suited to all elements of society, and may lead to radicalism.

Muslim millennials' views regarding whether Indonesian Islam must conform to Arabic culture likewise fall into two categories. The majority of millennials hold that Indonesian Islam must not embrace Arabic culture but rather remain suited to the culture of Indonesia. This indicates that the majority of Muslim millennials in Indonesia have a moderate mindset. However, one informant—MF—held that Islam is inexorably intertwined with Arabic culture, and thus be embraced by all Muslims. Such a view indicates that moderatism has not been fully embraced by all Muslim millennials in Indonesia.

Informants understood jihad as involving diverse activities, including controlling the COVID-19 pandemic, dawah (proselytization), being employed in one's field, continuously seeking knowledge, and raising one's family. All of the Muslim millennials interviewed held that Pancasila, Indonesia's national philosophy, conforms to Islamic jurisprudence (Sharia Law) and understand it as the best ideology for Indonesia.

When inquired about the Islamic organizations in Indonesia, informants expressed the view that the Indonesia Institute of Islamic Dawah (Lembaga Dawah Islam Indonesia, LDII) embraced disruptive doctrines and that the Islamic Defenders Front (Fron Pembela Islam, FPI) promoted extremist views. However, all informants had positive views of Nahdlatul Ulama, Muhammadiyah, al-Irsyad, and Rifaiyah, which they viewed as employing a humanitarian approach to dawah.

The majority of informants expressed the view that Indonesian Islam had been developed in accordance with Indonesian culture and customs and agreed with this development. However, one informant—P—held that Nusantara Islam was merely jargon, rather than an essential understanding. Another informant, MANP, held that Nusantara Islam was inappropriate as it was rooted more in Indonesian custom than in the Qur'an and the Sunnah. A third informant, AC, even identified it as a deviant form of Islam. It may thus be concluded that informant P may have been influenced by liberal views, while MANP and AC showed signs of radicalism. One indicator of moderatism is a willingness to accept religion and culture as existing side-by-side. The majority of informants also rejected the creation of a caliphate in Indonesia, as they viewed such a system as incompatible with the national ideology of Pancasila. Views regarding a blended council

(majelis) system, conversely, were mixed. The majority accepted such a system, while others opposed it as disruptive to those who were baligh (over the age of majority) and not afdhal (excellent).

It may be concluded that the Islamic narratives that have developed amongst Muslim millennials in Indonesia have influenced their attitudes and understandings. Radical and liberal views have also emerged.

2. The Grand Narrative of Moderatism amongst Millennials

This research shows that grand/meta-narratives do not necessarily influence the paradigms embraced by postmodern society. As this study has shown, many Muslim millennials agree with and understand the narrative of religious moderatism. This challenges Lyotard's argument that postmodern societies do not trust existing grand narratives, and that such narratives may ultimately be subsumed by smaller ones.

Lyotard's postmodernism emphasizes the failure of modernism, the downfall of socialism, the collapse of communism, and the fragmentation of modern society (Chow 2019). In his book *The Postmodern Condition: A Report on Knowledge*, Lyotard argued that no absolute truth can be claimed; it is contextualized and informed by linguistic tricks (Zembylas 2020). Lyotard's argument is no longer relevant, as contemporary grand narratives do not deal with socialism, the fall of communism, or modernity. Instead, narratives deal primarily with moderatism and its tangible benefits. It is this grand narrative that has structured the knowledge of Indonesian millennials, who have accepted and embraced it.

These findings also reject the grand narrative of universalism, holding that nobody can truly and comprehensively understand society (Matei 2021). Burdman disagreed with efforts to homogenize society and create uniformity, especially when said efforts involve acts of violence. Burdman emphasized that rapid advances in information technology during the late 20th century significantly influenced education and the spread of knowledge, thereby bringing society into the postmodern age (Burdman 2020). The miniaturization and commercialization of machines have also transformed the creation, classification, exploitation, and dissemination of knowledge. The views of Matei and

Burdman are not entirely correct, as the narrative of religious moderatism in Indonesia has been widely accepted amongst Muslim millennials.

The narrative of religious moderatism has become ensconced in Indonesian society because it offers a middle road between radicalism and liberalism, one with tangible benefits that emphasizes diversity and respect over universalism (Ritonga 2021). It is these very characteristics that have made it possible for moderate Islam to be accepted by Indonesian millennials in the post-modern era. Likewise, moderatism is not intended to promote universalism, but rather to acknowledge and respect the diversity that exists in Indonesia and to maintain harmony between all elements of society (Hefni 2020). The structure and characteristics of knowledge in Indonesian society likewise underscore the importance of diversity, be it religious, cultural, or linguistic. In other words, moderatism offers Indonesians a means of understanding how to live side-by-side with people from diverse religious communities. It is an ideology underpinned by humanism and agency, one that has been embraced by Indonesian millennials.

Advances in information technology in the late 20th century have had clear and tangible effects on knowledge and education, as shown by Al-Badayneh, and created a post-modern society (Trahair 2012). In Indonesia, however, the effects of information technology have been mediated by the religiosity of Indonesians, which enables them to filter narratives and select only those that are beneficial to them. From the data collected in this study, it is evident that Muslim millennials in Indonesia can filter the narratives that they receive from diverse media. Consequently, they are not easily swayed by liberal or radical thought. The narrative of religious moderatism, conversely, has been developed over centuries and has been propagated by academics, scientists, politicians, and religious/societal leaders. As such, it is not a constructed truth but a social agreement that reflects the real diversity of Indonesia.

Schmidt argues that, to revitalize knowledge, it is first necessary to accept diversity and remain open to innovative understandings (Vilar 2021). Moderatism is realized in everyday experiences and religious practices, as evidenced by the link between religion and local/cultural traditions. Religion is not positioned opposite culture; rather, the two are intertwined in a dialog to create a new culture. Moderate narratives, in other words, have taken root because they reflect the diverse characteristics of Indonesian society and provide Muslim millennials with clear benefits.

3. Liberalism, Radicalism, and Moderation

In 2005, the Indonesian Council of Ulamas (Majelis Ulama Indonesia, MUI) declared liberalism to be a deviant understanding and ruled that adherence to this understanding is haram (Indonesia 2005). In this study, it was found that many young Muslims employ a rational and innovative approach to understanding Islam, one that recognizes modern challenges while still upholding the universalism of Islam.

The development of social media and other information technologies has facilitated the spread of liberal ideologies. As this situation has yet to receive adequate consideration from the Indonesian government and education system, liberal and radical thoughts have become more commonplace amongst Indonesian millennials. As noted by Al-Badayneh, there is a worrying trend in which state universities are becoming incubators for radicalism and terrorist activity (Al-Badayneh 2011).

The extent to which liberal and radical ideologies have spread amongst millennials can be qualified through several aspects. Education plays no small role, as many institutions have pushed aside the cultural traditions that have long been practiced in Indonesian society.

In the literature, the phrase *wasathiyat Islam* is commonly translated as "justly-balanced Islam", "the middle path", or "the middle way", wherein Islam serves to create balance and mediate between diverse parties (Agama 2019; Schmidt 2021). These phrases underscore the importance of justice and balance, which prevents people from falling prey to extreme ideologies. Institutions of education, thus, must strive to conduct activities that reflect the religious traditions of Islam instead of simply conveying scientific knowledge.

Those millennials who have embraced *wasathiyat Islam* are the chosen generation, who act justly and moderately in all things—including in their individual worship and their social interactions—because such moderatism is taught by Islam. It is, therefore, necessary to position religious moderatism within its social context, i.e., the relationship between different elements of society that are committed to moderatism and humanitarian values.

Muslim millennials' commitment to moderatism is evidenced by their commitment to the values of justice. Persons who are more moderate and balanced are more likely to act just in their everyday lives. Conversely, less moderate persons are less likely to act justly. It may thus be concluded that religious moderatism is widespread amongst Indonesian

millennials. First, they can link text and context, referring not only to religious texts but also to the new realities and contexts in which they are given significance. By creating a dialog between text and context, they avoid literalist interpretations while remaining grounded; in other words, while they do not limit themselves to the text, neither do they ignore it completely.

Second, moderation in movement, i.e., the dissemination of religious understandings. They must do good with their every deed and avoid harm, such as that caused by violence. Likewise, their actions must be principled and just, serving to advance the betterment of society and prevent potential harm.

Third, moderation is evidenced in religious practices and traditions of local communities. Religion must not be positioned opposite to culture; the two must be seen as existing in dialogue.

All of the Muslim millennials involved in this study agreed with religious moderatism. They emphasized that Muslims must embody four indicators of religious moderatism: 1) a commitment to the nation; 2) tolerance; 3) devotion to non-violence; and 4) an openness to local culture. Based on these four indicators, many Muslim millennials have not fully embraced moderatism and are vulnerable to other ideologies and schools of thought—such as liberalism and radicalism. Appropriate approaches must be designed to promote moderatism and protect Muslim millennials from the traps of liberalism and radicalism.

4. Sources of Islamic Moderatism and Idealized Figures/Characteristics

Millennials have mostly studied Islam from their families. As such, families are important sources of religious knowledge, and parents must be prepared to convey moderate teachings to their children at a young age. Also important are institutions of education, both formal and informal (i.e., worship leaders, Qur'anic education groups, schools, madrasas, pesantren, and worship groups). However, two informants—S and P—indicated that they had studied Islam from various sources on the internet. Such studies must be carefully monitored, as the potential for misunderstandings and radicalism is greater when youths lack the guidance of experienced individuals such as teachers. At the same time, parents must be selective when selecting schools for their children and ensure that the curricula and teachings are moderate.

Muslim millennials can identify numerous Islamic organizations in Indonesia, including Nahdlatul Ulama, Muhammadiyah, Rifaiyah, Al-Irsyad, Persis, Jamaah Tabligh, Global Ikhwan, Hidayatullah, Hizbullah, Majelis Tafsir Al-Quran (MTA), Hizbut Tahrir Indonesia (HTI), Jamaah Tabligh (JT), Forum Umat Islam (FUI), Salimah, Matlaul Anwar, Ahmadiyah, Lembaga Dakwah Islam Indonesia (LDII), and Front Pembela Islam (FPI). Likewise, they possess a good understanding of the theological leanings of mainstream organizations such as NU, Muhammadiyah, Rifaiyah, and Al-Irsyad, all of which they identify correctly as founded on a theology of *ahlussunah waljamaah*. However, when asked about FPI, informants only knew the leader, Habib Riziq. As for LDII, HTI, and Hidayatullah, informants knew neither their leaders nor their theology. Informant T merely recognized LDII as an organization that had been declared deviant by the Indonesian government and the Indonesian Council of Ulamas.

One view was expressed by NA, "organizations are needed, but they are not the only reflection of Islam; when they claim that one organization reflects all of Islam and that those outside the organization are not Muslim, that is mistaken." A different view was expressed by AC: "Take FPI. It's good that they are affirming the teachings of Islam, and they are acting and helping others without any religious distinctions."

Muslim millennials commonly use social and digital media, including YouTube, WhatsApp, Facebook, and Instagram, to obtain information on Islam. They commonly rely on channels and social media groups such as Ismiati Official, NU Online, NU Garis Lucu, Group Pustaka Ilmu Tahfiz Al-Qur'an, Muhasatul Qolbi, Habib Novel Alaydrus, Zen Gofar, Jabal Nur, MJS Chanel, Tessa Sitorini, UAS Legacy TV, Ustadz Somad, Gus Baha, AA Gym, Habib Husein Al Ja'far, Mubadalah.id, Ngaji kyai, AIAT Se-Indonesia, NU Online, PSQ Online, Pesantren Girikesumo, Ustad Yusuf Mansur, Ustad Nuzulul Fikr, Ustad Oemar Mita, Hawariyun, and Dena Hura.

Interestingly, three informants—RG, ST, and U—stated that they did not follow the social media accounts of ustadz (religious leaders) or use other digital sources. Although such cases do exist, they are few and far between; the majority of millennials search for information on social and digital media, which influences their religious views. The understandings embraced by millennials are informed by their chosen sources, and by the speakers whom they choose to follow. At the same time, these are not their only sources of religious knowledge.

Informants expressed that they were happy that digital media had eased dawah. At the same time, however, they emphasized the need to carefully filter materials and avoid the influence of deviant teachings. They identified several social media platforms and websites as containing moderate values. Commonly visited ones, as stated by MYA and RK, included the digital lectures of Habib Lutfi as well as NU Online. Other informants indicated that they had listened to digital sermons but could not identify specific ones. AG and MANP indicated that they did not listen to content that promoted religious moderatism, while NI expressed that teaching activities made it impossible to follow such sermons. It may thus be understood that a knowledge gap exists between Muslim millennials, as not all of them find such content interesting. It is therefore necessary to ensure that moderate materials are presented in a manner that interests Muslim millennials.

Informants' lack of interest in moderate content can be attributed to several factors. First, the substance of the content may be uninteresting to them; the language used may not be suited to their level of understanding; they may know little about the subject matter; and the content may not refer to the culture and symbols of millennials. It is therefore necessary to present moderate content in a manner that interests millennials. Likewise, it is necessary to find religious leaders who can be accepted by millennials and explain the tenets of religious moderation.

Muslim millennials are commonly exposed to several moderate narratives, including tolerance, love for the nation and its people, and the interactions between the Prophet and non-Muslims. However, informants NR, NI, RG, and LM did not study religious moderatism. When youths are not exposed to moderate narratives, they are more easily influenced by the dangerous narratives of liberalism and radicalism.

Informants indicated that they admired several contemporary religious leaders, including Syeh Aljaber, Habib Luthfi, Gus Baha, Buya Yahya, Ustadz Adi Hidayat, Ustadz Hannan Attaqy, Ustadz Abdul Somad, KH Munif Muhammad Zuhri, Gus Dur, Misyari Rasyid, Muhasabatul Qolbi, Yusuf Mansur, Murais Sihab, Fahrudin Faiz, Adi Hidayat, KH. Musthofa Ya'cub, Khalid Basalamah, Habib Umar bin Hafizh, Dr. Zakir Naik, Emha Ainun Najib, Ustadz Oemar Mita, Ustadz Salim A. Fillah, Buya Hamka, and Muhammad Nasir. NR offered a different opinion, holding that "every human being surely has strengths and weaknesses; to idolize someone means being ready to accept all of their shortcomings". AC, conversely, expressed great respect for Habib Riziq, saying "he dares

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to speak the truth, not justifications, and is always at the frontlines in times of disaster, calamity, and evil". These two informants expressed two distinct tendencies; NR showed indications of liberal thought, while AC was influenced by radical thought.

Muslim millennials generally idolized Muslim leaders who sought to balance nationalism with religion; offered universal lessons using polite, refined, and rational speech; were able to respond to modern challenges; avoided extremism; offered detailed retellings of history; and offered clear and easily understood explanations. They wanted motivational leaders, simple individuals with an international mindset who are capable of comforting all.

From this discussion, the sources of moderate Islam employed by Muslim millennials and the characteristics they desire may be identified. Most Muslim millennials receive information from social media, the internet, and video-sharing sites (YouTube). Some also receive information from pesantren, friends, teachers, prayer groups, and books.

5. Muslim Millennials' Response to Narratives of Moderate Islam

The majority of Muslim millennials agree with moderate Islam, holding that Islam is not a violent religion, that moderatism can create peace and harmony, and that moderatism is best suited to Pancasila. Such views are reflective of those of most Indonesian Muslims, who reject discussions and seminars that convey radical messages. Some respond to such discussions/seminars very strongly, reporting them to the police and other authorities. Respondents indicated that, were they invited to participate in radical activities, they would reject such an invitation; some indicated that they would report such activities to the authorities and advise their friends to avoid said activities.

Likewise, several respondents indicated that, if any of their friends were influenced by radical thought, they would "not immediately create distance between them, but try and maintain good relations with them, try to approach them, find out why they joined, and try to convince them that such ideologies only bring ruin." Some responded that, "so long as it is not dangerous, it is not a problem". Others indicated that they would respond by giving advice and words of warning. This indicates that millennials are aware of the radicalism around them, as well as the need to report it to the authorities—or at least prevent the spread of radical thought.

To stave off radicalism, Muslim millennials argue that it is important to keep peace in one's mind and heart; educate children as early as possible; avoid radical teachings and, when necessary to criticize, do so politely; learn Islam from a teacher; write content dealing with religious moderatism, with reference to appropriate Qur'anic verses; write Facebook statuses; disseminate content that emphasizes tolerance; convey moderate messages to students and offer them opportunities to ask questions, express opinions, and seek guidance; serve as an example for one's family and peers; and focus on humanitarian action. From these responses, it is evident that Muslim millennials are aware of radicalism and the need to prevent it. However, some informants indicated that they had no interest in taking action.

According to Muslim millennials, several approaches are available for upholding moderatism:

- a. Carefully considering religious organizations, including their social media posts about Islam;
- b. Increasing nationalist dialog;
- c. Improving literacy;
- d. Being active in religious and social activities, so long as they do not run contrary to the teachings of Islam aswaja;
- e. Providing an example to one's community;
- f. Being open in one's thought; becoming involved in open forums that allow youths to voice their views, as well as forums and activities that enable youths to express themselves creatively;
- g. The government must facilitate nationalist activities; promote the learning of Islam from a teacher; and optimize the public's understanding of Islam and Indonesian culture.

Most of the Muslim millennials interviewed indicated that they never posted about moderate Islam. Others, however, indicated that they frequently posted about Islam. Likewise, many indicated that they rarely accessed moderate content. Informant P even indicated that he had never contributed to spreading moderate Islam. From this data, the importance of using social media to spread Islam is evident.

When asked whether women should wear large hijabs or even niqabs, only informant MF answered in the affirmative; the other informants indicated that it was sufficient for

one to cover one's aurat (intimate parts). This indicates that most Muslim millennials have a good understanding of veiling practices and have been little influenced by radicalism. When asked about gender equality, only informant MF answered that it was not needed; the other informants agreed with gender equality, so long as it did not violate Islamic law. From the responses to these two questions, it is evident that informant MF has been influenced by non-moderate views. Half of the respondents agreed with the use of arranged marriages through the *taaruf* process; the other half disagreed with this process, holding that it is necessary to learn the character of one's potential spouse before marriage.

As for Muslim millennials' views regarding practices such as *tahlilan*, *yasinan*, and *manakib*, most approved, indicating a moderate understanding of Islam. However, one informant—MF—responded that the acceptability of these practices depended; this indicated that the informant's thoughts were not entirely moderate. When asked about music, informants MF and T expressed the view that music is *haram* (forbidden by Islamic) law. Such a view was not espoused by other respondents, who stated that Muslim was acceptable so long as it did not influence individuals to act sinfully.

Most informants had no problem with non-Muslim leaders in government or organizational positions; only MF and AG were opposed to this possibility. This indicates that moderate views of leadership are commonplace among Muslim millennials. As for exchanging holiday greetings with people of different faiths, NH, RK, MANP, AC, T, and AM were opposed. This indicates that tolerance of other religions is somewhat lacking amongst Muslim millennials in Indonesia. However, when asked about the possibility of befriending people of different faiths, all informants agreed; this was more in line with the tenets of religious moderatism.

6. Muslim Milenials' Responses to the Sunni/Shia Divide, Jihad, and Violence

Muslim millennials' views regarding the Sunni/Shia divide may be seen in the following table:

No	Topic	Sunni Teachings	Shia Teachings
1	Pillars of Islam	<i>Syabadatain</i> (profession of faith) <i>Sholat</i> (worship) <i>Puasa</i> (fasting) <i>Zakat</i> (alms) <i>Haji</i> (pilgrimage)	<i>Shalat</i> (worship) <i>Sbaum</i> (fasting during Ramadhan) <i>Zakat</i> (alms) <i>Haji</i> (pilgrimage) <i>Territory</i> (Loyalty to Leadership)
2	Pillars of Faith	<i>Faith in Allah</i> <i>Faith in the angels of Allah</i> <i>Faith in the books of Allah</i> <i>Faith in the Prophet</i> <i>Faith in Qadla-Qadbar</i> (fate and destiny)	<i>Taubid</i> (monotheism) <i>Nubuwah</i> (prophethood) <i>Imamah</i> (belief) <i>Al-Adl</i> (justice) <i>Al-Ma'ad</i> (the hereafter)
3	Profession of Faith	<i>Consists of two sentences</i>	<i>Consists of three sentences (includes a reference to the twelve imams).</i>
4	Imams	<i>Belief in imams is not a pillar of faith (number of imams not limited)</i>	<i>Belief in imams is not a pillar of faith (twelve imams)</i>
5	Succession	<i>The Rashidun Caliphate was the true successor to the Prophet Muhammad</i>	<i>Ali was the true successor to the Prophet Muhammad</i>
6	Ma'sum	<i>Imams are not ma'sum (protected from sin)</i>	<i>Imams are ma'sum (protected from sin)</i>

Tabel 1. Understanding of the Sunni-Shia Divide: Perspective of the Indonesian Muslim Millenials

Muslim millennials also underscored the importance of using refined and humanitarian approaches to proselytization. When asked about the use of violence to spread Islam, one informant—P—agreed. This view, which was unique among informants, indicates the potential for radicalism. As for Muslim millennials' views of terrorism, most rejected and condemned it. One informant, P, understood terrorism as the act of creating terror through any means; such a view was unique among informants.

The majority of Muslim millennials have thus embraced the tenets of moderatism. However, they understand it more as avoiding radicalism rather than following the middle road between radicalism and liberalism.

CONCLUSION

Diverse Islamic narratives have spread among Muslim millennials in Indonesia, including radical, liberal, and moderate views. These narratives significantly influence the millennial generation's understanding of Islamic moderation. Some millennials are exposed to liberal and radical narratives generally spread through digital technology such as social media, YouTube, and other online platforms. However, moderate Islamic narratives are more widely accepted because they are considered to be in line with the values of Pancasila as a national ideology supporting social harmony and harmony. Sources of Islamic narratives for millennials include family, Islamic boarding schools, religious teachers, books, and digital media. In addition, millennials idolize moderate religious leaders with an inclusive approach, whose information is obtained from both digital media and traditional religious education.

This study contributes scientifically by providing in-depth insights into the interaction between traditional religious education and the influence of digital technology in shaping millennial religious identities. Methodologically, this study demonstrates the effectiveness of using a phenomenological approach combined with digital media analysis to understand the dynamics of religious narratives in the modern era.

However, this study has several limitations, including focusing on millennials in urban areas with high digital access, which is less representative of broader geographic and social contexts, such as rural communities. It also does not explore the impact of digital narratives on everyday religious practices in depth.

Further researches will be recommended to conduct comparative studies in other regions in Indonesia or other Muslim-majority countries to explore variations in the acceptance of moderate Islamic narratives. In addition, further researches should examine the impact of digital narratives on the religious practices of the younger generation directly, analyze the acceptance of Islamic narratives in minority communities, or use a longitudinal approach to understand changes in the views of the millennial generation towards Islamic narratives along with technological developments and social changes

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