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Strengthening the Role of MUI in Digital Literacy on the Dangers of Radicalism to Reinforce National Resilience

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ABSTRACT

Digital transformation in Indonesia has increased internet penetration to 80.66% of the national population. This condition has provided positive impacts on information technology development, but at the same time has created new threats in the form of radicalism dissemination through cyberspace. Young people, especially Generation Z, are the most vulnerable group exposed to radical propaganda through social media, short-video platforms, online games, and digital communication applications. This study aims to analyze the strengthening of the role of the Indonesian Ulema Council (MUI) in digital literacy regarding the dangers of radicalism in order to strengthen National Resilience. The study uses a qualitative method with a descriptive-analytical approach through literature review of official documents, MUI fatwas, government reports, and institutional data contained in the Individual Working Paper of the National Leadership Consolidation Education (P3N) XXVII Lemhannas RI 2026. The results indicate that the threat of digital radicalism is increasing due to low public digital literacy and the dominance of exclusive religious narratives in cyberspace. MUI possesses moral legitimacy and a high level of public trust as a national religious authority; however, the implementation of moderate digital preaching remains suboptimal. Therefore, strengthening strategies are needed through MUI digital transformation, integration of national religious digital literacy, strengthening cyber preachers, early warning systems for radical narratives, youth protection based on family and community, and strengthening cyberspace regulations. These strategies are expected to improve society's cognitive immunity against radical ideologies and strengthen Indonesia's National Resilience

INTRODUCTION

Digital transformation in Indonesia has reached a very significant level with an internet penetration rate of 80.66% (APJII, 2025), which covers around 229.4 million people of the total national population during the 2025–2026 period. This shows that the digital space has become an important part of Indonesian people's lives, especially for the younger generation who use social media as a main tool to get information, interact, and shape social and religious views.

Gen Z and millennials are the biggest internet users in Indonesia. The dominance of young people in internet usage creates a huge opportunity for strengthening education and national integration. However, this development also brings serious challenges in the form of the spread of radical ideologies and intolerance through cyberspace. Social media, short video platforms, messaging apps, and online games have all become effective tools for extremist groups to spread propaganda and carry out ideological recruitment.

The phenomenon of digital radicalism is becoming increasingly worrying because it is supported by low digital literacy (Gilster, 1997) in society, especially in terms of digital security and the ability to filter information. From a psychological perspective, the Online Disinhibition Effect (Suler, 2004) emerges, which makes individuals more easily influenced by hate speech, violence, and radical propaganda when they are in digital spaces compared to face-to-face interactions.

The Indonesian Ulema Council (MUI), as a national religious institution, holds a strategic position in promoting religious moderation and strengthening the ideological resilience of society. MUI has issued Fatwa Number 24 of 2017 (Indonesian Ulema Council, 2017) on Guidelines for Social Interaction via Social Media and the 2003 Fatwa on Terrorism (Indonesian Ulema Council, 2003). However, the implementation of digital preaching and the promotion of religious moderation values still faces various challenges, especially in reaching the younger generation in cyberspace..

This situation shows a gap between ideal expectations and reality on the ground. The narrative of religious moderation hasn't been able to effectively dominate digital spaces, while radical groups keep using social media algorithms to spread propaganda massively. Therefore, strengthening the role of the MUI in digital literacy (Gilster, 1997) has become an urgent need to bolster Indonesia's National Resilience (Lemhannas RI, 2024).

Problem Statement

Based on that background, the research problem in this study is: 'How can the role of MUI be strengthened in digital literacy about the dangers of radicalism to reinforce National Resilience?'

Research Purpose

This study aims to:

1. Analyze the dynamics of digital radicalism in Indonesia.
2. Identify the challenges of MUI's role in digital literacy.

3. Formulate strategies to strengthen MUI's role in countering digital radicalism to reinforce National Resilience.

METHODS

This study uses a qualitative method with a descriptive-analytical approach. The data used are secondary data obtained through a literature study of official documents, MUI fatwas, government reports, state institution data, and academic studies contained in the Individual Working Paper of P3N XXVII Lemhannas RI in 2026.

The research approach uses National Resilience analysis (Lemhannas RI, 2024) through the Asta Gatra perspective, supported by SWOT and PESTLE analysis to map internal and external factors in strengthening MUI's role in the digital space.

Digital Literacy Theory

Paul Gilster (Gilster, 1997) explains that digital literacy is not just the ability to use technology devices, but also the ability to understand, evaluate, and use digital information critically and effectively. Digital literacy becomes an important tool in building society's resilience against information manipulation and radical propaganda.

Online Disinhibition Effect Theory (Suler, 2004)

John Suler (Suler, 2004) explains that people in digital spaces tend to be bolder, more aggressive, and more open compared to real life because of anonymity and minimal social control. This phenomenon is one of the factors behind the rise of hate speech and radicalism on social media.

Echo Chamber Effect Theory

Cass R. Sunstein (Sunstein, 2018) explains that digital media creates echo chambers that make people only receive information that aligns with their views. Social media algorithms amplify the radicalization process because users keep getting content that reinforces a certain ideology.

The Concept of Wasathiyah Islam

The concept of Wasathiyah Islam (Indonesian Ministry of Religious Affairs Team, 2019) emphasizes the principles of balance, tolerance, justice, and moderation in religious life. This concept serves as an important foundation for the Indonesian

Ulema Council (MUI) in building counter-narratives against radical and extremist ideologies.

The Concept of National Resilience

National Resilience (Lemhannas RI, 2024) is a dynamic state of the nation that covers all aspects of national life in an integrated way and includes the nation's ability to face challenges, threats, obstacles, and disturbances from both within and outside the country.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The Dynamics of Digital Radicalism in Indonesia

The development of information technology has changed the way radicalism spreads from conventional methods to digital approaches. Radical groups use social media, short video platforms, online games, and encrypted chat apps to spread propaganda and carry out ideological recruitment.

Data shows that throughout 2025, more than 21,199 pieces of content (BNPT, 2025) containing radicalism and intolerance were found in Indonesia's digital space. In fact, 112 children across 26 provinces were identified as being exposed to radical ideologies through social media and online games.

This phenomenon shows that cyberspace has become a dangerous ideological battlefield for the younger generation. Radical groups take advantage of people's weak digital literacy (Gilster, 1997) as well as social media algorithms to systematically build their influence.

Threat of Radicalism to National Resilience

Digital radicalism is not only a cyber security threat, but also threatens National Resilience (Lemhannas RI, 2024) in various dimensions.

1. Ideological Aspect

The spread of transnational ideologies and anti-Pancasila narratives through social media can weaken national ideology and trigger social polarization.

2. Socio-Cultural Aspect

The rise of hate speech, intolerance, cyberbullying, and identity polarization has eroded values of mutual cooperation, tolerance, and deliberative culture.

3. Defense and Security Aspect

The phenomenon of lone wolves and self-radicalization (Sageman, 2008) shows that the terrorism threat now develops without formal organizational structures that are easy to detect.

Problems of Digital Literacy in Society

Even though internet penetration keeps increasing, the quality of digital literacy (Gilster, 1997) among Indonesians is still relatively low. Digital security is the weakest pillar in the Indonesian Digital Literacy Index.

This situation makes people vulnerable to hoaxes, disinformation, radical propaganda, and manipulation of social media algorithms. Young people often struggle to tell the difference between moderate religious preaching and radical propaganda that is packaged in an appealing and emotional way.

The Strategic Position of MUI in the Digital Space

MUI has moral legitimacy (LSI, 2023) and a high level of public trust as a national religious authority. In public trust surveys, MUI holds an important position as a religious reference for the Indonesian community.

MUI has issued various fatwas related to radicalism and social media ethics, including:

1. The 2003 MUI Fatwa on Terrorism.
2. MUI Fatwa Number 24 of 2017 on Guidelines for Conducting Transactions through Social Media.

However, the effectiveness of MUI's digital preaching still faces several obstacles, such as:

1. Preaching content that is still formal and not very interactive.
2. Limited digital resources.
3. Low optimization of social media.
4. Lack of cyber da'i (Islamic preachers).
5. The digital counter-narrative system is not yet integrated.

SWOT Analysis of Strengthening MUI's Role **Strengths**

1. Has moral legitimacy (LSI, 2023) and high public trust.
2. Has a network of institutions from national to regional levels.
3. Strong religious authority.
4. Experienced in religious moderation.

Weaknesses

1. Limited digital capacity.
2. Religious outreach content isn't yet adaptive to young generations.
3. Digital media management system is not yet optimal.
4. Limited human resources for cyber preaching.

Opportunities

1. High internet and social media usage.
2. Government support for religious moderation.
3. Cross-sector collaboration with BNPT, Komdigi, and educational institutions.
4. Advancements in digital technology.

Threats

1. Widespread radical propaganda.
2. Social media algorithms that reinforce echo chambers (Sunstein, 2018).
3. Spread of hoaxes and misinformation.
4. Phenomenon of self-radicalization (Sageman, 2008).

Strategy to Strengthen MUI's Role

1. National MUI Digital Transformation

MUI needs to carry out a comprehensive digital transformation by strengthening digital media infrastructure, optimizing social media, and developing multimedia-based da'wah platforms. This digital transformation should be able to deliver communicative, creative da'wah promoting religious moderation that is relevant to the characteristics of the younger generation.

2. National Religious Digital Literacy Integration

MUI needs to collaborate with the government, educational institutions, Islamic boarding schools,

and community organizations in creating a national religious digital literacy program (Gilster, 1997).

The program should include:

1. Education on social media ethics.
2. Prevention of hoaxes and radical propaganda.
3. Strengthening religious moderation.
4. Enhancing national awareness.

3. Strengthening Human Resources for Cyber Preachers and Moderate Influencers

MUI needs to conduct training for cyber preachers who have digital communication skills, an understanding of religious moderation, and the ability to produce creative content.

The presence of moderate influencers is important to compete with the dominance of radical content on social media.

4. Early Detection and Quick Response System for Radical Narratives

MUI, together with BNPT, the Police, and the Ministry of Communication and Digital, need to build an early detection system for the spread of radical propaganda on social media.

This system can be used for:

1. Monitoring radical content.
2. Digital counter-narratives.
3. Public education.
4. Preventing ideological recruitment.

5. Family- and Community-Based Protection for Young People

Families and communities play an important role in building ideological resilience in young people.

The Indonesian Ulema Council (MUI) needs to strengthen family education programs on:

1. Digital literacy.
2. The dangers of radicalism.
3. Social media ethics.
4. Religious moderation.

6. Strengthening Regulations and Governance of Cyberspace

Strengthening regulations is needed to ensure that digital spaces are not used as a means of spreading radical propaganda.

Cooperation between the government, digital platforms, and civil society is important in creating a healthy and safe cyberspace.

CONCLUSION

Digital transformation in Indonesia has brought serious challenges in the form of the spread of radicalism through cyberspace. Young people are the most vulnerable group to radical propaganda due to low digital literacy and the dominance of exclusive narratives on social media. MUI holds a strategic position as a national religious institution with moral legitimacy and a high level of public trust. However, MUI's role in digital preaching and digital literacy still needs to be strengthened to be able to face the evolving threats of cyber radicalism.

Strengthening the role of the Indonesian Ulama Council (MUI) can be done through institutional digital transformation, integrating national religious digital literacy, empowering cyber preachers, implementing early detection systems for radical narratives, protecting young people through family and community-based approaches, and improving regulations in cyberspace.

Implementing this strategy is expected to boost the public's cognitive immunity, strengthen religious moderation, and reinforce Indonesia's national resilience.

Recommendation

1. The Indonesian Ulama Council (MUI) needs to build a national digital literacy center to counter radicalism.
2. The government needs to strengthen synergy with MUI in digital counter-narratives.
3. Educational institutions need to integrate digital literacy and religious moderation into the curriculum.
4. Social media platforms need to strengthen monitoring of radical propaganda.

5. Families and communities need to be involved in building ideological resilience in the younger generation.

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