Formulating Strategies Against Student Radicalism: A Case of Madrasah in Indonesia

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ABSTRACT--Radical Islamic ideology has penetrated educational institutions in Indonesia. It has the potential to become the seeds of radical movements that threaten the survival of the life of the nation and state. This study aims to explore the madrasah strategies to deal with the threat of extremist radicalism. The authors employed an argumentative exploration that essays a history of the philosophical moderate Islamic attitude, which was supported by relevant recent research findings, government documents, and a review of the theory, and practice of madrasah education in Indonesia. The results of this study indicate that the strategies of madrasah to counter the growth of radicalism is mainstreaming Islamic moderation, which will function as an ideological shield for the younger generation from the threat of extremism, both right-wing, and left-wing. This strategy needs to strengthen the program by developing a blueprint that is supported by stakeholders and regard to the moderate Islamic cultural base that has been built by NU and Muhammadiyah.

Keywords-- Madrasah, Islamic Moderation, Radicalism

I. INTRODUCTION

Radicalism among students has been the theme of scholarly scientific discussion since the end of the 19th century [1], [2], [3], [4], [5]. Along with the development of this Movement, the theme then grew and was associated with Islam [6], [7], [8], [9], [10], [11]. Western and Eastern scholars have various perspectives on interpreting Islamic radicalism. Still, the common thread that emerges from these opinions refers to understandings and movements oriented towards extremism, exclusivity, intolerance, militancy, radicalism, jihadists, and revolutionaries [12], [13], [14], [14], [16], [17]. This understanding and movement have taken place across various regions of the country and generations by utilizing various media, including education.

A survey conducted in 2018 found that 58.5% of Indonesian students' tended towards radical behaviour or views, 51.5% expressed internal intolerance (i.e., towards followers of the same religion who held different religious views), and 34.3 expressed external intolerance (towards followers of different religions) [18]. These findings are in line with data obtained by the Setara Institute for Democracy and Peace (SIDP), showing that 8.5% of students agreed with replacing *Pancasila* (the basis of the Indonesian state) as the philosophical basis of Indonesia and 7.2% agreed with the efforts of radical organizations to spread hatred against followers of other

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religions [19]. Similarly, a survey by the Ma'arif Institute found that 40.82% and 8.16 % of respondents said that they were "willing" or "very willing" to attack people or groups that allegedly insulted Islam. Further, 1.02% of respondents believed that the law applied in Indonesia was the law of infidels. Regarding the establishment of an Islamic state in Indonesia, 19.39% "agreed" or 3.06% "strongly agreed," and 37.76% "disagreed." Additionally, 3.06% were willing to accept an invitation from certain radical groups to perform *jihad* [20]. Some of these data indicate that the problem of radicalism in Indonesia has been becoming more serious.

The growth in the seeds of Islamic radicalism in Muslim-majority schools supports the argument presented in UK media that conservative Muslim students sympathize with terrorism [21]. Children, especially adolescents, are vulnerable to religious indoctrination. One such doctrine, taught by hard-liners to adolescents, is *shahid,* or martyrdom, which is the view that anyone who chooses to die defending Islam will go to heaven [6]. Further, the dangerous notion of *fatwa (a* judgment that is used as a guide for the ummah), which is grounded in the fundamentalist views of Islamic hard-liners, threatens the integrity of a country that is truly diverse. In this view, a Muslim who does not adequately follow Islamic law is considered an apostate and can be killed. In contrast, the killing of infidels is not justified under Islamic law [22].

The use of violent acts to defend religion has increased in Indonesia [23]. It was supported by data from the National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) of Indonesia, showing that between 2010 and 2013, there were 274 cases of violation of religious freedom using violence [24]. The number of such cases increased between 2014 and 2016, with 67 reports in 2014, 87 in 2015, and 97 in 2016 [26], [27]. Violence in the name of religion can develop into a force that threatens the continuity of human civilization and tarnishes the image of Islam as a peaceful religion [28], [29], [30]. Such a situation cannot be tolerated if people in this country want to live peacefully in the spirit of *Bhinneka Tunggal Ika* (Unity in Diversity) and a harmonious international relations system.

All elements of the country, including educational institutions [7], need to take concrete steps to fight against radicalism. One crucial initial step is to build an understanding of Islam as a religion that spreads love and peace in this world. Madrasahs, which are places where Islamic values are taught, play an essential role in this. However, madrasahs live in a dynamic situation. In Pakistan, madrasahs were considered by Western media as the origin of Islamic radicalism [30]. While in Indonesia, madrasahs come in different forms and affiliation. Madrasah, which affiliated to Salafi, allegedly has close ties with the transnational Wahabi movement and was suspected of providing a training ground for terrorists [14]. It should serve as a warning and encouragement to society to strengthen efforts to save millions of young people in these schools from the threat of extreme Islamic radicalism.

There are currently about 82.418 madrasahs in Indonesia. This figure indicates that madrasahs have significant potential to produce leaders who support Islam as a religion that spreads love for all the people in the world. From this foundation, the fight against the development of Islamic radicalism can be strengthened. Data from the Education Management Information System in 2019 revealed that not less than 9.245.248 students attend madrasahs at all levels from pre-school (*Roudlotul Athfal*), elementary (*Madrasah Ibtidaiyah*), junior high (*Madrasah Tsanawiyah*), and senior high (*Madrasah Aliyah*). In-depth research is needed to identify the strategic policies the government should adopt to prevent the spread of Islamic radicalism in Indonesia through madrasahs.

II. RELATED WORK

2.1 Contextualization of Madrasah

Madrasahs are Islamic schools that have developed in Indonesia since the early 20th century [31]. Their numbers have increased throughout the history of this nation. Madrasahs were officially acknowledged in the 1975 joint decree by the Ministers of Religion (Mukti Ali), Education and Culture (Teuku Syarif Thayeb), and Home Affairs (Amir Machmud). The joint decree contains four dictums: (1) Madrasahs cover three levels: *Madrasa Ibtidaiyah* (MI) (Elementary)*, Madrasah Tsanawiyah* (MTs) (Junior High), and *Madrasa Aliyah* (MA) (Senior High); (2) Madrasah diplomas are considered equivalent to public school diplomas; (3) Madrasah graduates can continue their studies to a higher level at public schools; and (4) Madrasah students can move to public schools of the same level. Administratively, this policy has meant that madrasahs are treated as equal to public schools.

The joint decree was followed up by the development of the curriculum in 1976. This policy strengthened the equality between madrasahs and public schools. In subsequent developments, madrasahs became known as public schools that had Islamic characteristics by Law Number. 2 of 1989, Government Regulation No. 27, 28, and 29 of 1990, as well as Decrees of the Minister of Religion Number 370 and 373 of 1993. The curriculum used was the 1994 curriculum, about 10% of which was devoted to religious education. It distinguished the curriculum from the 1984 curriculum, which required approximately 30% religious education. Madrasahs obtained equivalence with public schools through Government Regulation No. 29 of 1990 and the Decree of the Minister of Education and Culture No. 0489/U/1992. In 2003, the status of madrasahs was further enhanced by the promulgation of Law No. 2 of 2003 on the National Education System. The law explicitly states that madrasahs are "equal" to public schools at various levels, that is, *Madrasah Ibtidaiyah* (MI), *Madrasah Tsanawiyah* (MTs), and *Madrasah Aliyah* (MA) are equivalent to Elementary, Secondary, and High Schools, respectively.

The recognition of the existence of madrasahs gives them a strategic role in preparing the nation's future generations. They are expected to be a means of transforming Islamic values in order to prepare young people to become peaceful Muslims (*rahmatan lil 'alamin)* [33], [34]. To this end, madrasahs have initiated a movement of moderate Islamic mainstreaming in Indonesia. The Ministry of Religion of Indonesia, as the supervisor of madrasahs, has implemented 12 programs in its fight against radicalism. Six programs were implemented in 2017 and the other six in 2018.

A long time before that, the madrasahs under the authority of Nahdlotul Ulama (NU) and Muhammadiyah were already on the Indonesian mainstream Islamic line. NU and Muhammadiyah have transformed moderate Islamic teachings into their young generation. NU instilled the doctrine of *ASWAJA* (NU's doctrine), while Muhammadiyah is preparing its cadres with *Al-Islam* and *Kemuhammadiyahan*. These roles are strategic, given that these two organizations have considerably more influence than radical Islamic movements [34]. The two organizations have become essential assets in the development of resistance to radicalism in Indonesia.

2.2 What Does Moderate Islam Mean?

The word "moderation" means reasonable, not excessive, and limited. The word "moderate" is related to several words in Arabic, including *al-tawassut* or *al-wasat* (moderation), *al-qist* (justice), *al-tawâzun* (balance), *al-i'tidâl* (harmony) [35]. Therefore, "moderate Islam" refers to the term *ummu wasat* mentioned in the Qur'an

[36], meaning people who put themselves in the middle. This term is variously interpreted by Islamic scholars. Mujahid bin Jabr (died 104/722) and Ibnu Abbas (died 68/687) defined it as "fair people/fair society". Al-Tabari (died 310/923) and al-Wahidi (died 468/1076) interpreted it as "neutral religion". Abduh (died 1323/1905) defined it as "moderate society/balanced nation". Al-Zamakhshari (died 538/1143) and Ibn Kathir (died 774/1373) interpreted it as "the best society in the middle, central, and balanced position" [37-38]. These scholars' definitions resulted from an in-depth analysis through which they sought to understand Islam as a religion that does not acknowledge extremism, either towards the right-wing or the left-wing.

It is not easy to define "moderate" or "Islamic moderatism." Their meaning depends on the context in which they are interpreted [38]. Because they can be interpreted subjectively, they are inevitably influenced by political and economic interests [35]. In this article, we have sought to avoid using a political interpretation oriented to particular interests.

Moderate Islam has built Islamic traditions by implementing moderate principles that create a balance between two opposing directions. It is because balance and moderation in Islam are the basis of all kindness and virtues [39]. The balance is harmonious with the nature of human beings and the universe. Moderate Muslims can be understood as Muslims who eschew violence in their ideology and lifestyle. Moderate Islam can also be understood as the religion of Muslims who are tolerant and non-violent [40]. The terms proposed by the scholars mentioned above are more theologically oriented, which is not how they are understood in the United States of America. In this country, moderate Islam is associated politically with George W. Bush's war on terrorism [36], [38], and is referred to as "tame and acceptable" [41].

This article uses the theological interpretation originating from authentic Islamic teachings. Moderate Islam is culturally located in its historical origins in Indonesia through the religious traditions of two socio-religious organizations, NU and Muhammadiyah, which have the most significant number of followers. NU has the moderate *Ahl al-Sunnah wal Jama'ah* (ASWAJA) doctrine as the foundation of its *da'wah* (preaching). At the same time, the traditions of Muhammadiyah are rooted in the "ideology of progressive Islam" that seeks to present Islam as combining purification and moderate dynamism (*wasatîyah*) [42]. In this context, moderate Islam is defined as a balanced religion, which opposes extremism of any kind, appreciates diversity, emphasizes tolerance and democracy, and abstains from all forms of violence while adhering to Islamic principles.

2.3 The History of Moderate Islam in Indonesia

The reputation of Islam as a tolerant religion has developed since Islam entered Indonesia. Historical evidence shows that Islam developed in Indonesia through a cultural approach that was friendly and tolerant. The process through which Indonesians accepted Islam began with respectful and peaceful interactions between Arabic traders and people on the coast of North Sumatra in the 7th century [43]. In Java, Walisongo sympathetically introduced Islam by establishing cultural collaboration between Islam and existing customs and traditions. Islam was compatible with the local culture; people were still able to practice their cultural traditions based on the values of Islamic teachings this tolerance of local traditions and their adaptation to Islamic principles led to several noblemen and the majority of Javanese on the north coast embracing Islam. Walisongo's tolerant and sympathetic approach combined the sociocultural features of Javanese and Islamic values so successfully that the religion came to be

referred to as "the religion of Java" [45], [46]. Moderate Islam has been practised by Muslims in Indonesia from the beginning.

NU had included the principles of *tawasuth* (moderation), *tasamuh* (tolerance), and *tawazzun* (balance), as well as *ta'addul* (fairness) as the foundation of the organization. At the Tanwir Muhammadiyah Session in Bandung in 2012, decisions were also made about "the Crystallization of Ideology and *Khittah* Muhammadiyah." One of the strategic decisions adopted was to identify Muhammadiyah as the ideology of progressive Islam that regards Islam as *Dîn al-Hadârah* (a progressive religion). This approach is based on the following principles: (1) *tajdîd* ('renewal') or the revitalization of the Islamic framework by returning to the Qur'an and Sunnah through *ijtihâd* (a legal term referring to independent reasoning); (2) reformism-modernism of a *wasatîyah* (middle, moderate) nature to distinguish it from extreme ideologies; (3) pro-progress and anti-stagnation, pro-peace and anti-violence, pro-justice and anti-oppression, pro-equality and anti-discrimination; and (4) upholding authentic core values according to Islamic teachings [42]. NU's and Muhammadiyah's moderate attitudes reflect their desire to build the image of Islam as a religion that promotes peace and respect for the followers of other religions [32]. It is why the two organizations are referred to as "the representatives of moderate Islam" in moderate Muslim countries [46].

NU and Muhammadiyah are the homes for pluralism and tolerance [47]. The two organizations have continuously attempted to instill Islamic moderation in the young generation. The NU's madrasahs call this approach National Education Standards (SNP-plus), which integrates the standard national curriculum with *Ahl as-Sunnah wal Jama'ah* (ASWAJA) lessons and NU's teachings. The doctrines include the concepts of *tasâmuh* (tolerance), *tawassut* (moderation), *tawâzun* (balance), *i'tidâl* (fairness/integrity), and *amar ma'ruf nahi mungkar* (commanding the good and forbidding the evil). Muhammadiyah, on the other hand, employs al-Islam lessons and Muhammadiyah's teachings to produce a moderate Muslim generation [48]. It is far from the accusation that efforts to ground moderate Islam are based on opportunistic reasons, namely to win sponsors from the West and obtain funding support from American donors [36], [50], [51]. This accusation was historically inaccurate since the moderate Islamic movement was supported by NU and Muhammadiyah long before it became a hot topic in America after 9/11. Indeed, it dated from the beginning of the development of Islam in Indonesia. ASWAJA doctrine is the manifestation of moderate Islam not in the political context for NU and its huge followers but rather is social piety, so does the ideology of progressive, moderate Islam propounded by Muhammadiyah. If this noble effort has been dragged into the political arena, this is due to the irresponsible attempts to politicize it by individuals who can only taint the worthy intentions of the founders of the two organizations, namely, Hasyim Asy'ari and Ahmad Dahlan.

III.   METHODOLOGY

The study was intended in review literature. Process the review literature by using the 5 step model. The first step is Framing the question, the second step of doing Identifying relevant work (relevant publication), the third step of doing Assessing the quality of study, the fourth step of doing summarizing the evidence, the fifth step of doing Interpreting the finding. The study was conducted by a systematic search in the scientific literature database followed by critical analysis.

IV.   RESULT AND DISCUSSION

4.1 The Inspiration of Moderate Islamic Values in Educational Practices in Indonesia

The values that can promote the mainstreaming of moderate Islam in Indonesia can be developed from NU's ASWAJA theology. This theology is in line with the spirit of Muhammadiyah's progressive and moderate (*wasathîyah*) Islamic ideology, which is described operationally in the sixth version of the fundamental values of education of this organization. However, these values must continue to be elaborated in order to accommodate the changes and challenges of modern life, which is becoming increasingly complex [52]. These values can be summarized in the following principles:

4.1.1 Principle of Tawasuth (Moderation)

This principle is explained in the Qur'an in Surah al-Baqarah (verse 134), which is interpreted by some scholars as a more practical concept. *Tawasuth* defined as a neutral attitude located between two attitudes, neither too radical nor too liberal. The neutral attitude refers to wisdom to accept the dispensations of Allah (*sunnatullah*) as a gift to humanity and to live a moderate social life. On that basis, the claim to a single truth that denies differences and liberal attitudes in religion undermines the wisdom [53], [54]. The *tawasuth* principle embodies an attitude that strives to uphold the necessity for justice and the avoidance of any approach that is extremist. It is not permissible to compromise the *tawassuth* principle by mixing different elements (syncretism) or isolating themselves and rejecting others well. On the contrary, one demonstrates this principle by putting oneself in the middle, between radical and liberal extremism [55].

From the Islamic theological perspective, *tawasuth* refers to the *Al-Asy'ariyah aqeedah* (first theological of Sunni Islam, which was founded by Abu al-Hasan al-Ashʿari, died 324 H/936 M), which at that time became the middle way between two opposing groups, namely, *Jabbariyah* and *Qodariyah*. *Jabbariyah* argued that all human actions were created by Allah, and humans did not play any role in those actions. *Qodariyah*, however, asserted that human actions were created by humans without Allah's intervention. Abu Hasan Al-Asy'ari argued that humans were given opportunities/roles by Allah to seek to follow the decrees of Allah. Therefore, humans were responsible for all their actions. The middle way offered by Al-Asy'ari was able to overcome the clash between *Qodariah* and *Jabariyah* at that time.

There are four sources of Islamic law: the Qur'an, Hadiths (Sunnah), *Ijma'*, and *Qiyas*. The legal basis of Islam is built on a series of strategic hierarchical steps. The Qur'an and Hadiths are the basic principles of the Islamic law that must be understood correctly according to trusted experts (*dlabit*) and can be justified. The experts considered as *dlabit* must meet specific criteria. Among others, these include having a true *aqeedah*, mastering the Arabic language and its various branches, mastering the science of rules for compiling Islamic law (*ushul fiqh)*, mastering the knowledge of the basics of Islam (*ushuluddin*), mastering the sciences of the Qur'an, understanding the Hadiths of the Prophet that explain the content of the Qur'an, and knowing and understanding the interpretations of the companions of the Prophet. However, *ijtihad* or human reason can be used to address problems that are not found in-laws (Qur'an and Hadiths) that are clear and binding (*sharih and qath'iyyud dilalah*) [54].

A moderate attitude also means respecting different opinions in assessing a problem, when the text of Islamic law is still possible to interpret *dzanniyyud dilalah*. It is done by taking account of the benefits of practising the Sharia in a plural society as part of Allah's gift. Concerning morality, *tawasuth* is achieved in several ways: 1) using manners in line with Islamic law and legislation (positive law); 2) not feeling proud or superior to others; 3) maintaining good manners and modesty (*tawadlu'*) and humility (*khusyu'*) with anyone and in any location; 4) striving for security and peace in oneself in particular and in society in general; 5) protecting oneself from misleading and irresponsible issues; 6) not being excessive in one's assessments, but acting calmly and wisely taking everyone's interests into account [54].

Tawasuth can be implemented in madrasahs through learning the Qur'an and Hadiths in the context of moderate understanding, as explained above. Sensitive topics about *jihad, khilāfa* (Islamic caliphate), and tolerance must be presented in the form of inclusive literature with teachers giving explanations from a *tawasuth* perspective. In the learning process, this step requires room for dialogue to obtain a contextual understanding of the teacher's explanation. Besides, the teachers should encourage their students to respond eagerly to phenomena that cannot be addressed textually, but rather contextually.

4.1.2 Principle of Tasammuh (Tolerance)

Tasammuh comes from an Arabic word meaning "broad-minded" and "forgiving". Being broad-minded is a noble trait that is needed to deal with diversity in a plural society. Diversity is a gift that should be addressed wisely in order to direct positive energy towards building a better future for the country. If, however, this gift is considered as a dividing line, it can lead to polemic, division, and enmity. The *tasammuh* attitude (tolerance) can erase those lines and generate unity and cooperation. This attitude is discussed in the Qur'an Surah Thaha [verse 44].

Tasammuh is necessary for a diverse country. This attitude teaches people to respect people's different perspectives on religious matters, such as *khilafiyah* (different views) on *juz'iyyah* (not principal) laws, social issues, and culture [56]. To deny differences is to deny *sunnatullah* (the decree of Allah), which is a despicable act that can lead to division, hostility, and bloodshed on Earth. The principle of *tasammuh* can be implemented by taking specific actions, such as a) respecting different views as long as they are not in contradiction with Islamic teachings; b) accepting and developing any cultural aspect that is in line with Islamic teachings regardless of where it comes from; c) being tolerant in relations with fellow humans and fellow nations; d) establishing relations with fellow human beings based on mutual understanding and mutual respect [54].

Tasammuh can be adopted in madrasahs through discussions about religious understanding related to *khilafiyah* (dissent) and the social phenomenon of plurality in the learning process. Teachers must be able to mediate and facilitate the discussion so that all involved can respect and appreciate different views and see them as part of God's decree (*sunnatullah*). When the young generation successfully instills *tasammuh* into their souls, they have the resources to turn differences into strengths that will be beneficial in the country's development. In the long term, the growth of tolerance will be able to fend off Islamophobia in Western countries that view Muslims as a threat to their social and political values [57–59].

4.1.3 Principle of Tawazun (balance)

The *tawazun* principle is described in the Qur'an Surah al-Hadid (verse 25). This principle encompasses the attitude to seek balance in various aspects of life that concern the relationship with the Creator (*hablum min Allah*) and relations with fellow human beings (*hablum min an-nas*). In legal terms, the balance principle also includes the use of reason (*aqli*) in understanding the arguments of the first proposition of Islam (*naqli*). The use of reasoning is necessary to find an understanding of the texts (*nash*), which are *zhanni* (speculative) in nature, but may not stand alone and apart from the arguments of *syara'*, which are *qoth'i* (definitive).

The *tawazun* characteristic is crucial in the effort to balance the rights and obligations of each human being to his or her God, their fellow humans, and other creatures, such as animals and plants [54], [56]. Balance is also necessary to develop harmonious connections between all elements in life. Someone with this attitude is expected to be able to find a balance between worldly needs and those of the afterlife, not to monopolize truth, and not to dominate attitudes about religious practices [60], [69], [70]. Besides, there is a need to increase awareness of equal rights to the truth in religious practices and avoid assuming that people outside one's group are wrong, even infidels. To monopolize truth is not the right attitude to hold in a diverse society. Such an understanding should be demonstrated to students by introducing moderate Islamic values into science and technology. It is necessary to develop competencies that constitute a balance between scientific and moral aspects.

4.1.4 Principle of Ta'addul (Justice)

The *ta'âddul* principle underpins efforts to uphold justice and integrity for people, in all places, and any situation by taking the interests of all people and the universe into account [54]. This principle is in line with the Islamic teachings mentioned in the Qur'an Surah al-Maidah (verse 8). The *ta'adul* principle is concerned with sociological, psychological, and other dimensions [56]. Two of the five national principles of Indonesia, *Pancasila*, embrace the *ta'adul* principle. The second and fifth principles refer to the idea of justice - *Kemanusiaan yang adil dan beradab* ("Just and civilized humanity") and *Keadilan sosial bagi seluruh rakyat Indonesia* ("Social justice for all the Indonesian people"), respectively. These two principles teach noble values that serve as the basis for efforts to encourage justice. The values embodied in these two principles can be used to guide the fight for truth and justice and to avoid the hatred of fellow human beings that can destroy justice.

The *ta'adul* principle can support the realization of a fair, harmonious, and peaceful nation. The implementation of this principle can counter the negative assumptions about Islam that underpin some people's anti-Islam views [61]. Efforts to implement the principle in madrasahs can begin with the creation of school rules and regulations that are fair to everyone in the madrasah and should be applied consistently. The justice practiced by teachers when dealing with students from many different backgrounds is also an essential focus of the principle. Its implementation will inspire and set an example for children in the future.

4.1.5 Amar al-Ma'ruf Nahi al-Munkar

Amar al-ma'ruf nahi al-munkar (enjoining what is right and forbidding what is wrong) is required in the Qur'an Surah Ali Imron (verse 110) in order for Muslims to become "the best ummah." Muslims must make every effort to do good deeds (*ma'ruf*) and to avoid despicable actions (*munkar*). All Muslims are expected to encourage good deeds that are beneficial for other people and to refrain from bad deeds that can demean life values [55]. The

effort to implement *amar al-ma'ruf nahi al-munkar* became the main missionary movement of NU and Muhammadiyah in order to ensure a peaceful and prosperous life, and it needs to be instilled in the young through education. It is crucial to the effort to prove that Islam is neither a threat nor a home for crime, as is often alleged [62].

Madrasahs must continuously develop learning activities that can motivate students to cultivate virtues (*amar ma'ruf*) and to refrain from vile and despicable deeds (*nahi munkar*). Teachers are exemplary figures for students in the implementation of this principle. The practice of religious observance in madrasahs, which is related directly both to Allah (*mahdhoh*) and to society (*ijtimaiyyah*), is a means of encouraging good deeds (*amar ma'ruf*). *Nahi munkar* can be taught to children by creating a pleasant learning environment that is free from physical and psychological violence.

4.2 The Programs of Madrasah Against's Radicalism

The spread of the seeds of radicalism in schools is a ticking time bomb that threatens the integrity of the nation. It requires the government body responsible for educational institutions in Indonesia to take concrete action immediately. The implementation of moderate Islam is one of the appropriate strategies for preventing the growth of this dangerous idea [63]. In this context, the Ministry of Religion of Indonesia has responded by designing a strategic program to mainstream moderate Islam through educational institutions under its control. Madrasahs became one of the mission spearheads through the introduction of resistance programs to the onslaught of radicalism.

The cultivation of moderate Islam through madrasahs needs to be directed to three religious domains - theology, *fiqh* (Islamic jurisprudence), and *tasawwuf* (Sufism) [36] - which need to be taught in a balanced way that avoids both radical and liberal-secular extremism. This strategy can foster the withering away of extremism and strengthen the development of a tolerant, peace-loving generation of Muslims who can live harmoniously amid diversity. Twelve programs to moderate mainstream Islam in madrasahs have been designed to combat radicalism. These are shown in Table 1.

Table 1: Deradicalization Programs in Madrasahs

No.	Program	Implementation	
		2017	2018
1	Prepare a module in multicultural education for MI, MTs, and MA students by providing readings about Islam as a *rahmatan lil 'alamin* (a mercy to all creation) religion.	√	-
2	Hold a National Madrasah Scout Campsite (PPMN) to instill national values and love for the Unitary State of the Republic of Indonesia (NKRI).	√	-
3	Encourage students to support Madrasah BERSINAR (*Bersih*/Clean, *Sehat*/Healthy, *Inklusif*/Inclusive, *Aman*/Safe, and *Ramah*/Friendly).	√	-

No.	Program	Implementation	
		2017	2018
4	Organize an event to hone and channel the interests and talents of students in both academic and artistic fields within the Ministry of Religion. This event was carried out through the Madrasah Arts and Sports Competition (AKSIOMA) and the Madrasah Science Competition (KSM) from the regional to the national level.	√	-
5	Provide information about multicultural education to the heads of madrasahs in order for them to understand and can transmit it to the teachers.	√	-
6	Hold international seminars on the prevention of global radicalism through primary and secondary education to provide balanced perceptions and produce a strategic formula for the global eradication of radicalism in education.	√	-
7	Develop guidelines for assessment and encouragement of students' attitudes and behaviours, which can be used by teachers to assess and address students' extremist behaviours.	-	√
8	Design various forms of extracurricular activities based on moderate values to develop tolerance.	-	√
9	To design the guidelines for the Counseling and Guidance Service (BK) for teachers to instil the value of *rahmatan lil 'alamin* to provide optimal support for students who are identified as potentially holding extreme attitudes concerning religion, the state, and national polity, and social life.	-	√
10	To design guidelines for the Counseling and Guidance service (BK) for teachers and students. The guidelines serve as a manual for teachers to guide students who are prone to radicalism or extremism.	-	√
11	To design guidelines to detect extreme teachings in madrasahs. The guidelines explain ways of detecting extreme teachings and attitudes among students and staff.	-	√
12	Provide information through curriculum innovation about the policies of deradicalization and mainstreaming to the Heads of Division, Section Chiefs, and Heads of Madrasahs.	-	√

Source: Adapted from the Ministry of Religion of the Republic of Indonesia 2018

The efforts of the Ministry of Religion to develop peaceful Islam in Indonesia need to be appreciated. The 12 programs shown in table 1 are the first steps to presenting the real Islam, which is a religion that does not acknowledge the violence but spreads benevolence and compassion for all people and the universe. The programs should be continued via strategic policies that are concrete, directed, and sustainable. Therefore, it is necessary to conduct comprehensive research to provide a firm foundation for the efficacy of the policies. For example, the

theological foundation underlying the programs should be examined to determine whether the authentic Islamic teachings have been used to develop the programs. It is crucial because the theological foundation of moderate Islam that comes from authentic sources will be more easily embedded in the heart and, thus, help to produce moderate attitudes in the public realm.

The 12 programs focus sharply on two essential themes: the use of peaceful ideology without violence in religious practices; and the need to strengthen the contemporary lives of Muslims through science and technology, democracy, human rights, multiculturalism, and tolerance. One theme, however, remains somewhat underdeveloped. This theme relates to the cultivation of rational thinking and a contextual approach to understanding the sources of Islamic teachings [36], [52], [64]. It is necessary to understand text (*nash*) that is open to interpretation (*dzanniyyud dilalah*), especially *nash* related to the relationship between fellow human beings (*hablum minan nas*). This theme is an integral part of the effort to moderate mainstream Islam in Indonesia. At the lowest level, the theme can be addressed by providing a basic understanding of the methods of rational thinking with a contextual approach to students who have reached a formal operational stage of development.

The themes of Islamic moderatism in the context of Indonesia need to be grounded in authentic theology to avoid careless claims that merely relate to refraining from extremist actions. Without authentic theology as a strong foundation, the programs are unlikely to be supported by stakeholders and may produce a superficial understanding of moderate Islam that can be quickly challenged by radical pragmatic influences. Hilmy refers to such understandings as the soft and fluid constructs of moderatism, which can turn moderation into radicalism if other, more convincing, or pragmatically advantageous conceptions are presented [52]. It occurs because the internal control towards moderation, rooted in a definite theology, has not been developed. On the other hand, the conception of moderate Islam based on authentic theology will generate firmly moderate religious attitudes because it is an expression of faith, not just a manifestation of shallow ideas.

Authentic theology provides the basis for the development of a framework that guides the determination of aims and objectives, the formulation of strategies, and the implementation of the programs (the main activities, and steps) or policies every madrasah must carry out. Such a blueprint based on authentic theology has not yet been developed by the Ministry of Religion of Indonesia. It needs to be formulated, reviewed, curated, and formatted by a team of experts who represent the stakeholders of the madrasahs. They are necessary to accommodate the different characteristics of the four main types of madrasahs in Indonesia, namely: public madrassas, private madrasahs managed by the NU, private madrasahs managed by Muhammadiyah, and private madrasahs managed by other organizations *(Al-Irsyad, Al-Khairaat, Al-Washliyah, Jam'iyatul Matlaul Anwar, Nahdlatul Wathan (NW), Persis, and Tarbiyah Islamiyah)*. As a result of the differences between them, each madrasah should be engaged in designing an acceptable blueprint that is supported by stakeholders to serve as a platform to moderate mainstream Islam in madrasahs.

A blueprint designed using authentic theology begins with an outline of authentic Islamic teachings, not merely accommodative responses based on Indonesian culture. The draft is later discussed in a forum involving stakeholders from all different organizational backgrounds. When the foundation of moderate Islam based on authentic theology is well developed as consensus, the blueprint should be disseminated to all stakeholders of the madrasahs. The stakeholders' understanding of moderate Islam can spread well moderate Islam through madrasahs.

NU and Muhammadiyah have started to develop the principles of Islamic moderation based on authentic theology within the social, cultural, and political context of Indonesia. They can serve as an inspiration in the effort to realize the mainstreaming of moderate Islam in madrasahs. The ASWAJA and NU doctrines, as well as Muhammadiyah's ideology of progressive Islam (*din al hadlarah*), can be used as references in the design of the blueprint. It is because these two organizations have excellent track records, namely: 1) they support pluralism and tolerance; 2) they have always rejected hardliners who advocate violence in their religious views and attitudes; 3) they have always opposed radical groups' views on an Islamic state; and 4) they are loyal supporters of the Republic of Indonesia (NKRI) based on *Pancasila* and the 1945 Constitution because NKRI is seen to accommodate all substantive elements of moderate Islamic teachings that emphasize the benefits for all people in the universe (*rahmat lil 'âlamîn)* [47], [52].

4.3 Essential Issues in Formulating Strategies to Mainstream Moderate Islam in Madrasahs

Several important issues need to be addressed in the process of formulating relevant strategies in the blueprint. These are elaborated below:

First, human resources need to have good understanding and behaviours as moderate Muslims. A deep understanding of moderate Islam is essential because the knowledge and insights of the madrasahs' human resources, especially teachers, will influence the learning process. The effort to instill moderate Islam will fail if the madrasahs' human resources do not have an in-depth understanding of moderate Islam. Concerning the 12 programs of the Ministry of Religion of Indonesia mentioned above, the programs need to be made more concrete and sustainable. Activities that can be carried out for this purpose include training or continuing professional development programs around the understanding of moderate Islam by the framework that has been developed.

Second, examples of moderate Islam by teachers must be strengthened. The learning activities led by teachers have a significant impact on the formation of children's ways of thinking and character [65]. Children frequently prefer to refer to what their teachers have explained or modelled rather than other sources. Children tend to look up to their teachers as exemplary figures in daily life. Moreover, people today put their trust in madrasahs to educate their children for a variety of reasons. Concerning the mainstreaming of moderate Islam, teachers and the academic community in madrasahs have a central role to play. Therefore, before educating children to become the generation of moderate Muslims, teachers must demonstrate exemplary character as moderate Muslims. This step is closely related to programs 5, 6, and 12 in Table 1, although it must be extended to include teachers in the various types of madrasahs.

Fourth, moderate attitudes must have become customary. Habit is the key to the inculcation of values and moral education, despite the criticism that moral education through habituation ignores the development of students' critical reasoning and independence [66]. This criticism is significant and needs to be addressed. One way of doing this is to provide room for dialogue among students to discuss what they do as habits. Concerning the cultivation of the educational values of moderate Islam, teachers must be able to be excellent facilitators in the habituation process. Habituation is closely related to the examples set by teachers and the madrasahs' management, as previously noted. This step is linked to the programs numbered 3, 7, 8, 9, and 10 in Table 1, whose implementation requires continuous monitoring. Consequently, detailed guidelines for the monitoring and evaluation of the programs need to be formulated.

Fifth, the values of moderate Islam based on authentic theology need to be integrated into intra-curricular and extra-curricular activities in madrasahs. This issue is addressed in programs 8 and 12 by developing strategies that are supported by the stakeholders in the madrasahs. How moderate Islamic values based on authentic theology should be integrated with intr-curricular and extracurricular activities in detailed and clear guidance. It needs to be addressed urgently by the Ministry of Religion of the Republic of Indonesia.

4.4 The Effectiveness of the 12 Programs to Mainstream Moderate Islam in Madrasahs

The effectiveness of the 12 programs has not been measured clearly, because of the absence of the mainstreaming moderate Islam blueprint. It leads to uncertainty about what the programs have and have not achieved. Research conducted by Convey Indonesia at schools and madrasahs identified three ways in which radical Islam enters schools/madrasahs, namely, alumni, teachers, and school policies. This finding has implications for the policies applied at the school/madrasah level and the Ministry level. The research identified areas of policy weakness at the school/madrasah level. The active role of the schools/madrasahs in preventing radicalism is open to question because they are exposed to radicalizing elements. The absence of clear and practical policies limits the ability of the heads of the schools/madrasahs to screen external parties who are charged with teaching Islam. For example, some alumni provide students with a hardline Islamic mentoring program through ROHIS (Islamic Spirituality Organization). Further, some madrasa teachers who attempt to sneak radical Islam into their classes escape monitoring. They can lead to the development of radical attitudes among students [67], [18].

Research has also revealed the availability of popular literature for young people that popularizes and indoctrinates radical Islamic ideology. At least five types of Islamic literature can be easily accessed by the young generation. *First,* Jihadi literature describes Islam concerning wars or threats from enemies who want to destroy Islam. This literature encourages Muslims to perform *jihad* using weapons and to attack symbols of Islam's enemies. *Second*, *Tahriri* literature seeks to convince Muslims that they have been colonialized by non-Islamic powers. *Third*, *Salaf's* literature emphasizes the necessity for fundamental purification and a literal interpretation of the Qur'an and Sunnah, as well as the Companions of the Prophet and his pious predecessors (*al-salaf al-shalih*). *Fourth*, *Tarbawi* literature attempts to actualize the *Tarbiyah* movement, which was inspired by the political and religious movement *Ikhwanul Muslimin* in Egypt. *Fifth*, popular Islamic literature emphasizes personal piety and reflects conservatism and literalism [68]. It indicates the need for the publication of Islamic literature that reflects a peaceful and non-violent orientation. Accordingly, the Ministry's program 1 in Table 1 needs to be improved in terms of quality and quantity in order to stem the dominance of popular literature that indoctrinates a radical Islamic ideology.

In summary, the 12 programs had not been able to eradicate the factors that contribute to the growth of Islamic radicalism in madrasahs. The elements that were the source of the spread of radicalism include, among others: teachers, alumni, school policies, and popular literature for school-age youth. They indicated the need for strategic policies to be developed to prevent Islamic radicalism from spreading in madrasahs. As well, guidelines must be put in place to monitor and evaluate efforts to mainstream moderate Islam and to follow up on the results. The Ministry of Religion should produce comprehensive guidelines that clearly explain the mechanisms for such

monitoring, evaluation, and follow-up. For instance, a madrasah that deviates and demonstrates a radical orientation can be identified and provided with guidance to return to the moderate path laid out in the blueprint.

V. CONCLUSION

The madrasah's strategy against radicalism in Indonesia was to moderate mainstream Islam among students. One strategy that had been held by the government was the implementation of 12 deradicalization programs. The efforts should be appreciated although two crucial problems were found. *First*, the programs were not able to exclude strategic elements that contribute to the growth of Islamic radicalism. *Second*, the program did not yet have a trustworthy and reliable foundation of authentic theology. As a result, it is threatened by a lack of support from stakeholders and runs the risk of producing a generation of "unprepared" moderate Muslims. They have made the programs potentially unsustainable because the absence of authentic theology reduces support from the stakeholders in the madrasahs who come from different backgrounds.

Nevertheless, the programs were valuable and should be continued with some improvements to enhance their effectiveness. The essential step in this context was to develop a blueprint that could eliminate those elements that potentially contributed to the spread of Islamic radicalism in madrasahs. The blueprint should be designed based on authentic theology that is supported by all stakeholders and should guide the implementation of the programs to achieve more concrete targets. The values of moderate Islam that had been developed by NU and Muhammadiyah were strategic points of reference that could be elaborated by the Ministry of Religion to develop the blueprint. The moderate values cultivated in NU schools/madrasahs through ASWAJA and in Muhammadiyah through *Al-Islam* and Muhammadiyah's teachings could provide a framework for the blueprint. However, in order to develop sustainable programs and garner support for them, it is vital to achieving consensus among the madrasahs' shareholders who come from different organizational backgrounds. If a mature blueprint is supported by the majority of madrasah administrators, the mainstreaming of moderate Islam will be more robust and effective.

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