



Charismatic Authority and Digital Resistance: The Role of Kyais in Countering Takfiri Radicalism in Society

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Abstract:

The increasing spread of digital *da'wah* based on takfiri doctrine has threatened the religious stability and social cohesion of Muslims in Indonesia. This study aims to analyze the role of kyais' charismatic authority in building digital resistance against takfiri radicalism in Indonesia's networked society. Using a qualitative case study design, data were collected through in-depth interviews with kyais, students, media managers, and congregations; observations of Islamic boarding school activities; and documentation in the form of *da'wah* archives and digital publications from an Islamic boarding school that actively promotes Islamic moderation. The findings indicate that (1) the charisma of the kyai's knowledge dampens the effects of algorithmic radical content because the congregation trusts the kyai's explanations more than extreme digital narratives, (2) Islamic boarding school moderation shifts the congregation's religious discourse style from takfiri rhetoric to peaceful dialogue, and (3) the *sanad* of knowledge forms ideological resilience so that the congregation feels confident in the source of moderate teachings. The novelty of this research lies in integrating charismatic authority and digital resistance into a model of deradicalization grounded in Islamic moderation. The implication is that Islamic boarding schools should expand their digital *da'wah* by emphasizing the charisma of their knowledge and *sanad* (traditional Islamic lineage), thereby strengthening the effectiveness of Islamic moderation in both online and offline spaces.

Key Words: *Charismatic Authority of Kyai, Digital Takfiri Radicalism, Islamic Moderation in Islamic Boarding Schools, Sanad of Knowledge*

Abstrak:

Meningkatnya penyebaran dakwah digital berbasis doktrin takfiri telah mengancam stabilitas keagamaan dan kohesi sosial umat Islam di Indonesia. Penelitian ini bertujuan menganalisis peran otoritas karismatik kyai dalam membangun resistensi digital terhadap radikalisme takfiri pada masyarakat jaringan Indonesia. Menggunakan desain kualitatif studi kasus, data dikumpulkan melalui wawancara mendalam dengan kyai, *santri*, pengelola media, dan jamaah; observasi aktivitas *pesantren*; serta dokumentasi berupa arsip dakwah dan publikasi digital dari sebuah *pesantren* yang aktif mengusung moderasi Islam. Temuan menunjukkan bahwa (1) karisma keilmuan

kyai meredam efek konten radikal algoritmis karena jamaah lebih mempercayai penjelasan kyai daripada narasi digital ekstrem, (2) moderasi *pesantren* menggeser gaya diskursus keagamaan jamaah dari retorika takfiri menuju dialog damai, dan (3) *sanad* keilmuan membentuk ketahanan ideologis sehingga jamaah merasa yakin pada sumber ajaran moderat. Kebaruan penelitian terletak pada integrasi otoritas karismatik dan resistensi digital sebagai model deradikalisasi berbasis moderasi Islam. Implikasinya, *pesantren* perlu memperluas dakwah digital dengan menonjolkan karisma keilmuan dan *sanad* agar efektivitas moderasi Islam semakin kokoh di ruang online maupun offline.

Kata Kunci: Otoritas Karismatik Kyai, Radikalisme Takfiri Digital, Moderasi Islam Pesantren, Sanad Keilmuan

INTRODUCTION

Takfiri-based religious radicalism poses a serious threat to the social cohesion of Muslims in Indonesia. This situation arises because the development of digital technology enables the dissemination of religious teachings without scientific scrutiny, leaving society vulnerable to the rapid and widespread acceptance of extreme religious understandings. Empirical evidence shows that provocative preaching content on platforms such as TikTok, Instagram, YouTube, and Telegram has increased significantly, alongside narratives that denounce moderate religious traditions as infidels (Rijal et al., 2024; Rohman et al., 2024; Shokay, 2024). This has created tensions between Muslim groups and triggered social polarization based on religious ideology. Based on this reality, research on countering takfiri radicalism is crucial for the wider community, as it concerns social stability, the integrity of Islam, and the sustainability of the values of moderation that have been the historical foundation of Islamic boarding school civilization in Indonesia.

Public exposure to radical content on digital media indicates a significant shift in the search for religious authority. Many individuals no longer look to ulama (Islamic scholars), kyais (Islamic religious leaders), and Islamic boarding schools (*pesantren*) as guardians of moderate Islamic traditions, but instead choose viral religious figures with unclear scientific credentials (Nasith, 2024; Shodikin et al., 2023). This problem is exacerbated by social media algorithms that prioritize provocative and emotional content, making it easier for takfiri teachings to reach users. As a result, there has been a rise in the practice of declaring Muslims as infidels, a rejection of traditional religious practices, and a rise in mutual suspicion within communities (Alami, 2024; Muhammad et al., 2021; Munir, 2021). Religious authority has shifted from knowledgeable figures to popular figures, making it increasingly difficult for society to distinguish between scientific, chain-based Islamic teachings and shallow, extreme teachings that marginalize other groups.

Various field findings indicate that young Muslims are the group most vulnerable to exposure to takfiri radicalism. They consume religion through short video clips, instant sermons, and confrontational content that often incites anger against other Islamic groups. In some areas, videos accusing *tahlilan*

(religious recitation of the Quran), *maulid* (mawlid), *yasinan* (recitation of the *Yasinan*), and grave visits of idolatry have sparked intercommunal conflict (Dalimunthe et al., 2023; Maulida et al., 2021). Even some religious teachers in schools and mosque administrators are struggling to deal with congregations polarized by radical digital narratives. Furthermore, Islamic boarding schools (*pesantren*) and *kyais* (Islamic scholars) with high scholarly legitimacy cannot always keep up with the rapid flow of digital information (Bali, 2024; Millie, 2023). This indicates a gap in *da'wah* (Islamic preaching), in which traditional charismatic authorities are underrepresented in cyberspace relative to radical digital authorities.

Various studies have addressed religious radicalism and its spread through digital media. For example, Raya (2024) and Yusuf et al. (2024) examines the rise of exclusive ideologies on online *da'wah* platforms; Kwanda, (2020) and Ptaszek et al. (2023) explains the process of religious polarization resulting from algorithmic media consumption; Garcés et al. (2021), Sakinç (2021), and Sidik et al. (2024) examines the vulnerability of youth to extreme religious messages; and Zaini (2024), Rijal et al. (2024), and Yudha et al. (2024) Highlights the shift in religious authority from *ulama* (Islamic scholars) to *da'wah* influencers. While these research contributions are important, they tend to focus on analyzing the structure and spread of digital radicalism without highlighting the role of traditional religious authorities as a countervailing force. In other words, prior literature remains limited in explaining how *kyais* (Islamic clerics), as charismatic figures in Nusantara Islam, confront takfiri narratives through a moderation-based counter-*da'wah* approach.

Furthermore, most previous research has not thoroughly described digital resistance strategies grounded in scholars' charisma and *sanad* (traditional chain of clerics), even though this authority has proven influential in curbing extremism in society (Rohman et al., 2024; Shokay, 2024). Previous research has also failed to identify in detail the model for transmitting Islamic moderation from Islamic boarding schools to the digital space, including the dimensions of spirituality, Sufism, traditions of tolerance, and moral education that underpin the identity of Nusantara Islam (Annisa, 2023; Mohiuddin, 2023). Therefore, this study occupies a crucial position by offering a strategic mapping of how clerics activate charismatic authority to counteract digital radicalism. This academic contribution extends not only to deradicalization studies but also to strengthening Islamic epistemology, grounded in *sanad* and moderation, amid digital turbulence.

The novelty of this research lies in the integration of two major concepts that have rarely been studied together: (1) the charismatic authority of clerics within the context of Islamic scholarly traditions, and (2) the dynamics of digital resistance in a networked society. This research not only explores the causes of digital radicalism but also examines how *kyai* (Islamic scholars) use their scholarly charisma, personality, exemplary conduct, and Islamic boarding school

traditions to create a counter-narrative of Islamic moderation that can effectively compete in the digital space. This approach yields a state-of-the-art digital *da'wah* formula grounded in sanad (chain of transmission) and spirituality, with the potential to mitigate extremism without creating new conflict or polarization (Almalki, 2023; Zou et al., 2024). These findings are expected to provide a new scientific framework for contemporary Islamic studies.

Based on analyses of phenomena and the literature, the primary research question is: What role does the charismatic authority of kyais (Islamic scholars) play in developing digital resistance to counter takfiri radicalism in Indonesia's networked society? This question encompasses three derivative issues: (1) how is the charismatic authority of kyais represented in the digital era, (2) how are kyais' digital *da'wah* strategies used to address takfiri content, and (3) how effective are these strategies in building societal ideological resilience. By focusing on these three issues, the research explicitly examines the relationship between kyais' authority, Islamic moderation, and the digital space.

The preliminary argument of this research is that the charismatic authority of kyais, particularly through their scientific chain of command, personal example, and spiritual education, provides a strong epistemological basis for producing a narrative of Islamic moderation that can rival radical narratives in the digital space. When this charismatic *da'wah* strategy is integrated with the systematic use of social media, Islamic boarding schools become not only traditional bastions but also central actors in creating a peaceful, tolerant, and constructive digital space. Thus, this research contributes to the formulation of a digital *da'wah* framework grounded in Islamic moderation, one that is relevant to deradicalization policies, the strengthening of digital literacy curricula, and the development of sustainable religious communication strategies in Indonesia.

RESEARCH METHOD

This research uses a qualitative case study design because the focus is to deeply understand the phenomenon of the charismatic authority of Islamic clerics (kyais) in responding to takfiri radicalism in the digital space within a specific social context (Thomann, 2020). The case study was chosen because the dynamics of digital resistance by Islamic clerics are not merely religious events but also social practices involving cultural interactions, Islamic boarding school structures, scholarly interpretations, and religious communication strategies in the era of algorithmic media. A qualitative approach allows researchers to uncover the meanings, motivations, and processes underlying these superficial actions, thus providing a holistic understanding of the kyais' digital strategies.

The research location was chosen at an Islamic boarding school led by an Islamic cleric who actively engages in digital *da'wah* (preaching) and is known for his strong commitment to moderate Islam. This location was chosen because its characteristics represent the Islamic boarding school's function as a bastion of Islamic moderation and an actor beginning to adapt to digital religious

communication patterns. Furthermore, the presence of students, congregations, and the surrounding community, along with *da'wah* content published on social media, enabled researchers to obtain multi-source data to capture the dynamics of digital resistance from multiple perspectives. By selecting this setting, the research can illustrate how traditional and digital authority interact in contemporary Islamic education.

Data collection techniques included in-depth interviews, observation, and documentation (Rifa'i, 2023). Interviews were conducted with kyais (Islamic religious leaders), Islamic boarding school media managers, students, and congregation members to understand digital *da'wah* strategies, perceptions of takfiri radicalism, and the effectiveness of narrative resistance. Observations were conducted on both direct *da'wah* activities in Islamic boarding schools and digital *da'wah* through YouTube, Instagram, TikTok, Facebook, and other media channels managed by Islamic boarding schools. Documentation included sermon archives, lecture recordings, social media posts, *da'wah* notes, and various Islamic moderation content. Triangulation between methods enabled researchers to capture the dynamics of the kyais' charismatic authority in both face-to-face and digital interactions.

Data analysis was conducted in stages: data condensation, data display, and data verification, as recommended by Miles and Huberman and as studied by Zaragoza et al. Data condensation involved selecting, simplifying, and grouping information relevant to the research focus, such as forms of charismatic authority, patterns of narrative dissemination of moderation, and digital resistance strategies. Data display was carried out by systematically organizing findings into matrices, concept relationships, analytical tables, and representations of key themes to facilitate interpretation. Data verification was conducted continuously through pattern analysis, rereading narratives, confirming findings across multiple sources, and identifying relationships between categories to yield robust, accountable thematic conclusions.

Data validity was ensured through source triangulation, technical triangulation, expert peer discussions, and member checking (Nufus et al., 2023). Source triangulation was employed by comparing data from kyais (Islamic religious leaders), students (*santri*), media managers, and congregation members to mitigate interpretive bias. Technical triangulation was carried out by matching data from interviews, observations, and documentation. Expert peer discussions involved academics in Islamic and social digital studies to test the logic of arguments and the consistency of analyses. Meanwhile, reconfirming transcripts, conducting member checking, and initial findings with informants to ensure that the researcher's interpretations aligned with their intentions. With this approach, the research not only meets the standards of qualitative validity but also demonstrates academic strength in describing the role of kyais' charismatic authority in digital resistance against takfiri radicalism in depth, credibility, and scientific rigor.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Result

This section presents the main findings from interviews, observations, and documentation. Each finding is explained in depth to illustrate how kyai (Islamic clerics), Islamic boarding schools (Islamic boarding schools), and the *sanad* (Islamic lineage) work in countering digital radicalism. The presentation is systematic, enabling readers to understand the data's patterns, dynamics, and meaning comprehensively.

The charisma of the kyais' knowledge dampens the digital radical algorithm.

This sub-finding is interpreted as the ability of a kyai with profound knowledge, exemplary morals, and spiritual authority to more strongly influence the congregation's perceptions and attitudes than radical preaching circulating on social media. In the field, scholarly charisma is evident when the congregation is more trusting of the kyai's explanations and guidance, even after being exposed to takfiri content or provocative religious videos. Charisma in this context is not only the kyai's manner of speaking but also the combination of scholarly *sanad* (chain of knowledge), calm, compassionate communication, and emotional presence that makes the congregation feel safer in accepting his guidance than in accepting radical digital narratives characterized by confrontation. Thus, scholarly charisma functions as an internal buffer, preventing the community from being easily influenced by extreme religious propaganda.

An interview with a congregation member revealed that their religious understanding remained unwavering despite frequent exposure to radical videos via WhatsApp groups. The informant stated, "On the internet, the language is sometimes harsh and frightening, but after listening to the explanation from the kyai, my heart feels calmer. I do not feel like joining in the angry outbursts on social media." From this statement, the researcher inferred that the kyai's calmness, maturity, and breadth of knowledge foster psychological security among the congregation, leading them to prefer the kyai's guidance over radical digital narratives. In other words, the charisma of knowledge has a protective effect against a person's tendency to follow extreme teachings.

A second informant, a student who manages the Islamic boarding school's media, emphasized that whenever radical videos or other content appear, the congregation seeks clarification from the kyai rather than immediately accepting them. He said, "Someone sent a video of a preacher accusing NU of shirk, but those who came to the Islamic boarding school said, 'I will not be sure until I hear the kyai's opinion directly.' So the congregation still returns to the kyai." This finding suggests that, even though digital algorithms repeatedly surface radical content, the kyais' scholarly charisma remains the final authority in the congregation's religious decision-making. Thus, the kyais' presence is not only a

source of knowledge but also an ideological filter that prevents the congregation from being polarized by takfiri narratives.

Observations indicated that after the congregation concluded the religious study, participants appeared more comfortable and no longer discussed the radical content that had previously disturbed them. In some activities, the congregation actively reminded one another to clarify any religious issues with the kyais before concluding. The researchers interpret that the kyais' physical presence, smiles, gentle language, and scientifically grounded arguments created a conducive spiritual atmosphere, making the congregation more emotionally stable than when they received information via social media. In other words, scholarly charisma created a consistent pattern of influence: the more intense the congregation's direct interaction with the kyai, the less influence the digital algorithms promoting takfiri radicalism had. The pattern suggests that scholarly charisma functions as an ideological immune system that neutralizes digital propaganda before conflicts of understanding arise in society.

Moderation in Islamic boarding schools shifts the dominance of takfiri rhetoric.

The sub-finding "Islamic boarding school moderation shifts the dominance of takfiri rhetoric" is defined as the process by which Islamic boarding school teachings emphasizing moderation (*tawaassuth*), tolerance (*tasamuh*), and noble character (*akhlakul karimah*) gradually weaken the influence of harsh, confrontational religious narratives in society. In practice, this is evident in changes in congregational discussion topics, in the style of student preaching, and in shifts in the community's response to sensitive religious issues. While previously some members were easily swayed by labeling certain practices as heretical or polytheistic due to digital exposure, after participating in moderate Islamic boarding school activities, they tended to be more cautious in assessing differences in religious practices. In other words, repeated exposure to moderate values within the social context of Islamic boarding schools became a force that balanced, and even replaced, the previously dominant takfiri narrative in public perception.

The following table presents the results of observations across various Islamic boarding schools and community activities to identify the percentage of moderation messages relative to the prevalence of takfiri rhetoric in daily religious interactions.

Table 1. Observation Results from Islamic Boarding School Moderation: Shifting the Dominance of Takfiri Rhetoric

Field Activity Observation	Finding Indicators
Weekly yellow book study	Emphasis on tolerance and differences in Islamic jurisprudence
Public lecture on Islamic holidays	Call for Islamic morals and brotherhood.
Student discussion forum	The use of peaceful arguments against differences
Community conversation after the religious study	Decrease in the use of the term "bid'ah/shirk."

The observation table shows that *pesantren* moderation is most strongly evident in core learning activities, particularly in the study of yellow books and public lectures. These two activities serve as the primary channels for conveying the message of moderate Islam to the broader community, thereby strongly influencing the congregation's patterns of religious interaction. In student discussion forums, moderation is not only studied as theory but also actively practiced through constructive dialogue and a non-blaming attitude toward other groups. In community conversations after religious studies, the influence of moderation is already quite significant, although occasional takfiri rhetoric still appears in everyday small talk. Overall, the observation table indicates that the greater a person's involvement in *pesantren* activities, the greater the internalization of the values of moderation, thus narrowing the scope for takfiri rhetoric.

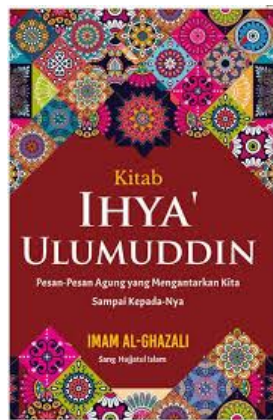
The pattern emerging from various observational findings is that moderation in Islamic boarding schools does not operate through confrontation or refutation of takfiri ideology, but rather through fostering gentle religious interactions, scholarly argumentation, and respect among fellow Muslims. This pattern demonstrates that moderation must be consistently present across various religious activities to normalize societal understanding of differences. Moderation strengthens when it is cultivated through social spaces and collective activities, rather than through one-way sermons. When moderation becomes part of the congregation's daily life, the takfiri narrative naturally loses its influence. Thus, change occurs not through ideological confrontation but through the reconstruction of a humanistic, calm, and rational religious culture.

The chain of knowledge strengthens society's ideological resilience.

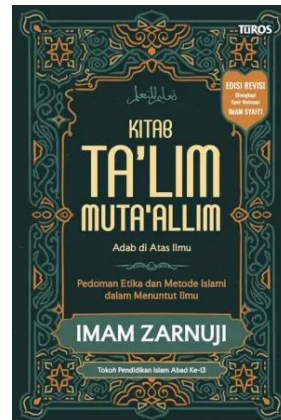
The sub-finding "*sanad keilmuwan*" strengthens the ideological resilience of society" is interpreted as a process in which the legitimacy of the kyai's knowledge, which is connected through generations to previous ulama, shapes the community's belief that the teachings conveyed are valid, tested, and trustworthy. In practice, "*sanad keilmuwan*" is understood not only as a teacher-student relationship but also as a guarantee that the religious interpretations studied by the congregation are grounded in correct methodology and free from the distortions of radicalism. The existence of a *sanad* provides a sense of theological security for the community, preventing it from being easily influenced by foreign teachings or digital preaching that disseminates takfiri narratives. Thus, *sanad keulimu* functions as an ideological filter that strengthens the community in sorting religious information and maintaining the stability of beliefs amidst a flood of extremist content.

This flow shows that the *sanad* of knowledge is passed down through three channels: first, the study of classical texts as a foundation of knowledge that serves as an authoritative reference; second, the tradition of *ijazah* or the direct transmission of knowledge from teacher to student; and third, recordings of Islamic preaching and digital publications of Islamic boarding schools that

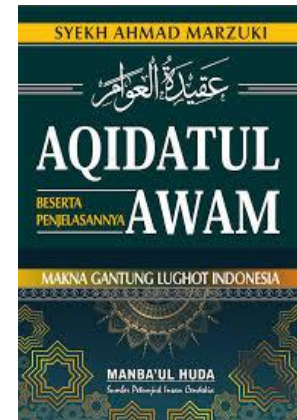
contain moderate Islamic teachings. The researcher's interpretation shows that the ideological resilience of the community is formed in stages: texts → ijazah → digital publications. This means that the community receives moderate teachings not just once, but through a continuous flow of knowledge transmission so that their beliefs are maintained and not easily displaced by harsh digital religious content.



Ihya' Ulumuddin:



Ta'lim al-Muta'allim:



Aqidatul Awam:

Figure 1. Recommendations for the most relevant book documentation

These three books demonstrate that the *sanad* of knowledge functions not only as an academic lineage but also as a multilayered mechanism for cultivating a moderate religious character. *Ihya' Ulumuddin* serves as a foundation for morality and spirituality, enabling the congregation to understand the meaning of religious teachings with serenity and emotional maturity. *Ta'lim al-Muta'allim* instills the ethics of seeking knowledge and respect for teachers, helping the community to recognize the importance of following scholars with legitimate *sanads* rather than merely viral religious figures. Meanwhile, *Aqidatul Awam* reinforces the creed of Ahlussunnah wal Jama'ah in a friendly and non-confrontational manner, so that the congregation does not feel the need to denigrate or denounce the practices of other groups as infidels. All three build a comprehensive ideological defense system: morality, scientific ethics, and clarity of creed, which simultaneously closes the space for influence for digital radicalism.

The emerging pattern shows that the *sanad* (traditional chain of transmission) strengthens ideological resilience through the interaction of classical and modern documents. Classical texts serve as spiritual and intellectual foundations; the tradition of transmission maintains the authenticity of teachings; and digital recordings of *da'wah* disseminate scholarly authority online. These three interlock, creating a stable form of ideological protection. When communities adhere to the *sanad*, they no longer validate religious truth based on harsh rhetoric, but rather on scholarly legitimacy. In this way, Islamic boarding schools are the centers of religious ideological resilience capable of withstanding radical digital propaganda.

Discussion

The results of this study indicate that the scholarly charisma of kyais (Islamic scholars) significantly mitigates the impact of radical digital rhetoric. This finding intersects with the literature that positions the authority of traditional ulama as the determinant of religious stability in society (M. C. Huda et al., 2020; Willya et al., 2024). However, this study extends this perspective by showing that the charisma of kyais remains effective even as society operates within an information ecosystem controlled by algorithms. This means that even though provocative religious information continues to appear repeatedly on social media, the congregation remains unaffected because they have an authoritative figure they trust as the final reference in understanding religion (Ba-Aoum et al., 2024; Feng et al., 2024). Thus, this study corrects the claim in the literature that digital authority completely replaces traditional authority.

Other findings reveal that moderation in Islamic boarding schools is not merely an ideological concept but has become a social and religious practice that shapes the behavior of its congregation. This is evident in the shift in community religious discourse from initially readily adopting harsh and judgmental language to becoming more cautious in assessing differences after intensive participation in Islamic boarding school activities (Mumtaz et al., 2024; Raya, 2024). Previous literature often positions moderation as a normative notion, while the results of this study show that moderation works through social habits: gentle language, ethical dialogue, and strengthening brotherhood (M. Huda, 2024; Paulson et al., 2021). Thus, moderation can replace the dominance of takfiri discourse not through aggressive debate but through the establishment of a culture of calm, rational religious interaction.

Findings on the *sanad* of knowledge demonstrate that classical scholarly structures continue to play a crucial role in shaping the ideological resilience of communities in the digital age. Unlike studies that merely view *sanad* as a formal teacher-student lineage, this research finds that *sanad* serves as the foundation of the congregation's trust in religious authority and as a psychological reinforcement when exposed to extreme religious content (Almalki, 2023; Sukmana, 2023). The study of classical texts, the acquisition of scholarly credentials, and a documented track record of scholarship have been shown to instill epistemological clarity, enabling the congregation to feel confident in the source of their teachings (Bryanov, 2021; Garg et al., 2020). These findings broaden academic discussions on radicalism by emphasizing that ideological resilience is built not only through education but also through the legitimacy of a layered, clearly sourced body of knowledge.

The theoretical implications of the overall findings demonstrate that religious authority in the digital era cannot be analyzed solely as a competition between kyais (Islamic scholars) and digital preachers. The reality on the ground shows that the authority of kyais is revitalized through emotional closeness, a scientific chain of transmission, and the practice of moderation in Islamic boarding school activities (Athoillah et al., 2024; Hefner, 2022). In other words,

resistance to radicalism depends not only on the strength of arguments but also on a sense of security, spiritual warmth, and historical trust in scientific sources (Adeoye, 2025; Wahid, 2020). These findings contribute to the development of theories on societal resilience to digital radicalism by incorporating affective and spiritual dimensions into the analysis.

The practical implications show that strengthening Islamic moderation cannot be achieved simply by producing normative religious content. Islamic boarding schools and their kyai (Islamic scholars) should maximize the use of digital media to transmit not only da'wah material but also the charismatic values of scholarship, *sanad* (chain of transmission), and the emotional atmosphere that have long been hallmarks of Islamic boarding schools in the offline world. The teaching of classical texts needs to be combined with digital documentation to ensure the legitimacy of scholarship remains legible online. With this strategy, Islamic boarding schools can deradicalize without confrontation, not by violently opposing radical ideologies, but by strengthening communities from within so they have a firm grip when confronted with extreme digital propaganda.

CONCLUSION

This study concludes that the charismatic authority of kyais plays a central role in countering takfiri radicalism in the digital era through three core mechanisms: scholarly charisma as a neutralizer of radical algorithms, the culture of moderation in Islamic boarding schools as a counterbalance to confrontational rhetoric, and the *sanad* of knowledge as an ideological protector of society. All three work simultaneously to build religious resilience within the congregation, not through ideological confrontation but through spiritual serenity, emotional maturity, and epistemological certainty grounded in the scholarly heritage of Nusantara Islam. The most important lesson from this study is that confronting digital radicalism is not simply about increasing public knowledge, but about strengthening the relationship of trust and emotional closeness between the congregation and the authoritative figures they believe in. Thus, kyais are not only religious actors, but also guardians of social cohesion and the psychological stability of Muslims amidst the digital information turmoil.

The scientific contribution of this study lies in integrating the concepts of charismatic authority, pesantren moderation, and digital resistance into a single analytical model, demonstrating that counter-narratives of moderation grounded in *sanad* and spirituality can effectively compete with radical narratives in Indonesia's networked society. This research offers a new conceptual framework for contemporary Islamic studies, particularly in the fields of deradicalization, religious communication, and *sanad*-based Islamic epistemology. However, this study still has limitations because it focuses on a single *pesantren* location, thus not reflecting the variety of digital resistance strategies across Indonesia. Future research should expand the sample to include

various types of pesantren, analyze the digital *da'wah* model across generations of kyai, and develop quantitative evaluation instruments to measure the long-term effectiveness of sanad-based moderation. Thus, studies on the role of kyais in digital ideological struggles can continue to develop academically and practically.

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