



Student Resilience against Exposure to Digital Radicalism: The Role of Islamic Religious Education Teachers and Progressive *Rohis* Extracurricular Activities

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Abstract:

The proliferation of digital media has significantly shifted radicalization processes to online ecosystems, making adolescents highly vulnerable to extremist narratives. This study aims to analyze the synergistic roles of Islamic Religious Education (PAI) teachers and progressive Islamic spiritual extracurriculars (Rohis) in fostering student resilience against digital radicalism. Employing a narrative literature review approach, data were synthesized from peer-reviewed articles published in Google Scholar between 2019 and 2024. The findings reveal that combating digital extremism requires moving beyond restrictive measures toward building multidimensional cognitive, emotional, and social resilience. PAI teachers provide the essential theological foundation and digital literacy frameworks, while Progressive Rohis operationalizes these concepts through peer-led counter-narratives, inclusive social activism, and emotionally supportive environments. This collaborative mechanism effectively transforms students from passive consumers into active defenders of religious moderation. Ultimately, the study concludes that institutionalizing this educational synergy is crucial for policymakers to develop proactive, resilience-based strategies that empower youth to navigate the digital landscape safely and champion inclusive pluralism.

Keywords: Digital Radicalism; Student Resilience; Progressive Rohis.

Introduction

The proliferation of digital media has significantly transformed the landscape of ideological dissemination, shifting radicalization processes from physical spaces to digital ecosystems. Adolescents are increasingly exposed to extremist narratives through algorithmic echo chambers, targeted content, and unregulated online forums (Binder & Kenyon, 2022). This digital exposure often utilizes compelling visual media and simplified religious interpretations to recruit vulnerable youth, making the digital sphere a critical frontline in the prevention of radicalism (Ummah, 2020). Consequently, understanding how students navigate and resist these digital threats has become a pressing educational priority.

During adolescence, the psychological drive for identity formation and peer belonging renders students particularly susceptible to the absolutist and exclusionary narratives propagated by digital radical groups (Saputri et al., 2023). To counter this vulnerability, educational psychology emphasizes the development of student resilience—the capacity to adapt, critically evaluate, and bounce back from adverse ideological influences (Masten et al., 2022; Ronen, 2021; Zembylas, 2021). In the context of digital radicalism, resilience is not merely about avoiding harmful content, but cultivating the cognitive and emotional agility to deconstruct extremist narratives and maintain a moderate worldview (Ummah, 2020).

Within the formal educational structure, Islamic Religious Education (PAI) teachers play a pivotal role in fostering this resilience by integrating religious moderation (*wasathiyah*) into their pedagogy. Contemporary PAI educators are expected to transcend traditional rote learning, acting instead as facilitators of digital literacy and critical thinking who can contextualize religious texts against modern extremist claims (Palange, 2022). By employing dialogical approaches and promoting inclusive Islamic values, PAI teachers equip students with the theological and logical frameworks necessary to reject digital radicalism (Saichu et al., 2023).

Beyond the formal classroom, the Islamic spiritual extracurricular group (*Rohis*) serves as a crucial non-formal space for religious socialization. Historically, some *Rohis* groups have been criticized for fostering exclusivity, which can inadvertently mirror the insular dynamics of radical ideologies (Wildan, 2022). However, there is a growing paradigm shift toward "Progressive *Rohis*"—extracurricular entities that embrace inclusivity, social activism, and digital savvy. When guided by moderate principles, a Progressive *Rohis* functions as a powerful protective factor, utilizing peer-to-peer influence and digital counter-narratives to build collective resilience among students (Husna, 2020).

Despite the recognized importance of both formal and non-formal Islamic education, existing literature predominantly examines PAI teachers and student extracurriculars in isolation, often overlooking their synergistic potential in the digital realm. Furthermore, the specific mechanisms through which a *Progressive Rohis* collaborates with PAI teachers to build digital resilience remain underexplored (Nurhayati & Nurhidayah, 2019; Padil, 2018). Therefore, this study aims to bridge this gap by analyzing the synergistic roles of PAI teachers and Progressive *Rohis* in fostering student resilience against digital radicalism, providing empirical insights for designing more effective, collaborative, and digitally responsive religious education strategies.

Method

This study employs a narrative literature review approach to synthesize existing knowledge regarding student resilience against digital radicalism, specifically focusing on the roles of Islamic Religious Education (PAI) teachers and progressive *Rohis* (Islamic spiritual extracurriculars). Unlike a systematic literature review (SLR) that requires exhaustive, reproducible search protocols and statistical meta-analysis, this narrative approach allows for a more flexible, interpretive, and holistic

synthesis of diverse empirical and conceptual studies to build a comprehensive theoretical framework. The primary data source for this review is Google Scholar, selected for its extensive and inclusive coverage of both international peer-reviewed journals and regional educational research pertinent to the Indonesian Islamic education context. The literature search was strictly confined to publications between 2019 and 2024 to ensure the findings reflect the most current digital ecosystems, algorithmic trends, and post-pandemic educational dynamics. Key search strings utilized Boolean operators combining terms such as "digital radicalism" OR "online extremism," "student resilience" OR "youth digital resilience," "Islamic religious education" OR "PAI teacher," and "progressive *Rohis*" OR "inclusive Islamic extracurricular."

To ensure the relevance and academic rigor of the reviewed literature, specific inclusion and exclusion criteria were systematically applied during the screening process. Eligible studies comprised peer-reviewed journal articles, academic book chapters, and conference proceedings published in English or Indonesian that explicitly discussed digital extremism, youth psychological resilience, or Islamic educational interventions. Conversely, exclusion criteria were applied to filter out opinion pieces, non-academic articles, unpublished theses, and studies published prior to 2019 or those focusing solely on offline radicalization without a digital component. The final selection of literature was then analyzed using thematic analysis, wherein the texts were iteratively read, coded, and categorized into core themes aligned with the research objectives. These themes encompass the nature of digital radical exposure, the pedagogical and digital literacy strategies of PAI teachers, the transformative characteristics of progressive *Rohis*, and the synergistic mechanisms that collectively foster student resilience, ultimately providing a robust conceptual foundation for the study.

Results and Discussion

Mapping Digital Radicalism Exposure Among Students

The proliferation of digital media has fundamentally transformed the landscape of ideological dissemination, shifting radicalization processes from physical spaces to highly complex digital ecosystems. Adolescents are increasingly exposed to extremist narratives through algorithmic echo chambers, targeted content, and unregulated online forums that prioritize engagement over factual accuracy. This digital exposure frequently utilizes

compelling visual media and simplified religious interpretations to recruit vulnerable youth, making the digital sphere a critical frontline in the prevention of radicalism. Consequently, understanding how students navigate and resist these pervasive digital threats has become a pressing educational priority for researchers and practitioners alike. The psychological vulnerability of teenagers, combined with the persuasive nature of digital propaganda, necessitates a comprehensive approach to building robust cognitive and emotional defenses (Hughes et al., 2021; Kozyreva et al., 2020a).

Digital radicalism often manifests through subtle mechanisms such as the gamification of extremist ideologies, the spread of historical revisionism, and the weaponization of social justice issues to foster in-group hostility. Students frequently encounter these narratives not through explicit terrorist propaganda, but via seemingly benign content that gradually normalizes exclusionary theological viewpoints and intolerance toward diverse groups. The algorithmic nature of social media platforms exacerbates this issue by continuously feeding users content that aligns with their emerging biases, thereby creating insular echo chambers that reinforce radical perspectives. This phenomenon makes it exceptionally difficult for students to critically evaluate the information they consume, as the digital environment is specifically engineered to maximize emotional engagement rather than intellectual reflection (Arguel et al., 2019; Cladis, 2020; Liu et al., 2023).

Furthermore, the anonymity and borderless nature of the internet allow radical actors to bypass traditional community safeguards, directly targeting students in their personal digital spaces. The lack of effective digital moderation in many educational contexts means that students often rely on peer networks for information validation, which can inadvertently amplify extremist viewpoints if the peer group is susceptible to radical narratives. This exposure significantly impacts their worldview, potentially leading to social withdrawal, intolerance, and in severe cases, the willingness to engage in real-world violence. Therefore, mapping the specific pathways of digital radicalization is essential for designing targeted educational interventions that address the root causes of online vulnerability (Berjawi et al., 2023; Irfan et al., 2023; Mughal et al., 2023).

The Pedagogical Shift of PAI Teachers in Digital Literacy

In response to the escalating threat of digital radicalism, Islamic Religious Education teachers are undergoing a significant pedagogical shift from traditional knowledge transmission to active digital literacy facilitation. Contemporary educators recognize that merely teaching theological doctrines is insufficient; they must also equip students with the critical skills necessary to navigate the complex digital information landscape. This shift requires PAI teachers to integrate digital literacy components directly into their religious curriculum, ensuring that students can contextualize religious texts within the modern digital ecosystem. By doing so, teachers help students distinguish between authentic religious teachings and the distorted interpretations frequently propagated by online extremist groups (Sahin, 2018; Suyanto et al., 2022).

The integration of religious moderation into digital literacy education serves as a cornerstone of this pedagogical transformation. Teachers are increasingly utilizing case studies of online radicalization to stimulate critical discussions in the classroom, encouraging students to analyze the rhetorical strategies used by extremist content creators. This dialogical approach fosters an environment where students feel comfortable questioning dubious online religious claims without fear of judgment, thereby strengthening their theological foundation. Furthermore, teachers emphasize the concept of digital ethics in Islam, teaching students that their online behavior and content consumption are subject to moral and religious accountability (Afna, 2023; Kambali et al., 2023).

Beyond the classroom, PAI teachers are expanding their role to become digital mentors who actively monitor and guide students' online religious consumption. They utilize their own social media platforms to share moderate religious content, effectively creating a positive digital counter-narrative that competes with extremist material. This proactive engagement allows teachers to build stronger rapport with students, making them more approachable when students encounter confusing or disturbing online content. Ultimately, this pedagogical shift transforms PAI teachers from mere instructors into vital protective figures in the digital lives of their students (Fadella et al., 2023).

Transformative Characteristics of Progressive Rohis

Historically, Islamic spiritual extracurricular groups have sometimes been criticized for fostering

exclusivity, which can inadvertently mirror the insular dynamics of radical ideologies. However, recent literature highlights the emergence of a transformative paradigm known as Progressive Rohis, which actively rejects exclusivity in favor of inclusivity, social activism, and intellectual openness. These progressive groups redefine religious spirituality by emphasizing compassion, social justice, and respect for diversity, aligning their activities with the broader principles of religious moderation. This transformation is crucial because it provides students with a spiritually fulfilling environment that does not require them to adopt rigid or intolerant worldviews to feel a sense of belonging (Ezzani & Brooks, 2019; Wulandari et al., 2022).

Progressive Rohis distinguishes itself through its deliberate engagement with contemporary social issues, encouraging members to apply Islamic values to solve real-world problems rather than focusing solely on ritualistic practices. Members are trained to think critically about societal challenges, such as environmental degradation, poverty, and digital inequality, viewing these as integral parts of their religious responsibilities. This outward-looking perspective prevents the group from becoming an echo chamber for conservative ideologies, as it constantly interacts with diverse community segments and broader societal concerns. Consequently, students in Progressive Rohis develop a more nuanced and empathetic understanding of their faith, which acts as a strong buffer against radical narratives (Rohinah, 2022).

Synergistic Mechanisms Between PAI Teachers and Progressive Rohis

The effectiveness of combating digital radicalism is significantly amplified when there is a strong, synergistic collaboration between PAI teachers and Progressive Rohis organizations. This synergy bridges the formal curriculum delivered in the classroom with the non-formal, experiential learning that occurs within the extracurricular environment. PAI teachers provide the theological foundation and critical thinking frameworks, while Progressive Rohis offers a practical platform for students to apply these concepts in their daily digital and social interactions. This collaborative mechanism ensures that the values of religious moderation are not just theoretical concepts, but lived experiences that shape the students' digital citizenship (Amin et al., 2025; Nafisah et al., 2022; Rahmelia & Apandie, 2020; Widiyanto, 2023).

The mentorship dynamic between PAI teachers and Rohis advisors is a critical component of this synergistic mechanism. Teachers often serve as informal advisors to the Rohis, guiding the selection of discussion topics, ensuring the theological accuracy of digital campaigns, and helping students navigate complex religious questions that arise from online content. This guidance prevents the Rohis from drifting into unmoderated spaces where radical ideologies might take root. Conversely, the Rohis provides teachers with valuable insights into the current digital trends and challenges faced by students, allowing teachers to adapt their classroom pedagogy to address real-time issues (Aldhafeeri & Alotaibi, 2023; Alismail, 2023).

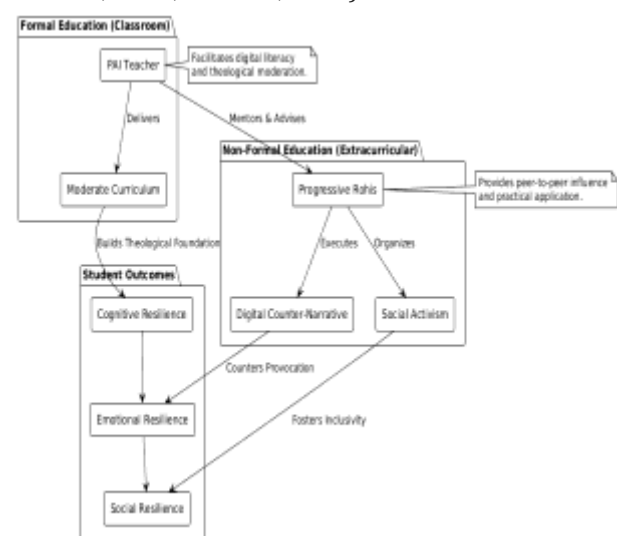


Figure 1. Synergistic Framework for Building Student Digital Resilience

The diagram presented in Figure 1 visually maps the collaborative flow between formal and non-formal educational components in building student resilience. It demonstrates how the PAI teacher's mentorship and the moderate curriculum directly feed into the cognitive and operational capacities of the Progressive Rohis. In turn, the Rohis translates these academic concepts into actionable digital counter-narratives and social activism, which collectively forge the emotional and social resilience of the students. This interconnected framework underscores that resilience is not built in isolation, but through a cohesive ecosystem of guided educational interventions (Hariani et al., 2021; Masten & Motti-Stefanidi, 2020).

Cognitive Resilience: Critical Thinking and Theological Moderation

Cognitive resilience refers to the intellectual capacity of students to critically analyze, deconstruct, and reject extremist narratives encountered in the

digital sphere. This form of resilience is heavily dependent on the students' mastery of theological moderation, which provides them with a balanced and comprehensive understanding of Islamic jurisprudence and ethics. When students possess a strong cognitive foundation, they are less likely to be swayed by the simplistic and absolutist arguments commonly used in radical digital content. They can identify logical fallacies, recognize context-stripping techniques, and evaluate the credibility of online religious sources with a high degree of accuracy (Hruschka & Appel, 2023; Pehlivanoglu et al., 2021).

The development of cognitive resilience is actively cultivated through the integration of critical thinking exercises within both the PAI curriculum and Rohis discussions. Students are trained to question the underlying motives of content creators, analyze the historical context of religious texts, and understand the diversity of scholarly opinions within the Islamic tradition. This intellectual rigor prevents the cognitive closure that radical ideologies seek to impose, keeping the students' minds open to nuance and complexity. Consequently, they develop a mental immunity that allows them to process disturbing or provocative online content without adopting the extremist worldview (Mughal et al., 2023).

Furthermore, cognitive resilience empowers students to become active fact-checkers and knowledge validators within their own digital networks. Rather than passively consuming information, they engage in digital verification processes, cross-referencing online claims with authoritative and moderate religious sources. This proactive cognitive engagement not only protects the individual student but also creates a ripple effect, as they share verified and moderate perspectives with their peers. Ultimately, cognitive resilience transforms students from vulnerable targets of digital radicalization into active defenders of moderate Islamic discourse in the online world (Kozyreva et al., 2020b; Wolfowicz et al., 2022).

Emotional Resilience: Managing Digital Provocation and Echo Chambers

Emotional resilience in the context of digital radicalism involves the ability to regulate emotional responses to online provocation, hate speech, and the intense polarization often found in digital echo chambers. Radical content is specifically designed to trigger strong emotional reactions, such as anger, fear, or a sense of grievance, which can bypass rational thinking and lead to radicalization. Students with high emotional resilience can recognize these emotional

triggers and employ coping strategies to prevent these feelings from dictating their online behavior or worldview. This emotional regulation is crucial for maintaining mental well-being and preventing the emotional exhaustion that often precedes ideological extremism (Menefee et al., 2022).

Progressive Rohis plays a vital role in building emotional resilience by providing a safe, supportive space where students can process their emotional reactions to disturbing online content. Through guided peer discussions and mentorship from PAI teachers, students learn to articulate their feelings, practice empathy, and develop a sense of spiritual calmness that counters the anxiety induced by digital hostility. The emphasis on spiritual practices, such as mindfulness and reflection, helps students maintain emotional equilibrium even when confronted with aggressive online debates. This emotional stability allows them to disengage from toxic digital environments rather than becoming entangled in them (Gioia et al., 2021).

Additionally, emotional resilience enables students to break free from the psychological grip of echo chambers by fostering the confidence to express moderate views in hostile online spaces. When students are emotionally secure in their identity and values, they are less likely to seek validation from extremist groups that promise a sense of power or belonging. They can tolerate the discomfort of being in the minority online without resorting to radical ideologies for psychological comfort. This emotional fortitude is essential for sustaining a moderate digital presence and resisting the emotional manipulation tactics employed by online recruiters (Li et al., 2021).

Social Resilience: Fostering Inclusive Digital Citizenship

Social resilience encompasses the ability of students to maintain positive, inclusive, and constructive relationships in the digital realm, despite the prevalence of divisive and exclusionary online narratives. It involves viewing digital citizenship as an opportunity to promote social cohesion, tolerance, and mutual respect across diverse cultural and religious lines. Students with strong social resilience actively reject the "us versus them" dichotomy propagated by radical groups, choosing instead to build digital bridges with individuals from different backgrounds. This form of resilience is critical because radicalization often relies on social isolation and the demonization of the "other" (Bull & Rane, 2019).

The Progressive Rohis actively fosters social resilience by organizing collaborative digital projects that require interaction with diverse communities and organizations. By engaging in joint online campaigns for social justice, environmental protection, or community service, students practice inclusive digital citizenship in a practical and meaningful way. These activities demonstrate that Islamic values are inherently compatible with pluralism and global citizenship, countering the isolationist narratives of extremist groups. Furthermore, the collaborative nature of these projects builds strong, positive peer networks that reinforce moderate social behaviors and provide a buffer against radical socialization (Nie et al., 2022).

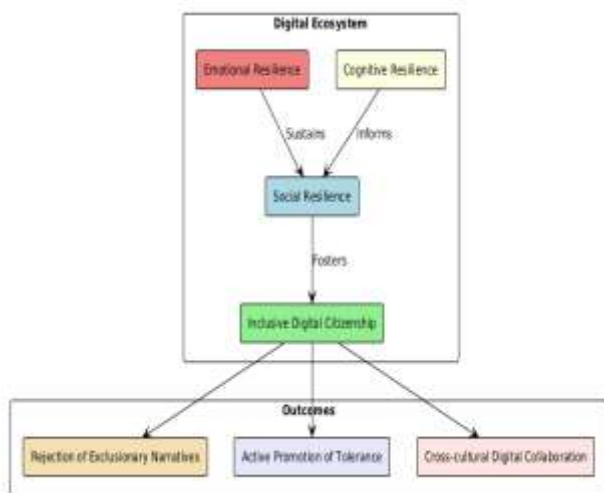


Figure 2. The Multidimensional Framework of Student Digital Resilience

Figure 2 illustrates the interconnected nature of cognitive, emotional, and social resilience in fostering inclusive digital citizenship. It shows how cognitive and emotional resilience act as the foundational pillars that support and sustain social resilience in the digital ecosystem. When these three dimensions are fully developed through the synergistic efforts of PAI teachers and Progressive Rohis, students are empowered to actively reject exclusionary narratives and promote cross-cultural collaboration. This multidimensional framework highlights that true resilience against digital radicalism requires a holistic approach that addresses the intellect, emotions, and social interactions of the student (Benjamin et al., 2021).

Counter-Narrative Strategies in the Digital Ecosystem

Counter-narrative strategies involve the proactive creation and dissemination of content that directly challenges, debunks, or offers an alternative to

extremist ideologies in the digital space. Unlike simple takedowns or censorship, effective counter-narratives utilize humor, empathy, personal storytelling, and theological accuracy to dismantle the appeal of radical content. Progressive Rohis members, being digital natives, are exceptionally well-positioned to create these counter-narratives because they understand the visual and linguistic codes of their peer group. They can translate complex moderate theological concepts into engaging, shareable formats such as short videos, infographics, and memes that resonate with Generation Z (Halversen & Weeks, 2023).

The impact of these peer-generated counter-narratives is significantly higher than top-down interventions by authorities or teachers, as they are perceived as more authentic and relatable. When students see their peers successfully articulating moderate views and challenging radical logic, it normalizes moderation and makes it socially desirable within the youth culture. PAI teachers support this process by providing the theological oversight and digital communication training necessary to ensure the counter-narratives are both impactful and doctrinally sound. This collaborative approach transforms students from passive consumers of digital content into active agents of positive ideological change (Sobko et al., 2020).

Challenges and Limitations in Fostering Digital Resilience

Despite the promising synergies between PAI teachers and Progressive Rohis, several significant challenges hinder the optimal fostering of digital resilience among students. The most formidable challenge is the sheer scale and sophistication of algorithmic radicalization, which continuously adapts to bypass content moderation and target vulnerable users with increasing precision. Educational interventions often struggle to keep pace with the rapid evolution of digital platforms, making it difficult for teachers and Rohis advisors to address the specific, emerging threats in real-time. Furthermore, the encrypted nature of many messaging applications creates hidden digital spaces where radicalization can occur entirely outside the purview of educators and parents (Chapman et al., 2018).

Another critical limitation lies in the varying levels of digital literacy and technological proficiency among PAI teachers themselves. While many teachers possess strong theological knowledge, a significant portion lacks the advanced digital skills required to effectively monitor, analyze, and counter complex

online extremist narratives. This digital gap can lead to a disconnect between the guidance provided in the classroom and the actual digital realities experienced by the students. Without adequate technological training and institutional support, teachers may struggle to fulfill their role as effective digital mentors, thereby weakening the overall resilience-building ecosystem (Motz et al., 2023).

Additionally, the internal dynamics of the Progressive Rohis can sometimes pose challenges, particularly in maintaining the progressive mandate amidst pressure from more conservative segments of the school community or parents. Rohis leaders may face intimidation or social backlash for promoting inclusive views, leading to self-censorship or a gradual shift toward more conservative, exclusive practices to maintain popularity. Ensuring the continuous commitment of Rohis members to progressive values requires constant reinforcement, strong institutional backing from the school administration, and unwavering support from the PAI teachers. Overcoming these internal and external pressures is essential for the long-term sustainability of the Progressive Rohis model (Misopoulos et al., 2018).

Implications for Future Islamic Education Policies

The findings of this literature review carry profound implications for the future formulation of Islamic education policies at both the institutional and national levels. Policymakers must recognize that preventing digital radicalism requires a paradigm shift from purely defensive, restriction-based approaches to proactive, resilience-building strategies. This necessitates the formal integration of digital literacy and religious moderation into the national Islamic education curriculum, ensuring that all students are equipped with the cognitive and emotional tools to navigate the digital world safely. Furthermore, policies should mandate the provision of comprehensive digital pedagogy training for all PAI teachers, transforming them into certified digital mentors capable of guiding students through complex online ideological landscapes (Aithal & Aithal, 2023; Hafidz, 2023).

At the institutional level, schools must develop clear guidelines and support systems for extracurricular Islamic organizations to ensure they operate as inclusive, progressive spaces rather than exclusive enclaves. School administrations should actively facilitate the synergy between PAI teachers and Rohis by allocating resources for joint digital campaigns, providing access to digital creation tools, and establishing regular forums for collaborative

planning. Recognizing and rewarding Progressive Rohis for their contributions to social cohesion and digital counter-narratives can also incentivize other schools to adopt similar models. This institutional support is crucial for scaling up the successful practices identified in this review and creating a nationwide network of resilient, moderate student organizations (Kim et al., 2021).

Finally, the review highlights the urgent need for further empirical research to measure the long-term impact of these synergistic interventions on student radicalization trajectories. Future studies should employ longitudinal designs and mixed-methods approaches to quantify the effectiveness of specific counter-narrative strategies and the psychological mechanisms underlying digital resilience. Additionally, research should explore the scalability of the Progressive Rohis model across diverse cultural and geographical contexts, identifying the contextual factors that contribute to its success or failure. By grounding future policies in robust empirical evidence, educational stakeholders can continuously refine their strategies to effectively combat the ever-evolving threat of digital radicalism (Irfan et al., 2023).

Conclusion

In conclusion, this literature review demonstrates that fostering student resilience against digital radicalism requires a synergistic approach that bridges formal Islamic Religious Education (PAI) and non-formal extracurricular activities, specifically through the transformation of *Rohis* into progressive, inclusive entities. The digital ecosystem's algorithmic echo chambers and sophisticated extremist narratives cannot be combated through mere content restriction; rather, they demand the cultivation of multidimensional cognitive, emotional, and social resilience. PAI teachers play a critical role in providing the theological foundation and digital literacy frameworks necessary to deconstruct extremist logic, while Progressive *Rohis* operationalizes these concepts through peer-led digital counter-narratives, social activism, and emotionally supportive environments. Together, this collaborative mechanism effectively inoculates students against online extremism by transforming them from vulnerable targets into active, moderate agents of digital citizenship.

The implications of these findings underscore the urgent need for educational policymakers and school administrators to institutionalize and resource this collaborative model. Schools must move beyond viewing *Rohis* merely as internal ritualistic gatherings and instead empower them as strategic partners in

digital moderation, supported by continuous digital pedagogy and psychological training for PAI teachers. Furthermore, future research should transition from conceptual syntheses to empirical, longitudinal studies to quantitatively measure the long-term impact of these synergistic interventions on students' ideological trajectories. By grounding educational policies in this integrated framework, stakeholders can build a sustainable, proactive defense system that not only protects the younger generation from digital radicalization but also empowers them to champion religious moderation and inclusive pluralism in the digital age.

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