BUILDING A DIGITAL-BASED (POST-PANDEMIC) MODERATE MUSLIM URBAN COMMUNITY: REFLECTION ON THE INTERPRETATION OF DA'WAH VERSES

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Abstract

Extremism is a common problem requiring resolution by various parties. One of the causes of extremism is the paradigm of primordialism and ethnocentrism, which asserts the superiority of individuals or groups and tends to demean others. In addition, socio-religious changes due to the Covid-19 pandemic also have intensified the situation of a pluralistic Indonesian society and have even permeated through cyberspace. Therefore, this study aimed to reflect on the interpretation of the verses calling for a response to the post-Covid-19 condition of Muslim urban communities. This study also aimed at maintaining the harmony of Indonesian society, specifically urban Muslims, while reinforcing a moderate attitude after the outbreak. A qualitative method was adopted using content analysis. The result showed that the reflection of these da'wah verses led to the importance of digital da'wah as a means of building (post-pandemic) moderate urban Muslim communities by upholding the goals of Islam, namely *rahmatan li al-'alamin*, and collective benefit. Six ways were identified in building a moderate, digital-based Muslim urban community. First, through media literacy and digital literacy, second, a preacher must have the courage to expose potential, third, grounding the content of moderation on social media, and fourth, forming a group of moderate-minded digital media account managers. The fifth is strengthening collaboration with influencers (people who are influential in social media) and the sixth is courteous communication.

Keywords: Covid-19; Da'wah Verses; Moderate; Urban Muslims.

A. Introduction

The emergence of Covid-19 in 2019 (Suryahadi *et al.* 2020) is implicating various sectors of human life internationally, including Indonesia. This disease affects health, economic, religious, social, educational, and tourism aspects (Lin *et al.* 2020, Suryahadi

et al. 2020, Isalamy 2021). Another coinciding problem with the emergence of Covid-19 is the weakening of moderation, which triggers the rise of extremism. According to previous studies, exaggerated attitudes or extremism have become the main motive for global or local violence and terrorist attacks (Rahman 2018, Suprianto 2022). The interpretation of "violence" is only shown physically and in non-physical forms, such as verbal. Both physical and non-physical violence have caused psychological and physical impacts on victims, resulting in the disruption of life stability. In certain circumstances, people experience anxiety (Murtiwidayanti & Ikawati, 2021) and live in fear of becoming victims of violence or being unable to meet the necessities of life. Eventually, individuals may experience the phenomenon of "overprotecting" which leads to over-protection.

The perspective of sociology identifies this phenomenon as primordialism and ethnocentrism. These two terms are often interpreted with high loyalty to ethnicity, race, religion, and culture. In addition to positively impacting principles and cultural identity, an excessive portion of primordialism or ethnocentrism also leads to negative impacts, overshadowing the essence and prominence of a group's existence. Degrading, intolerance, and insults, even in the physical realm can occur because of primordialism and ethnocentrism. Societies that are unable to maintain this attitude with the multicultural reality of Indonesian citizens trigger social conflicts, potentially disrupting the harmony of Indonesia as a nation (Prayitno et al., 2018). This phenomenon occurs in social settings and in religious life. However, the paradigms of primordialism and ethnocentrism have served as the embryo of complex problems, specifically in relation to the existence of Covid-19, requiring everyone to maintain the will of life and continue to live despite the limitations.

The urge to survive and respond to situations and circumstances caused by Covid-19 can be used as a medium to refine creativity to live in a limited life situation, including distance learning. It can also be used as a momentum for spreading the understanding of extremists. Based on a study conducted by *The Habibie Center*, extremist groups responded to Covid-19 by building a narrative that the pandemic was a punishment from God caused by unjust local or global governments (Rasyid et al., 2021). This result may lead the public to understand extreme behavior and government sentiment. At the highest level, violence and terrorism pose significant challenges and the continued escalation will hinder the government's goal to declare 2022 as the year of tolerance. Syatar et al. stated that at the basic level, the moderation in religious emergency is attributed to a superficial interpretation, guarding the soul (*hifdz al-nafs*), fiqh, and the rule of "*al-ashl fi al-mudar al-tahrim*"(the original law stating that anything unuseful is forbidden) (Abdul Syatar et al., 2020).

The result of the study showed that society is not moderate due to the inability to harmonize religious teachings with the situation and circumstances during the pandemic era. This situation generates the issue of SARA (ethnicity, religion, race, and inter-group relations), social inequality, and intolerance in the name of religion, giving the impression of no equality and unity as a nation. In contemporary times, these problems are present in the real world and also transformed in the virtual environment. For example, the era of digital disruption can stimulate an individual to be more creative and innovative but develop the seeds of extremism. Issues of religion, politics, and socio-culture are used as weapons to mobilize the masses. Fake news (hoaxes), provocative content, and hate speech also continue to appear in cyberspace. Conversely, extremism is now dominated by young people who incidentally are pioneers in the extra demographic of this country. A weak understanding of *wasathiyyah* and the rapid flow of information resulted in an inclusive society and the depletion of moderate attitudes. These conditions have influenced transcendental and social values, discouraging

individuals from adopting the path of *tabayyun* (clarification) and verification in responding to news content. In the absence of concerted efforts to address these challenges, societal cohesion and stability could be compromised.

Based on data released by databoks.katadata.co.id. in January 2022, internet users in Indonesia reached 204.7 million or 73.7% of the total population (Pahlevi 2022). The high data constructs and transforms positive attitudes into tools that are used to spread and practice extremism. Data from the Ministry of Communication and Information Technology of Indonesia (*Kominfo RI)* showed 20.443 accounts as terrorist content on social media on April 3, 2021 (Rizkinaswara, 2021). According to Commissioner General (*Komjen*) Boy Rafli Amar, 50% of social media postings contain expressions of intolerance and evil plans. This condition is a bitter reality of the concept of religious and cultural diversity in Indonesian society. Even the motto of *Bhinneka Tunggal Ika* and "religious society" are under scrutiny.

The crisis requires a good, efficient, relevant, immediate, and creative response. The absence of quick responses will retain the problem of moderation in urban society after the pandemic era. Therefore, the urgency of this study applies to building a post-pandemic moderate urban society. By examining the verses in the context of optimizing digital da'wah, this study aimed to interpret da'wah verses to produce realistic digital-based steps. Digital da'wah is interceded for forming a society based on the principles of Islamic teachings. Accordingly, it should be representative, innovative, and interactive (Nasution, 2019). Optimizing digital da'wah is a delivery method that is adapted to the conditions of modern society and also an actualization of religious teachings. According to the Hadith narrated by Abdullah bin Amr Ra, Rasulullah saw. stated, "Convey from me even if only one verse" (Narrated by al- Bukhārī) (Al-Bukhārī 1993). The Hadith shows that every human being is obliged to communicate religious teachings, including moderation and tolerance. Furthermore, this study aimed to reflect on the interpretation of da'wah verses as a way of responding to post-Covid-19 situations and conditions. The situation is socially related to optimizing digital da'wah toward a moderate society, by asking the question of "how to reflect on da'wah verses? and how to build a moderate Muslim urban society after Covid-19?"

B.   Methods

This is a qualitative study that adopted various literature as the basis data using ethnographic and content analysis. In addition to collecting data using a library study, a virtual ethnographic perspective was adopted. The principle of this virtual ethnographic approach is identifying and discovering the continuity of phenomena that have taken root in the offline world and transformed online. After collecting the data, it was then analyzed using content analysis, and verses that contained the ways of da'wah were selected. The results of this interpretation are reflected in responding as well as developing solutions for building a moderate urban society after the Covid-19 pandemic.

C.   Results and Discussion
1.   Results
Tracing the Roots of Urban Community Extremism during the Covid-19 Pandemic

The term "extremism" is a phenomenon stemming from a rigid interpretation of religious sources. Another factor that shapes extremism is the paradigm of primordialism and ethnocentrism. Primordialism is a firm attitude towards local values and norms since birth, including race, religion, customs, and beliefs. This attitude has both positive and negative effects on nationalism. The positive effect is the formation of

life patterns and social interaction based on individuals beliefs and cultural norms. However, it will turn negative when individuals refuse to accept differences in the surrounding environment, as are the circumstances. This primordialism is closely related to nationalism as an element, either as a strengthening or weakening factor. Meanwhile, ethnocentrism is a way of life that asserts individuals culture or group is the best. This trait is caused by five elements, namely biological differences, geography, social status, beliefs, and social norms (Coakley, 2018; Prayitno et al., 2018; Sari & Samsuri, 2020).

Primordialism is an exaggerated attitude toward self-locality, in terms of race, religion, belief, and culture. Despite the embodiment of Pancasila values in the Indonesian way of life, Indonesians are confronted with two alternatives. The first is the development of a tolerant society that allows for the coexistence of differences, while the second is leading society to self-based values. This ego-trait will not accept the opinions, views, and choices of others. When Covid-19 hit Indonesia, many paradigms became the foundation to interpret the situation, including various public responses (Hilmy & Niam, 2021). Individuals with a rigid understanding of fiqh argued that the government was preventing people from praying in congregations and worshiping. However, those with flexible fiqh convictions believed that the government was trying to protect the citizens from death. These two facts depart from individuals' belief in religious teachings. Some maintain the egoism of belief regardless of situations and conditions, while others are tolerant of individuals decisions. In cases where society fails to adapt to diverse conditions, the attitude of primordialism triggers social conflicts disrupting the harmony between humans (Rizqi, 2020).

The results of excessive primordialism and ethnocentrism trigger a belief that everyone must adopt to the opinion, which may lead to a domino effect. Consequently, activities that include beliefs, attitudes, feelings, actions, and strategies from one character go beyond the normal (Aliah et al., 2018). The benchmark of "going beyond the bounds of the ordinary" is reflected in the absence of conformity to the essence of religion or the type of government in a country to people's behavior. There is a relationship between the quality of understanding religion and social reality. This attitude of extremism is engendered by a bad understanding of one of these two elements. Balance and collaboration of perspectives are important to campaign to create a moderate society. Furthermore, an excessive belief in religious views and behavior, as well as judging other individuals religions as wrong is the first root of extremism. According to Masykuri Abdillah, extremism is religious understanding and behavior that believes only in the understanding, while considering others as wrong and must be resisted or oppressed (Alkatiri, 2018).

The religious diversity of urban society gives rise to various ways to express religious teachings, specifically Islam. This implies that there is competition in identifying religious characteristics as a representation of each other's identity. This condition turns into a parasite in the socio-religious domain and fosters exclusivity, as individuals perceive understanding to be most correct. One of the factors that led to urban society's religious views is the instantaneous acquaintance with religion without any strong scientific link. This situation is even intensified by the massive use of the internet by urban communities. According to Kominfo (2013), urban communities have dominated internet use since 2013. The impact of this spontaneous and partial understanding of religion is that urban society does not have a comprehensive view of the essence of religion.

Individuals who understand the essence of religious teachings namely maintaining human dignity, worth, and civilization cannot be free from extremism,

when it is not balanced with a comprehensive understanding of the state consensus. For example, despite extensive study of religious teachings for years, individuals who violate the points of Pancasila, the 1945 Constitution, and the Unitary State of Indonesia (NKRI), widely accepted by the Indonesians are considered extremists. Religion should not serve as a pretext for the destruction of civilization, as the historical purpose has been the advancement and construction of society (Kemenag RI, 2019). Understanding Indonesianness and nationalism is important to balance the knowledge of religion essence. Religious beliefs that teach affection and love must also be instilled in urban society. This will foster a perspective that discerns actions devoid of love as not truly reflective of religious principles, but "under the guise" of religion. One of the elements to practice this belief is to realize that every individual has a homeland. The absolute state consensus is maintained in harmony with the core principles of each religion and does not interfere with the beliefs of adherents.

Extremists have sentiments against the government and are increasing due to the attitudes towards Covid-19. This includes adapting to government policies regarding pandemics (Said en Santosa 2021). There are three views of extremists towards the Covid-19 outbreak. *First*, to keep sympathizers from leaving the area and group. *Second*, Covid-19 is a medium for Allah's punishment that was shown to disbelievers. *Third*, the momentum to build a narrative and attack the enemy (Rasyid *et al.* 2021). Even though this view is a form of global extremism, the picture is not significantly different in the realm of Indonesia. For example, the leadership of *Jamaah Ansharut Daulah* (JAD) in the Java region affirmed that Covid-19 is a part of God's army. It is even positioned as God's punishment for Indonesian citizens. Based on this narrative, extremist groups continue to carry out actions to influence society with digital media, especially social media. This choice is justified and consistent with the enactment of PSBB (Large-Scale Social Restrictions) by the government in almost all regions.

The movement of community activities from the real to the virtual world provides an opportunity for extremists to spread teachings digitally. The content displayed tends to be an imbalance between the understanding of religion and the existing reality. Therefore, straightening and balancing "understanding" is the foundation for building a moderate society, which is consistent with the purpose of Allah SWT. In QS. Al-Baqarah verse 143, Allah SWT. stated "Thus We have appointed you a middle nation, that ye may be witnesses against mankind, and that the messenger may be a witness against you".

According to al-Baghawi (d. 510 H), the word *wasathan* (middle) means fairness and choice (Al-Baghawi, 1997). Based on this interpretation, al-Zamakhsyari (d. 683 H) (Al-Zamakhsyarī, 1407 H) stated that the word *wasathan* can be used as singular (*mufrad*), plural (*jama'*), female (*muannath*), and male (*mudzakka*r). Through the analysis of the language, al-Zamakhsyari constructs that a just or moderate attitude is in religion and covers all aspects of life. This is exemplified by the pronunciation of "wasathan," exhibiting uniformity across diverse word categories, thereby maintaining equitable and impartial application. From the perspective of tafseer maqashidi, the presence of the word *wasathan* aims at giving the impression that a "balanced nature" is not confined to just one aspect of life. The broad definition of justice does not generalize things but can position something according to the situation and circumstances. In the previous verse, Allah wants people on this earth to give something according to portion. The complexity is in accomplishing this task amidst the diverse array of creations ordained by Allah, such as in the context of knowledge comprehension. A just person will use that understanding deeply in any circumstance and situation. This fair attitude escapes extremists when responding to the arrival of the Covid-19 pandemic. The implication of having a just nature and being the selected people is the formation of a good society. The

community can position itself between extremists and liberals, namely *al-ghuluwwu* and *al-taqṣir.*

The urgency of having fairness in all aspects of life requires maintaining religious principles. Therefore, fairness and balance are the principles of moderate religion. Fair means putting everything in place, while balance is a disposition consistently positioned between two poles. Extreme people are willing to act in God's name but ignore the human aspect. These individuals are willing to kill each other "in the name of God", even though protecting humanity is the core of just religious teachings.

One of the actions that are not based on humanity is intolerance. It is human nature to be created as diverse and plural creatures, necessitating tolerance in all matters. Moreover, in Indonesia, there is diversity in religion, ethnicity, race, culture, and language. This fact is still used as the seed of extremism in religion. Some events that are still remembered include instances, such as the disruption of a church congregation in Bekasi Regency in 2020 and the expulsion of Muslims who were worshiping a holiday (Eid al-Fitr) in Tolikara in 2015 (Said 2017, Indonesia 2020).

Trends in cases of extremism before and during the Covid-19 pandemic have similarities, without significant differences that are not significantly different. For example, the case in September 2020 in Aceh where the government banned religious leaders' houses in the form of a warning to stop construction (Admin 2020). A similar incident occurred in Mojokerto in the form of a ban on the heads of the community from putting up religious symbols and turning houses into places of worship (Santoso 2020, Rasyid *et al.* 2021). A form of intolerance occurs in Bekasi for those who are in direct contact with the Covid-19 situation, which is experienced by one family due to the prevention from praying at home. According to Setiawan (2020), this ban stems from social restrictions. Examining the instances that have transpired, it becomes evident that the issue of extremism stems from divergent interpretations of religious doctrines concerning others, notwithstanding the guidance provided in the Qur'an by Allah SWT. On the principles of interfaith interaction and respect. This is stated in QS. al - An'am verse 108 that "*Do not curse (the worship of) what they worship besides Allah because they will later curse Allah by going beyond the limit without (basic) knowledge. Therefore, appealing to each community are their deeds. Then to their Lord their return, then He will tell them what they have done*".

According to Ibn Abbas, the *asbab nuzul* of the verse talks about the preaching of the Prophet and the believers who insult the God of the polytheists. After that incident, the polytheist spoke to the Prophet to stop preaching messages perceived as offensive, otherwise, there will be retaliation (Kaŝīr 1419 H, Al-Ṭabarī 2001). Ibn 'Athiyah (d. 542 H), on al-Muharrar al-Wajiz, emphasized that it is not permissible for a Muslim to insult religion and the cross -God- of infidels, denigrate and insult certain religious figures or sacred symbols. This type of activity was caused by religious fanaticism ('Aṭiyyah 1422 H). The attitude of religious fanaticism can lead to contempt for religion, violence, and discrimination, and will even divide unity in Indonesia (Nurjanah en Wibowo 2021). Therefore, insulting symbols of other religions is illegal because it hurts individuals, the life of the nation, and the state.

Intolerance does not only occur in aspects of private worship rituals but also in the social realm. Cases of rejecting the bodies of Covid-19, selecting the distribution of aid based on religion, the exclusion of patients, and not even being motivated to help others are also included in cases of intolerance. Both in terms of religion and society, intolerance occurs because people do not have extensive knowledge about the importance of building togetherness amid differences and awareness to maintain human values. The attitudes of extremist also arise because of the erroneous interpretation of "tolerant" in

religion. Extreme people do not have a stand for the beliefs, but are willing to follow the main rituals of other religions for reasons of tolerance. Even though being moderate is enough to respect others and not disturb the peace of others.

The problem of extremism is transformed into a part of cyberspace. The freedom of digital space provides an opportunity for some groups to spread extremism, which endangers the lives of people who are affected by digital media. The order of attitudes (personal norms) and social norms was damaged, thereby impacting bad social and cultural systems. Based on data released by the equivalent institute (2021), there were 32 cases of reported religious blasphemy in 2020, and 27 were based online (in the network) (Setara 2021). The case that happened to Muhammad Kece showed that intolerance has become an acute problem (antarnews 2021) and the impact will change the religious system and order of Indonesian society known as friendly and tolerant Islam. The diversity of humanity created by Allah SWT. is not intended for mutual insult, disparagement, or disrespect. However, it is meant to foster mutual understanding, cultivate brotherhood, and promote love. QS. al-Hujurat verse 13 stated "*O mankind, verily We have created you from a male and a female. Then, we made you nations and tribes so that you may know each other. Indeed, the most honorable among you in the sight of Allah are the most pious of people. Surely Allah is All-Knowing, All-Seerful*".

In general, this verse talks about the etiquette of believers towards all human beings. This is a form of application of the science of *munasabah* (correlation) verses 11, 12, and 13 QS. al-Hujurat. According to al-Zuhayli (d. 2015), this verse shows similarities between humans and also prohibits boasting of offspring to ensure that differences and multiculturalism are a necessity in life (Al-Zuhailī 1418 H). This is respected by Islam, as practiced by the Prophet in the Medina charter. Multiculturalism has relevance to Islamic teachings, including tolerance, peace, and justice (Akhmadi 2019), which are not only realized in the world. The topics are real and must be grown in life in cyberspace. Therefore, building a moderate urban society must include cyberspace which incidentally becomes a new space for interaction and building civilization. This proposition emphasizes that digital da'wah must continue to be attempted and optimized.

Reflections on the Interpretation of Da'wah Verses: from Conventional to Digital Da'wah

Da'wah is the need of the people to express religious teachings and principles. In fact, da'wah can also be used as propaganda or a moment to influence others. It is an attempt to communicate to both individuals and groups the Islamic perspective on human life (Hasanah 2021). Meanwhile, according to Asman et al., da'wah is an effort to improve a new civilization for humans (Fathurrrahman *et al.* 2021). The description provides an understanding that it is a religious effort carried out by individuals to improve and renew the life of the community. The function of preaching can be understood as an effort to preserve the life of the community to ensure happiness and harmony. In addition, da'wah works to save people from all things that can lead to destruction (Nasution 2019). Allah SWT. stated in QS. Ali Imran verse 104. "*There should be among you a group of people who call to virtue, enjoin (doing) what is good, and forbid what is bad. They are the lucky ones*".

According to al-Maraghi (d. 1371 H), in Tafsir al-Maraghi, the verse contains three commands, namely perfection of individuals, carry out all orders, and avoid prohibitions (Al-Marāgī 1946). Explicitly, the three commandments are the meaning of da'wah aimed at protecting the law and sharia. In addition, da'wah is one of the processes of achieving individual good with collective benefits. This is consistent with

the expression of Lestari that da'wah is an activity that aims at inviting the community to goodness and forbid evil, either in verbal, writing, and painting. It also includes actions using methods and media that are bounded by Islamic principles to achieve human happiness in this world and the hereafter (Lestari 2020).

The statement positioned da'wah as a process and is also directly related to the methods and media used by individuals in preaching. Success in achieving goals necessitates the creativity of individuals. Therefore, the methods and media used in preaching cannot be separated from objectives. The methods and media must still rely on the basic concept of Islam, namely *rahmatan li al-'alamin*. This is consistent with the words of God in QS. al-Nahl verse 125 that "*Call (humans) to the way of your Lord with wisdom and good teaching and debate them in a better way. Indeed, your Lord is the one who knows best who strays from His way and He (also) knows best who got the hint*".

The basic concept of Islam should be the basis for preachers to determine the methods and media used. In general, da'wah had three methods, namely verbal, written, and behavioral. Verbal methods include lectures, discussions, questions and answers, counseling, and propaganda (persuasion). The writing method is carried out with various printed mass media, such as books, magazines, newspapers, pamphlets, and others. Furthermore, behavioral da'wah is practiced by doing good deeds (Rukmana 2018). This is consistent with the Hadith of the Prophet Saw that: "*when you see evil then change it with your hands; if you are unable to do it, then use it verbally; but if you are still not strong enough, then (must deny) with your heart, because that is the weakest faith*" (Narrated Muslim) (Al-Ḥajjāj 1433).

The hadith shows the necessity of proactive measures in preaching, emphazing accommodation by offering a variety of methods designed to the capabilities of adherents. The emphasis is the importance of each individual participating in improving and renewing society. It is not a requirement to use all methods of da'wah, but select one. According to Qadhī 'lyadh, the Hadith pertains to the nature of transformation. Regarding the imperative for the individual effecting change, it is necessary to organize ways and methods that allow for changes in the object being, either verbally or in action (Al-Nawawī 1392). This interpretation opens the way for a preacher to be creative and innovative in conveying the contents of da'wah to change what is bad, and strengthen what is already good. Along with the development and progress of the times, the changing nature conveyed by the Hadith experiences flexibility of interpretation. It is not surprising that digital da'wah, in the perspective of reflection on da'wah verses, tries to provide a touch and implementation of what has been expressed by Qadhī 'lyadh.

In addition to the method, the success of da'wah is closely related to the media being used. Therefore, the optimization of methods and media are two aspects that must be fulfilled in building good da'wah. One of the media of da'wah in contemporary times is digital. According to Santi et al., digital is something related to technology. The existence of "digital da'wah" shows that the delivery of Islamic religious teachings always blends with the progress of the times and is not rigid (Hadiono *et al.* 2021). This shows that Islam is open to innovation, provided it is consistent with the universal values of Islam In addition, digital da'wah can be an alternative amid the massive needs of society to digital platforms toward digital culture.

The existence requires awareness of the people concerned about the relationship between da'wah as an obligation and digital as a means of da'wah. This shows that da'wah has two principles, namely *tsawabit* and *mutaghayyirat*. *Tsawabit* is a fixed and definite principle, for example, inviting the good, preventing evil, and prioritizing compassion, balance, and tolerance. Meanwhile, *mutaghayyirat* is a changeable principle and flexibly adapted to the circumstances. For example, preaching through wayang

media during the *Wali Songo* period and digital preaching in modern era.

Changes and replacements of da'wah media in Islam aim at maintaining the quality of the teachings, not merely destroying da'wah principles themselves. The presence of digital preaching facilitates the spread of compassion, moderation, and peace messages. This is because the nature of digital da'wah is flexible and not bound by time, thereby saving time. In addition, digital da'wah is an attempt of preachers to ground Islam that is not rigid and open by the principle of renewal, namely "Maintaining the good old traditions, and making new things that are better."

The principle should be upheld by individuals who are obliged to preach, specifically in terms of moderation. Kirana en Garadian (2020), moderation is described by religious groups that prioritize the balance of mind (and revelation), and pay attention to the basic principles of maintaining the common good. The invitation to form a moderate Muslim urban community after the Covid-19 pandemic should be of concern to all levels of society and related institutions to use digital media. The tendency and habits of people during the pandemic to spend time in the "digital world" are the strongest reasons for the importance of digital da'wah. Tracing back acts of extremism shows occurrence in the cyberspace and real world. The movement is then shown in digital space with the aim of existence or as a selection of group members. This shows that digital da'wah has a dual function in building a moderate society. First, it promotes moderation in interactions and actions in the real world. Second, it fosters a healthy and moderate digital communication platform, rather than serving as a conduit for instilling extremist ideologies and behaviors. Therefore, "digital" is free of values and laws, it is necessary to be optimized in its context and function as a medium of da'wah moderation.

2. Discussion
Intensification of Digital Da'wah to Form a Moderate Urban Society

Broadly speaking, the intensification of digital da'wah is a simple abstract effort in optimizing digital media. Therefore, it needs to be shaped into concrete steps in the context of building a moderate Muslim urban society after the Covid-19 pandemic. This effort can be realized in several ways such as *first*, through media and digital literacy. The word "literacy" is defined as individuals ability to read and write, characterized by the ability to make brief life statements. Literacy is also related to the ability to locate, evaluate, use, and communicate through various resources, including text, visual, sound, and video resources (Sumadaria 2014).

The term "media literacy" means that individuals must have the knowledge, interpretation, and ability to understand media content. Accordingly, it is directed at building a joint cultural and intellectual awareness movement about the importance of addressing the flow of media information to ensure life benefits. The existence of media literacy builds "preachers" to produce counter-narratives of extremists. In addition, the public must also have the ability to analyze, identify, and verify any present information, to ensure that the content of extremist has no effect. For example, preachers must look at phenomena that occur in the digital world before producing da'wah content, specifically those that have nothing to do with moderation. This allows for the provision of an overview and evaluation to the public about the negative content. In the context of society (as consumers of content/objects of da'wah), media literacy skills can be carried out by studying and diligently asking questions in the presence of sketchy information.

Digital literacy is the ability to use information technology and digital facilities appropriately in managing, assessing, developing, and communicating content or information effectively and properly (Restianty 2018). Digital literacy must be possessed by a preacher to maximize the moderation of content because each media has different

facilities. For example, preachers are smart in using social media and can take advantage of every menu, allowing for the development of interesting content that is right on target. This first step is the actualization of the Q.S. al-'Alaq verses 1-5 emphasize the activities of reading, writing, and observation. *Second*, a preacher must have the courage to expose potential. The digital world focused on individuals creativity and productivity encourages the exploration and maximization of abilities with no exception for preachers. After building media and digital literacy, preachers must have the courage to show abilities and potential. This is also related to expertise in one field of knowledge and development ability. Preachers can convey a message of moderation without video or sound but in writing. This can be found on the Instagram account @nadirsyahosen_official, where the majority of the content contains photos of Gus Nadir and short posts. This second step is based on the obligation of preaching for each individual and human nature has its potential.

Third, optimize moderate content creation, which is a digital world marketing strategy. The sophistication of "equipment" in the digital era should be used as an incentive to develop more interesting content. The creation of this content requires an understanding of something to be communicated. If the message of moderation is material, then you must have an understanding of moderation. Afterward, the preacher should understand the status and condition of the object or target of da'wah. This will affect the creation of the content, whether in the form of text, sound, images, or video. This third step also relates to the packaging of the content, either in a satirical, stilted, or even humorous form, but the message reaches the object of da'wah.

Fourth, form a digital media account management group. This includes both digital and conventional preaching, which is often found by management groups, specifically in the digital world. Optimizing digital da'wah talks about content and moderation messages, as well as relating to the group included. This third step also shows that digital da'wah is efficient and effective when there is synergy between groups. This is based on the limitations of preachers in managing da'wah content in digital domain. For non-millennial preachers, this digital preaching is often an obstacle. Therefore, young and old are required to form groups to realize a moderate urban Muslim society.

Fifth, strengthen cooperation with influencers, who have the power to influence other people's decision-making due to authority, knowledge, position, or relationship with the audience (followers) (Anjani en Irwansyah 2020). The reach of individuals influence in the digital world, specifically internet-based, is partly due to the number of followers. With an increasing number of followers, the dissemination of content expands, reaching a wider audience. Accordingly, it is essential for preachers to harness the potential of these influencers, fostering collaboration, or for influencers themselves to convey messages of moderation. For example, government agencies, Community Organizations (Ormas), and Youth Organizations (OKP) which are directly related to institutional responsibility can hook influencers in campaigning messages of moderation. *Sixth*, convey courteous communication, which reflects on the interpretation of QS. al-Nahl verse 125 that building a moderate Muslim urban community must be done with well-mannered communication patterns. Whatever media is used, conventional or digital, respectful communication is the main key.

D. Conclusion

In conclusion, the understanding and attitudes of extremism in society must be resolved properly and wisely. The presence of digital da'wah provided a convincing prospect for realizing a moderate society. This was because the concept of digital da'wah was an embodiment of the core teachings and objectives of Islam, namely *rahmatan li al-*

'*alamin,* and collective benefit. Optimizing digital da'wah from an Islamic perspective adhered to the principle of maintaining good old traditions and adopting better habits. This principle was directed at making Muslim urban communities better and prosperous in the world and the hereafter. Furthermore, this understanding was a reflection of da'wah verses that discussed the process and the importance of inviting conventional to digital-based. Reflection on the da'wah verses must be concretely realized to develop a moderate Muslim urban society through six ways. *First*, media literacy and digital literacy; *second*, preachers should have the courage to expose potential, *third*, by grounding content moderation on social media, *fourth*, forming a digital media account management group, *fifth*, strengthening cooperation with influencers, and *sixth*, courteous communication. These six efforts were expected to provide an injection of enthusiasm for the community, specifically preachers, to optimize digital equipment as a propaganda medium. With these efforts in place, it was not impossible that the aspiration of declaring 2022 as the "year of tolerance" could be achieved soon.

E.   Acknowledgments

F.   Author Contributions Statement

This study consists of three authors who have the respective roles. Two authors live in Jakarta and one in Manchester while completing his doctoral studies. Jauhar Azizy was the initiator of the study, compiled and designed the analysis, and proposed a joint study with partners. Sihabussalam collaborated on data collection, work on reference management, and contribution. Desmaliza collaborated to develop reference management study instruments and analytical tools. All authors cooperated in collecting data, analyzing data, and reading to approve the final manuscript.

G.   References

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