The Role of Pesantren In Countering Radicalism: A Case Study Of Indonesia

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ABSTRACT

The author conducts a meta-synthesis and assesses the progress of implementing religious moderation in Indonesia which focuses on the role of pesantren, based on selected research in the 2020-2022 period. In a review of 40 studies related to keywords, it shows the role of pesantren which is quite significant in the fields of education, information and communication media, and socio-culture. Pesantren are suggested as centers for dealing with radicalism.
Keywords: Radicalism, Religious Moderation, Pesantren and Post-Pancemic

A. INTRODUCTION

After the Covid-19 pandemic, various studies related to Pesantren (Islamic Boarding School) have increased. Along with this, the issue of religious moderation continues to be strengthened within Islamic educational institutions, including pesantren, gto ensure that pesantren are active and consistent in practicing religious moderation that has been recommended by the State. The issue of religious moderation is important considering that Indonesia is a multi-ethnic country with a variety of cultures, languages and traditions. Zainuri (2021: 254) mentions, in Indonesia there are 6 (six) religions recognized by the State, namely Islam, Christianity, Catholicism, Hinduism, Buddhism, and Confucianism. In Islam itself there are several Islamic community organizations, including: Al-Irsyad Al-Islamiyah, Al Ittihidiyah, Al Washliyyah, Indonesian Islamic Da'wah Council (DDII), Indonesian Mosque Council (DMI), Indonesian Islamic Da'wah Forum (FDII), Indonesian Islamic Da'wah Institute (LDII), Nahdatul Ulama (NU), Muhammadiyah and so on. The attitude of moderation is understood as the attitude of a Muslim who views Islam as being in the middle, prioritizing tolerance towards differences as stated in Q.S. al-Baqarah verse 143.

Sholehuddin, et al. (2021:197-198) adds, the moderate concept is the unifying basis of all kinds of differences that exist in the Indonesian nation. The developed concept of religious moderation has 10 characteristics that have been agreed upon by the Indonesian Islamic Ulema Council, including: tawasuth (taking a middle path), tasamuh (tolerance), shura (deliberation), musawah (egalitarian and non-discriminatory), tawazun (balanced), tahaddhur (civilized) and so on. Educational institutions must become a laboratory basis for religious moderation through a socio-religious approach to religion and the state. The Indonesian Ministry of Religion launched the theme of religious moderation in 2019. Syamsul Ma'arif and Jamil (2019) in Azizan & Wahid (2012: 51) states, these two moderating factors and religious digitalization have encouraged an increase in the number of studies on pesantren.

The term religious moderation is generally related to respecting different interpretations and not getting caught up in extremism, intolerance and acts of violence. Among pesantren, especially traditional pesantren, the practice of religious moderation is not something new. Faisal, et al. (2022:1) argues, long before the state made religious moderation a priority agenda and became part of the 2020–2024 National Medium-Term Development Plan (RPJMN) 2020-2024, Traditional religious leaders have promoted and strengthened religious moderation through

education and teaching, preaching, and exemplary. Thus, it is very important to review the role of pesantren in counteracting post-pandemic radicalism.

According to Hidayat, et al. (2022: 354-355) Islamic educational institutions are the target of Islamic fundamentalist groups and radical movements in the name of Islam, so that it becomes a challenge for Islamic institutions to prevent the spread of radicalism. The digital era makes it easier to receive information related to radicalism. Radicalism especially in religion thrives in the educational environment. The challenge for Islamic education institutions in the digital era is to upgrade technology-based religious education to keep up with the times and control all technology-based educational activities to minimize the entry of radicalism through increasing the capacity of institutions and human resources.

Siregar revealed (2021:109), the Covid-19 pandemic forced the education system in Indonesia to undergo changes. Face-to-face learning is rapidly being replaced by virtual learning, especially with the use of digital resources such as computers and the internet. UNESCO (2020) states that at least 1.5 billion schools have been affected by Covid-19 in 188 countries. WHO ensures that the pandemic affects many sectors, including the education process. In Indonesia, the number of confirmed cases of COVID-19 has reached more than 170,000 cases. The Minister of Education and Culture ordered all education units to implement online learning starting March 24, 2020. This sudden change made it difficult for educators to improve their skills in using technology for distance teaching and learning in a short time.

In many previous studies before the pandemic, studies related to keywords in Indonesia were quite extensive, not focusing on the fields of education, information and communication media and socio-culture. Like the study of Awan, Siddiquei, & Haider (2015) linking religious moderation with buying and selling and awareness of halal products. Likewise Haque et al. (2015) Alam and Hisham (2011), Cloud, at al. (2015) and Haque et al. (2015) Mudzakkir & Nurfarida, (2014). (Marhayati, et al., 2019:293-294). After the Indonesian Ministry of Religion launched the theme of religious moderation this year (RI, 2019), studies linking religious moderation are growing rapidly. Apart from the fields of education, information and communication media as well as socio-culture, there are also studies that discuss verses of the Qur'an that promote peace and non-violence. The theme of religious moderation is often associated with radicalism. A literal understanding of verses that seem to promote violence can only be countered by a literal understanding of verses that explicitly call for a non-violent and non-violent approach. In such a

contest, verses advocating non-violence can offer a perspective that is friendlier, tolerant Islam that is inclusive and civilized. The values of peace in Islam show peace which has long been explored by other scholars by deconstructing the verses of the Koran which have implications for violence to fight extremism. (Baidowi, et al., 2021: 26,30-31). A more specific study related to the boarding school environment in the practice of religious moderation shows that in the last decade it is related to the activeness of charismatic religious leaders in pesantren consistently practice religious moderation which has been recommended by the State. Integration, tolerance, inclusion, and the Kiai's accommodative view of Islam and the state have a lasting impact on the future of Indonesian Islam. The concern that the pesantren environment has a more extreme viewpoint tends to be common does not have a solid foundation. (Faisal, et al., 2022:12).

B. LITERATURE REVIEW

Religious Moderation in Countering Radicalism

Historian Kartono Kartodirjo (in Nurpratiwi, et al., 2021: 152-155) mentions the term "radical" as an indicator of total rejection of the ongoing conditions as well as a peasant protest movement that uses religious symbols in rejecting all existing rules and orders. Adeed Dawisha describes radicalism as an attitude of the soul that leads to actions aimed at weakening and changing the established political order and usually by means of violence and replacing it with a new system. According to Horace M. Kallen, social radicalism is generally a response to ongoing conditions; rejection followed by attempts to change the order to another form of order; and believe in the truth of the program or ideology they carry and reject the truth of other systems that will be replaced.

According to Zuhdi & Syauqillah (2020: 65-83), the younger generation is very vulnerable to exposure to radicalism, especially children who receive less attention from their parents, affected because of the impact of divorce that affects the psychological development of children. Radicalism can encourage someone to believe that their ideology is superior and always right. Identity turbulence and Islamic identity is a condition where a person is vulnerable to exposure to radicalism. All elements of the family (children, wife, husband, grandparents and relatives) are very vulnerable to potential exposure to radicalism. In fact, a mother and a young woman can be the main actors in the process of radicalization. The rise of radicalism is also inseparable from the digitalization era (Arif, et al., 2022: 456). Credible media in Indonesia

participate in reminding educators to be wary of intolerance and radicalism. Education is demanded as a representation of Islam which is Rahmatan Lil Alamin (Arif, et al., 2022: 456-457).

In the field of education, educational institutions are vulnerable to radicalism and as an institution that has an important role in providing a correct understanding of Islamic teachings. The teacher's efforts in providing an understanding of the dangers of compassion-based radicalism to students. Schools and educators also need to collaborate with the Ministry of Religion so that students understand Islamic understanding from various sources. Schools and ustadz can also improve their ability to detect students if there are students who deviate from Islamic teachings. (Kusen, et al., 2020: 5401-5408).

Data from the Ministry of Communication and Informatics reveals a lot of provocative content calling on Muslims to attack apostates. The BBC Indonesia website released news on how easy it is to find content of radicalism and intolerance on blogs, websites and social media accounts. Zaenudin (2019:83-93) states that negative content in the digital era can trigger intolerance between religious communities. the dissemination of information on the dangers of intolerance is also difficult to anticipate. Wise access and management of media is important because the spread of provocative and negative content is also a social reality that is easy to find. Regarding media literacy and information literacy, solutions to increase public awareness of the dangers posed by radicalism are also important, including fighting radicalism by utilizing technological advances in the information sector.

Understanding, attitude and practice of religious moderation are urgently needed in order to prevent understanding, attitude and practice of radical religious understanding which has the potential to disrupt religious harmony. In the field of education, religious moderation must be instilled in students so that students have a moderate attitude in the life of the nation and state, so that in the future they become peaceful, compassionate and tolerant human beings. The indicators of religious moderation presented by the Minister of Religion Lukman Hakim Saifuddin include: 1. National commitment; 2. Tolerance; 3. Anti-violence; 4. Accommodate local culture. In line with that, the main values of religious moderation in Islamic Religious Education lessons in class XII Senior High School include Unity in Diversity and Democracy, the mercy of Islam for the Archipelago, and the Grace of Islam for the universe. (Aryatti & Yuniar, 2021: 255-261).

Religious moderation in the field of education should ideally be oriented towards 2 (two) directions at once, namely respect for others as well as respect for oneself. In general, religious

moderation means prioritizing balance in terms of belief, morals, discourse, and action as individual or group religious expressions. Religious attitudes and behavior based on balanced values are carried out consistently in the form of recognizing and understanding different individuals and other groups. Religious moderation is manifested in an attitude of tolerance, respecting differences of opinion, appreciating diversity, and not aggressively imposing will on behalf of certain religious beliefs. Religious moderation in classical studies (turats) is known as "wasathiyyah Islam," by prioritizing the importance of justice and balance as well as a middle way so as not to get stuck in extreme and radical religious attitudes. In principle, Islamic teachings are characterized by moderation (wasathiyah), both in the aspects of faith, worship, morals and muamalah. In Al-Qur'an Surah (Q.S) al-Baqarah: 143. Some of the principles of religious moderation related to the Islamic concept of wasathiyah are as follows. 1. Tawassuth (choosing the middle way); 2. Tawāzun (balanced). 3. I'tidāl (straight and firm). 4. Tasāmuh (tolerance). 5. Musāwah (egalitarian). Meanwhile, there are 4 (four) indicators of religious moderation, namely: (1) national commitment, (2) tolerance, (3) anti-radicalism and violence, and (4) accommodative to local wisdom. The learning design of Islamic Religious Education with an insight into religious moderation emphasizes educators and students on: The process of social education, planting the value of religious moderation that focuses on the goals of respect for others and respect for oneself, and pays attention to social realities and global needs by prioritizing the dimensions of teachings that are dynamic, moderate, tolerant and multicultural, and highlighting the characteristics of Islam which is Rahmatan lil' Alamin (ISRA). (Hanafi, 2021: 8-19).

High school level students and the community are also aware of the potential for radicalism to arise from erroneous understandings of religion. Preventive efforts are carried out by presenting a peace pattern preaching curriculum. Schools and communities work together to establish positive cooperation in fostering Islamic teachings that are peaceful and exciting and maintain tolerance in a multicultural society. In addition, the da'wah concept developed by this school mosque is coherent with Islamic counter-radicalism education and promotes Islam as rahmatan lil 'alamin, which is friendly, peaceful and tolerant. (Hidayat, et al., 2022: 48-56). Religious moderation developed in the learning curriculum at the madrasah aliyah level includes: At-ta'aruf (knowing each other), at-tawassuth (moderate), at-tasamuh (tolerant), at-ta'awun (mutual help) and at-tawazun (harmony). The root of the word moderation is adopted from the Latin, namely; moderatio which means "moderate" (no more and no less). The word can also mean

self-restraint from strengths and weaknesses. In the Big Indonesian Dictionary (KBBI), the word moderation is interpreted into two meanings, namely reducing violence and avoiding extremism. In Arabic language rules, moderation is better known as al-Wasth or Wasathiyah. There is a similarity in meaning between the words tawassuth (middle), ta'adul (fair), and tawazun (balanced). On the basis of these very close or even identical meanings, the three expressions can be combined to become "wasathiyah". Wasathiyah means the middle way or balance between two different or opposite things. The religious moderation developed in the design of the learning curriculum includes several main points, namely; at-ta'aruf (know each other), at-tawassuth (moderate), at-tasamuh (tolerant), at-ta'awun (help each other), and at-tawazun (harmony). Religious moderation is understood as a religious attitude that is balanced between one's own religious practice (exclusive) and respect for other people's religious practices with different beliefs (inclusive). This middle way in religious practice will undoubtedly prevent extremes, "blind" fanaticism, and revolutionary attitudes in religion. Since the launch of the book "Religious Moderation" on October 18 2019 by the Center for Research and Development for Guidance and Religious Services, the Research and Development Agency of the Indonesian Ministry of Religion, since then the discourse on religious moderation has continued to roll on and has even become material for study among academics and continues to be narrated by the Ministry of Religion. RI. (Zainuri, 2021: 106-107)

At the tertiary level, the concept of religious moderation was also developed. At IAIN Pekalongan, for example, the implementation of the concept of moderation in religion has been summarized in the course curriculum and integrated. Such as interpretation courses, hadith, morals, ulumul qur'an, ulumul hadith, Arabic, English, Pancasila and Citizenship Education (PPKN), Indonesian and so on. The concept of tolerance and respect for differences to create harmony, concord, and respect for fellow religious communities and also adherents of other religions is emphasized in the context of realizing Indonesia's vision. However, the challenges of globalization and the large number of mass media that teach hate and violence against groups that do not agree cause students whose faith is weak to be easily shaken. For this reason, it is necessary to strengthen concepts and doctrines that are more mature in order to produce the next generation of a moderate nation. The concept of religious moderation at IAIN Pekalongan refers to the policy direction of the Minister of Religion of the Republic of Indonesia Fachrul Razi and the Circular Letter of the Director General of Education and Culture Number B-3663.1/Dj.I/BA.02/10/2019

dated 29 October 2019 concerning Circular of the House of Moderation of Religion on PTKIN Campus. Religious moderation has three main pillars, namely: Justice, balance and tolerance. There are ten basic values which are indicators of religious moderation, namely: (1) peace education; (2) education that develops entrepreneurship and partnerships with industry; (3) education that pays attention to Islamic prophetic content, namely humanization, liberation, and transcendence for social change; (4) education that includes teachings of religious tolerance and pluralism; (5) education that teaches Islamic understanding which is the mainstream of moderate Indonesian Islam; (6) education that balances intellectual insight (head), spiritual and moral insight (heart) and vocational skills (hands); (7) education that produces intellectuals and knowledgeable intellectuals; 8) education which is a solution to current educational problems such as the problem of dualism and learning methodology; (9) education that emphasizes the quality of education in a comprehensive manner; and (10) education capable of increasing mastery of foreign languages. There are 4 approaches used, namely: Contributive approach (basic structure, objectives, and main characteristics in a curriculum), approach. (Sholehuddin, 2021:198-209).

Advances in information technology in the digital era can be used as a support for instilling religious and multicultural values to prevent and fight radicalism. In learning Islamic religious education at the senior high school level, an integrated PAI learning model based on image animation media can develop tolerant, inclusive student personalities based on a spirit of brotherhood, unity, and values of honesty in accordance with Islamic values and cultural values. Islamic religious education learning innovations in implementing multicultural values produce religious, humanistic, knowledge, and skill competencies that successfully prevent students from being affected by religious radicalism. (Malla, et al., 2020: 51-56). In the socio-cultural field, understanding multiculturalism can give meaning to differences so that radicalism can be avoided. Radicalism is often caused by a weak understanding of multicultural values. The reality of the Indonesian nation being multicultural, multi-ethnic and multi-religious has the potential for division and disintegration such as the conflicts that have occurred in various regions in Indonesia due to radicalism.

C. RESEARCH METHOD

This study is important to see how pesantren play a role in supporting the progress of religious moderation in Indonesia. Through the literature review method, this study focuses on

reviewing various studies related to the keywords (research protocol) that have been defined in this study and tries to answer 3 research questions: (1) How to counteract radicalism through religious moderation in post-pandemic Indonesia; (2) how religious moderation is practiced in pesantren and; (3) how is the progress of religious moderation in the field of education, the field of information and communication media and the field of socio-culture. Through this research, it is expected to discover the role of pesantren in encouraging the progress of religious moderation in Indonesia.

D. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The Role of Pesantren in Post-Pandemic

Role in the Indonesian Dictionary means a set of behavior that is expected to be owned by a person who is located in society. In English, a role is called a role, which means the way in which someone or something is involved in an activity or situation, and how much influence they have on it. In the Oxford dictionary, it is defined as a role is the function assumed or part played by a person or thing in a particular situation. Or normal or customary activity of a person in a particular social setting. (Aswar, 2013: 6).

Pesantren are also known as madrasas, Islamic schools with the characteristic of providing dormitories (cottages) as residences for students besides mosques and madrasas. cared for by Kyai, is the oldest type of Islamic education in Indonesia which was born from the religious response of the local community to Islamic education with the aim of forming individuals who understand Islam and have noble ethics (akhlak karimah). Based on the education system implemented, pesantren are divided into integrated traditional (salaf) and modern (khalaf) pesantren. Salaf pesantren (traditional pesantren) focus on religious education and character building, while khalaf pesantren (modern pesantren) provide religious and general education as well as skills training. Most pesantren can be categorized as integrated with the characteristic of balancing between religious education (madrasas) and general education (state schools). (Hanafi, et al 2021). Pesantren is also a type of Islamic school in Indonesia apart from madrasas and Islamic schools. Traditional Islamic schools such as salafiyah pesantren and madrasah diniyah do not follow the national curriculum and are only registered under the Ministry of Religion. The management and supervision of the pesantren is divided between the Ministry of Education and

Culture and the Ministry of Religion. Madrasahs and pesantren are registered with MoRA under their respective directorates. (Christian, 2002).

Pesantren are also known as one of the two main types of Islamic schools in Indonesia, namely madrasah (Islamic schools) and pesantren although these two types of schools are not separate types of institutions, as many madrasas are simultaneously pesantren. Madrasas are managed by the Ministry of Religion (MOR). (Parker & Raihani, 2011). Traditional pesantren are one of the three types of Islamic education that apply in Indonesia besides madrasas and Islamic public schools. (Hasanah & Hasanah, 2021). Historically, pesantren played a role in giving birth to many social movements, so that pesantren in the present and in the future can become important instruments for societal change. These prominent national heroes made the pesantren their headquarters to fight colonial powers to gain recognition and respect as human beings. (Latif & Hafid 2021).

The strengthening of religious moderation in Indonesia is inseparable from the central role of the kiai in relation to national commitments which can be seen in three aspects, namely, thought, movement and action. The concept of religion and state in Indonesia, that Indonesia is not a religious state but does not separate religion in the daily lives of its citizens. Religious values are maintained, along with local wisdom and customs. There is no reason for citizens to question Pancasila or seek new foundations for a multi-interpreted and untested state. Religious leaders must avoid religious sermons that can lead to hostility between adherents of religions. As part of a social institution called local wisdom, Kiai lead the practice of religious moderation in society, which reflects religious moderation. The moderation model displayed in pesantren can be applied elsewhere because it is a social modality that promotes harmony. (Faisal, et al., 2022:6-8).

In the field of education, the concept of religious moderation in pesantren is to build religious and nationalist students as well as humanize humans by promoting Islam that is rahmatan lil 'alamin with an emphasis on strengthening morals. The position of Islamic education offers a solution in carrying out the deradicalization cycle. The idea of wasath (moderation; middle way) as a term of deradicalization thought is important in Islamic education so that national ideology can be accepted by all groups, including religious differences. Pesantren provide insights to students in understanding and practicing the concept of moderation in Islam overcoming radicalism in the world of education through the implementation of a pesantren-based curriculum and state defense education from 2020-2021. Efforts to counteract radicalism from various angles,

starting with education and continuing to strengthening information and communication as a basis for protecting the country from radicalism. Radicalism education also begins with providing an exclusive understanding of the meaning of an event, because the original intention of radicalism was built on the legitimacy of defending the weak/oppressed. (Arif, et al., 2022: 456-460).

In the information sector, in today's digital era, all religious studies can be accessed easily; although sometimes the source is not validated. Marhayati et al. (2019: 181) is of the view that openness to various kinds of information has helped the process of religious moderation among the younger generation of Muslims in Indonesia, although on the other hand it also puts them in a position that is vulnerable to radicalism. To anticipate this vulnerable position, the ability of media literacy and the critical power of religion to support peace and respect for differences in values is urgently needed.

In the socio-cultural field, religious moderation is a very important strategy for the community in building religious harmony in Indonesia and must become a shared point of view. (Marhayati, et al., 2019:134-144). Mosques can be used as the main media for Islamic information centers in increasing awareness of social-religious moderation in society to strengthen social harmony and coexistence of people with different religious and cultural backgrounds. Awareness of socio-religious moderation encourages people to establish patterns of good social relations with high tolerance and peaceful coexistence. Socio-religious moderation is synonymous with theoanthropocentric-integralistic concept. Islamic values are developed followed by social sensitivity and social ethics. In Lombok, for example, Tuan Guru Bajang implemented a strategy of developing mosques as centers of social-religious moderation through religious approaches and scientific literacy culture (dialogical approach) with library facilities and religious education programs. The method of grounding moderation is applied through transformative preaching (objective-academic), making the mosque a center for social-religious moderation and inculcating Islamic moderation values based on Ahlussunnah wal jama'ah. According to Nurpratiwi (2021: 170-171), in pesantren, the kyai insert several themes related to radicalism and introduce students and pesantren residents to be able to recognize these radical Islamists so that they are able to avoid their influence. Islamic boarding school kiai are very active in trying to fortify their families and communities from radicalism. Islamic boarding school kiai are also very active in maintaining various traditions of cultural expression in the Indonesian Muslim community which are known to be adaptive to various local cultures. One of the factors that can trigger radicalism is poverty.

Pesantren, which generally live among poor rural communities, are expected to be agents of social change. Kiai is a figure who has the ability to mobilize pesantren and the community to carry out social and structural mobilization and to become pioneers of change and community development.

E. CONCLUSION

From the metasynthesis of the progress of the implementation of religious moderation in Indonesia which focuses on the role of pesantren, it can be concluded that through a review of research related to the keyword's radicalism, religious moderation, pesantren and post-pandemic shows that there is an emphasis on religious moderation in three main aspects, namely: Education, information and communication, and socio-culture. The role of pesantren in tackling radicalism in the fields of education, information and communication media and post-pandemic socio-culture is quite significant and implemented in accordance with the times. This role is inseparable from the charismatic figures of the kiai who lead the pesantren. Pesantren are suggested as centers for dealing with radicalism.

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