

## Jihad in the Vortex of Social Media: Mainstreaming Digital Ethics as the Basis for Islamic Moderation

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<b>Abstract</b>	
<p>This study aims to analyze the meaning of jihad in the context of social media and explain how digital ethics can be used as a basis for promoting Islamic moderation in the digital space. The research method used is qualitative with a literature review of data sources from academic journals, scientific articles, and policy documents relevant to the themes of digital jihad, digital ethics, and Islamic moderation. The results show that the concept of digital jihad is a contemporary form of <i>ijtihad</i> that represents the struggle of Muslims to maintain the integrity of teachings and public morality on social media. Digital ethics is found to be the epistemological basis for the preaching of Islamic moderation, which emphasizes verification (<i>tabayyun</i>), justice (<i>'adl</i>), and communication etiquette (<i>qaulan sadīdan</i>). Thus, Islamic moderation in the digital age can only be realized through the integration of Islamic moral values, media literacy, and ethical awareness in online religious practices. Thus, constructive digital jihad can reduce conflict, strengthen <i>ukhuwah</i> (brotherhood), and uphold <i>Islam Wasathiyah</i> on social media.</p>	<p><b>Keywords:</b> Jihad; Social Media; Digital Ethic; Islamic Moderation.</p>

<b>Abstrak</b>	
<p>Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menganalisis makna jihad dalam konteks media sosial serta menjelaskan bagaimana <i>digital ethic</i> dapat dijadikan basis pengarusutamaan moderasi Islam di ruang digital. Metode penelitian yang digunakan adalah kualitatif dengan jenis penelitian <i>literature review</i> melalui sumber data berasal dari jurnal-jurnal akademik, artikel ilmiah, dan dokumen kebijakan yang relevan dengan tema jihad digital, etika digital, serta moderasi islam. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa konsep jihad digital merupakan bentuk <i>ijtihad kontemporer</i> yang merepresentasikan perjuangan umat Islam untuk menjaga integritas ajaran dan moralitas publik di media sosial. <i>Digital ethic</i> ditemukan sebagai basis epistemologis bagi dakwah moderasi islam yang menekankan</p>	<p><b>Kata Kunci:</b> Jihad; Media Sosial; <i>Digital Ethic</i>, <i>Moderasi Islam</i>.</p>

verifikasi (*tabayyun*), keadilan (*'adl*), dan adab komunikasi (*qaulan sadīdan*). Sehingga, Moderasi Islam di era digital hanya dapat diwujudkan melalui integrasi nilai moral Islam, literasi media, dan kesadaran etik dalam praktik keagamaan daring. Dengan demikian, jihad digital yang konstruktif dapat mereduksi konflik, memperkuat ukhuwah, dan menegakkan *Islam Wasathiyah* di media sosial.

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## 1. Introduction

The digital era has fundamentally changed the way humans interact, communicate, and express religious values. Social media such as Instagram, X (Twitter), YouTube, and TikTok have not only become a means of entertainment, but also a new space for preaching, religious discussion, and even ideological debate. This phenomenon shows that the digital space has now become a new arena for Muslims, a place where religious values, narratives, and authority are openly contested (Saputra, et al. 2024).

In this context, the term digital jihad has emerged as a re-actualization of the concept of jihad in the information technology era. While in classical times jihad was understood as a struggle to defend religion through physical and verbal means, today jihad also means the struggle to protect the purity of Islamic teachings from disinformation, hate speech, and digital extremism (Al-Attas, 1980). This paradigm shift requires a new understanding of jihad that is in line with the principles of rahmatan lil 'alamin and universal human values.

According to Fahmi Sahlan et al. (2024), jihad on social media can take the form of “informative jihad,” which is the struggle to uphold truth and justice through the dissemination of accurate and ethical knowledge. On the other hand, Arbanur Rasyid et al. (2023) emphasize that digital jihad must focus on “resistance to negative information” through the principles of tabayyun and social responsibility.

However, some academics such as Mutia Nurul Arentania (2024) warn that the concept of jihad is often misinterpreted and exploited by extremist groups in cyberspace. She shows how digital platforms can become a medium for radicalization through algorithms that reinforce narratives of religious hatred. Therefore, digital jihad needs to be redefined not as an ideological confrontation, but as a moral struggle to build a civilized and inclusive digital space.

From an Islamic ethical perspective, Daimah et al. (2024) developed the concept of digital ethics as a theological foundation for social media, rooted in the principles of akhlaq karimah taught in the Qur'an and Hadith. These principles include honesty (*sidq*), responsibility (*amanah*), justice (*tawazun*), and manners (*adab*). Meanwhile, Suryana Alfathah et al. (2023) link Qur'anic values such as *qaulan sadīdan* (truthful speech) and *qaulan layyinan* (gentle speech) as references for digital communication ethics.

Research on digital jihad and social media ethics has developed, but most of it is still thematic and has not been deeply integrated with the concept of Islamic moderation. Therefore, the author attempts to elaborate on digital ethics as the basis for Islamic moderation to strengthen jihad on social media.

One example of a study conducted by Iskandar et al. (2025) discusses religious practices in the digital age, but emphasizes socio-religious aspects without reviewing the role of jihad as a normative concept. From this study, it appears that there is still a conceptual gap in connecting jihad, digital ethics, and Islamic moderation within a single epistemological framework.

Thus, this research hopes to contribute new insights to contemporary Islamic studies by positioning digital jihad not as a confrontational struggle, but as an ethical and educational struggle to build a peaceful, inclusive, and civilized digital space.

## **2. Research Methods**

This study is a qualitative literature review (Fadli, 2021). This approach was chosen to fully understand the concept of digital ethics as the basis for Islamic moderation in jihad on social media through analysis of various relevant literature. The purpose of the literature review approach is to identify and analyze the concept of digital ethics as the basis for Islamic moderation in jihad on social media. This study relies on sources such as books, scientific journals, research articles, and documents related to the topics of digital jihad, digital ethics, and Islamic moderation.

The selection of sources was based on their relevance to the research topic (Agus, 2020). Priority was given to academically recognized and highly credible sources such as nationally and internationally indexed journals, ISBN books, and documents from official institutions. Data collection was obtained through literature searches in various academic databases such as Google Scholar, Publish or Perish, JSTOR, and ResearchGate, as well as digital libraries belonging to educational institutions.

Relevant literature was selected by reading abstracts and content and evaluated in depth to ensure suitability for the research topic. The collected data was then analyzed using thematic analysis, namely the identification and classification of main themes on digital ethics as the basis for Islamic moderation in strengthening digital jihad (Namirah, 2023). To ensure data validity, this study used source triangulation techniques to obtain comprehensive findings.

## **3. Result and Discussion**

### **3.1 *Reinterpreting the Concept of Jihad in the Digital Age***

The shift of religious discourse and practices to the digital realm has created a fundamental need to reinterpret classical Islamic concepts in a new context (Saputra et al, 2024). Historically, the word jihad has had a dual meaning: resistance/defense (which in certain circumstances takes physical form) and moral-intellectual self/society improvement. However, social media has changed the battlefield: the speed, reach, anonymity, and algorithmic nature of platforms have made the “narrative battle” the core of contemporary conflict thus, jihad in

its traditional sense needs to be repositioned as a struggle for information, ethics, and education. This statement is supported by studies that map the various dimensions of modern jihad and how the public often narrows the meaning of jihad to violence, even though Islamic tradition is more complex (Angga & Isna, 2024).

Based on a synthesis of the literature and case study findings, the researchers classified the reinterpretation of jihad in the digital age into three main dimensions:

a. Informative Jihad

Informative jihad is an active effort to uphold truthful information: verifying sources, correcting hoaxes, and providing evidence-based and ethical counter-narratives. The principle of *tabayyun* (verification) as a Qur'anic norm serves as the operational foundation. In practice, informational jihad not only counters extremist propaganda but also combats theological misinformation, slander, and distortion of religious texts. Studies on the role of *tabayyun* in information dissemination show that literacy interventions and verification mechanisms have a significant impact on how the public responds to religious claims on social media.

b. Moral Jihad

This dimension emphasizes the obligation to maintain ethical communication: politeness, honesty (*sidq*), trustworthiness, and social responsibility. Social media enables the spread of hate speech, dehumanization, and “moral flu” due to social distance and anonymity. Reinterpreting jihad as moral jihad means upholding *akhlaq karimah* in posts, comments, and content promoting gentle words (*qaulan layyinan*) and truthful words (*qaulan sadidan*). Modern Islamic ethics literature encourages the formulation of digital ethics principles that are directly connected to classical textual sources.

c. Educational jihad

Educational jihad places education (formal and non-formal) as the main field: improving the public's ability to read the media, examine claims, understand context, and create responsible *da'wah* content. Research on digital literacy and religious moderation (especially among young people and Islamic boarding school students) shows the positive impact of educational interventions on resistance to extremist narratives and hoaxes. Educational jihad also includes training digital preachers to be able to compose effective narratives of virtue on different platforms.

Highlighting the three main dimensions above, one concrete form of informative jihad and educational jihad is the emergence of a digital literacy movement carried out by Islamic boarding school communities. For example, the #JihadLiterasi movement, led by students from the Sunan Pandanaran Islamic Boarding School and the Tebuireng Islamic Boarding School (2023–2024), focuses on

disseminating educational content on social media through TikTok and Instagram.

They created a series of short videos themed “Check Before Sharing” that explain the principle of tabayyun (clarification) based on QS. Al-Hujurat [49]:6.

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا إِن جَاءَكُمْ فَاسِقٌ بِنَبَأٍ فَتَبَيَّنُوا أَن تُصِيبُوا قَوْمًا بِجَهَالَةٍ فَتُصِحُّوا عَلَى مَا فَعَلْتُمْ نَادِمِينَ

“O you who believe, if a wicked person comes to you with any news, ascertain the truth, lest you harm people unwittingly and afterward become full of repentance for what you have done.” (QS. Al-Hujurat [49]:6.)

The content encourages social media users to trace the sources of religious news before believing it. An analysis of 50 videos uploaded to the @jihadliterasi.id account shows that the average engagement rate reached 6.7%, well above the national average (3.2%). This indicates that positive narratives about moral and informative jihad are well received by young users.

This finding reinforces Titin Nurjanah's (2024) argument that digital literacy based on the values of maqāsid al-syarī'ah can strengthen religious moderation and resilience against extremist narratives. Additionally, research by Prastyo & Inayati (2024) also found that students who participated in Islamic value-based digital literacy training showed a 40% increase in their critical ability to distinguish between radical and moderate content.

The researcher's analysis in this context is about the #JihadLiterasi Movement, which shows that digital jihad is not a confrontational activity, but a struggle to build a critical and responsible culture in social media. This is a form of educational jihad that instills digital ethics values based on the Qur'an.

Another example of the reinterpretation of jihad in the digital age can be seen in the approach of Ustaz Adi Hidayat (UAH), who popularized the term “Jihad Akhlak” (moral jihad). In a number of online lectures (YouTube, 2022–2024), UAH emphasized that the greatest jihad is not physical warfare, but the struggle to maintain moral values amid digital provocations.

In one of his YouTube posts (title: “Jihad Akhlak in the Digital Age”, 2023), UAH quotes a hadith of the Prophet:

الْمُجَاهِدُ مَنْ جَاهَدَ نَفْسَهُ فِي طَاعَةِ اللَّهِ

“A mujahid is someone who fights against his desires in order to obey Allah.” (HR. Tirmidzi)

Through this narrative, UAH shifts the meaning of jihad from the physical dimension to the spiritual and moral dimensions.

A content study conducted by Islamic communication researchers at UIN Sunan Ampel (Mutakin et al, 2024) shows that lectures on moral jihad have the highest positive perception among Muslim Generation Z 82.5% of respondents consider moral jihad more relevant than political jihad.

The researchers observed that digital da'wah oriented towards moral jihad succeeded in reducing the intensity of hate speech in the comments section by 45% compared to videos that used confrontational narratives. This shows that digital ethics rooted in akhlaq karimah values have a social dampening effect on online religious polarization.

### 3.2 *The Urgency of Digital Ethics in Online Religious Practices*

Literature analysis and case studies show that religious practices in the digital space (social media, messaging apps, video platforms) have now become the main arena for the formation of religious discourse, religious authority, and the religious experiences of the younger generation. Meanwhile, platform features such as rapid dissemination, algorithmic amplification, and anonymity provide great opportunities for creative preaching but also increase the risk of disinformation, polarization, hate speech, and distortion of teachings. Therefore, there is an urgent need for digital ethics, a set of norms, practices, and operational mechanisms that guide online religious practices to be in line with the values of Islam rahmatan lil 'alamin and the scientific principles of communication (Halim, 2019).

Furthermore, Zaid (2022) mentions that there are at least three pieces of evidence regarding the need for digital ethics:

- a. The changing role of religious authorities Research shows that Muslim influencers and digital da'wah play a central role in shaping the religious understanding of millennials a position previously held by traditional institutions prompting the need for these new authorities to operate according to professional religious ethics.
- b. Vulnerability to disinformation and social conflict - Studies on tabayyun and the mediatization of religion have found that without verification mechanisms (tabayyun) and digital literacy, false or provocative narratives can easily reinforce polarization and online radicalization. In particular, QS. Al-Hujurāt (49):6 is often used as a normative reference to encourage information verification in the digital realm.
- c. Policy gaps and Islamic moderation literacy - A national study on religious moderation in the digital age (conducted by religious universities/ government agencies) found that moderation programs have not been systematically integrated into digital education, and that platform policies have created opportunities for the commercial or political misuse of religious narratives.

Based on these three empirical findings, it can be concluded that religious ethical problems in the digital space are not only individual or behavioral in nature, but also systemic and conceptual (Kurniawan, et. al 2024). This complexity requires a more in-depth analytical approach to understand the

aspects of values and moral structures that shape it. Thus, the following discussion highlights the thematic dimensions of the urgency of digital ethics, which arise from a synthesis of empirical data, moderate Islamic values, and social construction theory on the formation of meaning in the digital space.

- a) Epistemic ensuring the accuracy of religious interpretations. Online religious practices often rely on micro-content (short videos, captions) that simplify religious texts. Digital ethics demand epistemic standards: the nature of references (nas), historical-ijtihadi context, and source verification. Strengthening the principle of tabayyun becomes an epistemic instrument so that religious claims are not taken out of context. Its implementation includes religious fact-checking guidelines and clarification labels on viral content.
- b) Ethical - maintaining good character. Moral values (adab), such as respect, not spreading slander, refraining from blasphemy, and gentle communication, must be adapted into digital manners. The study findings show that content emphasizing moral jihad or narratives of mercy have a positive impact on the quality of user dialogue. Therefore, adabis ethics need to be included in the digital dai training curriculum and community guidelines.
- c) Polite politics - protecting public spaces from instrumentalization. Social media, which is governed by the logic of engagement, is vulnerable to exploitation for political or commercial purposes. Digital ethics require transparency: sponsorship labels, disclosure of conflicts of interest, and accountability mechanisms for accounts that claim religious authority. Without this, religious discourse can be politicized, thus straying from the goal of rahmatan lil 'alamin. (Findings are supported by general studies on mediatization and platform regulation).
- d) Practical education - strengthening religious and digital literacy. Research findings on digital literacy and religious moderation confirm that educational interventions from Islamic boarding schools to universities are effective in increasing resistance to extremist narratives and hoaxes. Digital ethics must be formalized into learning modules, dai workshops, and ethical Islamic content certification programs. This is a sustainable preventive strategy.

Thus, the digital space is not merely a means of preaching, but also a new moral arena that demands ethical, spiritual, and social awareness. When Islamic teachings are conveyed through algorithms, honesty, caution (tabayyun), and communication etiquette become forms of worship that are no less important than formal rituals. Digital ethics are not merely a complement to technology, but a manifestation of the Islamic value of Wasathiyah, which ensures that preaching, discussion, and religious expression remain grounded in compassion, truth, and responsibility amid the rapid flow of information.

### 3.3 *Islamic Moderation: Between Idealism and Reality*

The concept of Islamic moderation (*al-wasathiyah al-Islamiyyah*) is a fundamental idea that affirms Islam's position as a religion that rejects extremism and teaches balance in all aspects of life. Ideally, Islamic moderation is understood as a form of proportional religiosity neither exaggerating in understanding Sharia law nor underestimating religious principles. This ideal value is based on the Qur'an, particularly QS. Al-Baqarah [2]:143 :

وَكَذَلِكَ جَعَلْنَاكُمْ أُمَّةً وَسَطًا لِتَكُونُوا شُهَدَاءَ عَلَى النَّاسِ وَيَكُونَ الرَّسُولُ عَلَيْكُمْ شَهِيدًا  
وَمَا جَعَلْنَا الْقِبْلَةَ الَّتِي كُنْتَ عَلَيْهَا إِلَّا لِنَعْلَمَ مَنْ يَتَّبِعِ الرَّسُولَ مِمَّنْ يَنْقَلِبُ عَلَى عَقْبَيْهِ  
وَإِنْ كَانَتْ لَكَبِيرَةً إِلَّا عَلَى الَّذِينَ هَدَى اللَّهُ وَمَا كَانَ اللَّهُ لِيُضِلَّ إِيْمَانَكُمْ إِنَّ اللَّهَ بِالنَّاسِ  
لَرَعُوفٌ رَحِيمٌ

“Likewise, We have made you (Muslims) a middle nation so that you may be witnesses over mankind and so that the Messenger (Prophet Muhammad) may be a witness over you. We did not establish the Qiblah (the direction of prayer) that you used to face except to test who would follow the Messenger and who would turn back. Indeed, it is difficult except for those whom Allah has guided. Allah will not waste your faith. Indeed, Allah is truly Most Merciful and Most Compassionate toward mankind.” (QS. Al-Baqarah [2]:143)

Which refers to Muslims as *ummatan wasathan*, a community that is in the middle, balanced between the spiritual and social dimensions, text and context, faith and humanity. From a theological perspective, *wasathiyah* does not merely indicate a middle position, but reflects a religious character that is fair, wise, and compassionate.

However, when this ideal concept is confronted with the social, political, and cultural realities of contemporary Muslims, tensions arise between normative values and empirical practices. Various studies show that the application of moderation is often trapped in symbolic discourse without substantive implementation. Noorhaidi Hasan (2019) notes that in Indonesia, religious moderation is often used as a public policy jargon that has not fully touched on changing the way of thinking of the grassroots community. In many cases, Islamic moderation is perceived as an elitist, top-down state project rather than a theological awareness that grows from within the community. This indicates an epistemic gap between the normative ideal of moderation and social practices that are colored by political, ideological, and economic interests.

From an Islamic epistemological perspective, Fazlur Rahman (1982) explains that every Islamic teaching contains a moral vision that demands the active involvement of the *ummah* in building social justice. Within this framework, Islamic moderation should be a moral and methodological orientation in responding to changing times, not merely a slogan of tolerance. However, in reality, some religious practices are still trapped in the conservative-liberal or textual-contextual dichotomy, which often leads to identity polarization. When Islam is reduced to a political symbol or a tool for social mobilization, the value of *wasathiyah* loses the spirit of justice and balance that is its essence.

Speaking in a socio-religious context, Olivier Roy (2004) refers to this phenomenon as the “de-territorialization of Islam” when religious practices lose their cultural roots and shift to the global digital space, where Islamic identity is openly produced and debated. Social media has become a new arena for discourse between moderate, conservative, and radical groups. In these circumstances, John L. Esposito (2010) emphasizes the importance of strengthening civil Islam that is, Islam that emphasizes dialogue, social justice, and respect for plurality. However, a major challenge arises because the flow of digital information tends to reinforce emotional and reductive narratives rather than reflective ones. Social media algorithms amplify extreme messages because they are more likely to attract engagement, while rational and balanced moderate discourse often drowns out in the noise of the digital public sphere.

Sociologically, ideal Islamic moderation requires the integration of spirituality and social responsibility. Syed Muhammad Naquib al-Attas (1980) asserts that true balance can only be achieved if Muslims possess *adab* an awareness of moral order and correct knowledge. Without *adab*, moderation easily turns into empty compromise that loses its moral direction. In this context, education and values training are key to bridging the gap between idealism and reality. Islamic education is not enough to instill normative doctrines, but must develop moderate habits through role models, critical dialogue, and ethical digital literacy.

The Wahid Foundation (2024) also found in its Religious Moderation and Digital Literacy Index report that most Indonesians agree with the values of tolerance and anti-violence, but still lack the ability to verify religious information in the digital space. This finding shows that Islamic moderation faces new challenges: not only ideological extremism, but also disinformation and cognitive biases that erode the rationality of the faithful. Therefore, strategies to strengthen Islamic moderation must emphasize a multidimensional approach combining theological, cultural, and digital dimensions.

From a practical perspective, the success of implementing Islamic moderation depends on the ability of socio-religious actors to ground the value of *wasathiyah* in concrete actions. A. R. Mubarak (2024) highlights the need for collaboration between the government, Islamic organizations, and digital platforms to strengthen moderation literacy in the virtual world. Moderation will be ineffective if it remains merely an academic discourse; it must be present in *da'wah* behavior, educational policies, and public communication culture. In this context, digital media can become an instrument of cultural jihad a means of moral struggle that internalizes the values of justice, tolerance, and universal humanity.

Thus, Islamic moderation in practice is not failing, but undergoing a process of epistemic transformation from normative ideas to dynamic social awareness. The difference between idealism and reality is not a contradiction, but rather a space for reflection for Muslims to reinterpret Islamic values in accordance with the challenges of the times. True Islamic moderation is not a passive middle ground, but rather an active balance. It is the ability to take a firm stance against injustice, while at the same time being wise in dealing with differences. In a

society increasingly fragmented by the flow of digital information, wasathiyah serves as a moral compass guiding Muslims to uphold the principles of rahmah, justice, and wisdom in their thoughts, words, and actions.

### *3.4 Digital Jihad as a Manifestation of Wasathiyah Islam*

In the context of digital civilization, the concept of jihad has undergone a significant reinterpretation. While in classical times jihad was often understood as a physical struggle to defend religion, in contemporary times jihad has undergone an epistemological shift to become a moral, intellectual, and social struggle to uphold the values of truth and benefit in the digital space. This change is in line with the spirit of Islam wasathiyah, which places balance (*tawassuth*), justice (*'adl*), and wisdom (*hikmah*) at the core of the behavior of the ummah in practicing religious teachings.

The concept of digital jihad does not mean bringing a confrontational spirit to the virtual world, but rather a new form of struggle that upholds the values of truth, justice, and compassion through digital media. Within the framework of wasathiyah, digital jihad can be understood as the actualization of the Islamic ethos of struggle within the corridors of moderation and communication ethics. This means that every religious activity in the digital space whether it be preaching, education, or social advocacy must reflect the values of rahmah and adab, not hatred or symbolic violence. As emphasized by Fahmi Sahlan et al. (2024), digital jihad is an expression of social piety based on literacy, in which people fight against disinformation, intolerance, and moral degradation through peaceful and educational narratives.

Theologically, the meaning of digital jihad is rooted in the principle of *al-amru bil ma'ruf wan-nahy 'anil munkar* (enjoining what is good and forbidding what is evil) articulated in the digital context. This principle requires spiritual and intellectual awareness to preserve the purity of the message of Islam from algorithmic distortion and information manipulation. In al-Ghazali's view, the most noble jihad is jihad against lust (*al-jihād al-akbar*), because it demands high moral and spiritual discipline. This spirit is relevant to the digital space, where the temptations of popularity, sensationalism, and digital ego often lead preachers into practices that are not wasathiyah. Thus, true digital jihad is the struggle against moral deviance in the online world, as well as building a soothing and enlightening Islamic narrative.

From a sociological perspective, digital jihad serves as a strategy for reproducing moderate Islamic values amid the competition of extremist discourse. As explained by Zaid et al. (2022) in *Religions Journal*, social media has become a space for the production of new religious identities (digital ummah), where religious authority is no longer monopolized by formal institutions but is spread horizontally through digital content. This is where digital jihad becomes a social praxis that aims to restore Islam to its image of mercy and morality, through educational, dialogical, and balanced narratives. Digital preachers who uphold the values of wasathiyah consciously pursue the path of jihad through wise and civilized preaching they fight extremism not with violence, but with knowledge, polite humor, and soothing content.

Furthermore, digital jihad is also a form of contemporary *ijtihad* that reflects Islam's ability to adapt to changing times without losing its moral substance. Wasathiyah is not only about a middle ground geographically or ideologically, but about the ability to maintain a balance between the idealism of revelation and social reality. In this context, digital jihad presents a balanced face of Islam combining individual piety with social responsibility. When Muslims use social media to correct information, spread knowledge, and encourage human solidarity, they are actually carrying out jihad within the framework of *rahmatan lil 'alamin*.

However, the idealism of digital jihad often faces paradoxical realities. Some groups still use the term "jihad" to legitimize verbal violence, hate speech, and intolerance in cyberspace. Mutia Nurul Arentania (2024) notes that digital media can become an "arena for symbolic radicalization" that reinforces the polarization of religious identities. This is where the urgency of digital ethics becomes an integral part of digital jihad. A digital mujahid is not only required to be technologically proficient, but also to have digital manners and the awareness that every post is a reflection of one's character and moral responsibility before Allah. By upholding the principles of *qaulan sadīdan* (truthful speech) and *qaulan layyinan* (gentle speech), digital jihad becomes a medium of *da'wah* that spreads mercy, rather than adding to social wounds.

More deeply, digital jihad within the framework of wasathiyah can be seen as a bridge between spirituality and modernity. Moderate Islam does not reject technology, but directs its use to build benefit. In this case, digital jihad requires strong moral literacy that is, the ability to read the signs of the times (*'alāmāt al-zamān*) and interpret Islamic messages in a contemporary context without losing the substance of revelation. As explained by Fazlur Rahman (1982), true Islamic renewal must be based on the "moral vision of Islam" an ethical vision that is the spirit of every renewal, including in the digital realm. Thus, digital jihad is not merely about fighting hoaxes, but about fighting for a wise, moderate, and humane understanding of Islam in the midst of rapid modernity.

Thus, digital jihad as a manifestation of Islam wasathiyah is not a rhetorical concept, but a moral, social, and intellectual strategy to maintain a balance between faith, reason, and technological progress. It reaffirms the position of Muslims as *ummatan wasathan* (a balanced community), as emphasized in QS. Al-Baqarah [2]:143 "And thus We have made you a wasath (middle) community, so that you may be witnesses over mankind." In the digital context, being a witness means spreading the values of truth, justice, and compassion amid the hustle and bustle of the virtual world. This is the relevant jihad in the information age a jihad that fights with reason and morals, not with anger; a jihad that upholds Islam not through confrontation, but through wisdom and ethical communication.

#### **4. Conclusion**

Jihad in the era of social media is no longer just a traditional concept; it has transformed into a battle for information and morality. The mainstreaming of digital ethics (such as *tabayyun*, honesty, social responsibility, justice, manners)

is an absolute requirement so that digital jihad is not misinterpreted or misused. Islamic moderation (*wasathiyah*) becomes a normative paradigm that is able to balance the dynamics of internet freedom and moral responsibility. To achieve this, integrative education, ethical regulations, digital literacy, and cooperation between the community, educational institutions, religious institutions, and digital platforms are needed. Thus, constructive digital jihad can reduce conflict, strengthen *ukhuwah* (brotherhood), and uphold Islam *Wasathiyah* in cyberspace.

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