

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background Research

The development of communication technology has significantly influenced religiosity, particularly among young Indonesians. One perspective on this relationship views communication tools themselves as sacred, regardless of the messages they convey. This aligns with the concept of digital religion, which examines the evolution of religious practices in both online and offline contexts. Tsuria (2021) highlights how digital platforms are not just tools for communication but transformative spaces that shape religious identity, community, and authority. In the digital age, religion extends beyond physical institutions, finding expression through apps, social media, and other platforms imbued with religious symbolism. This transformation underscores the dual nature of communication technology as both sacred and profane, influencing religiosity at both macro and micro levels (Tsuria, 2021).

Despite these advancements, religion is increasingly seen as irrelevant by some young Indonesians. Religious education is often criticized as rigid, monotonous, and disconnected from the realities of modern life. As a result, many young people drift away from spiritual values, losing critical moral guidance in navigating their lives. This detachment is further exacerbated by stigmatized social issues such as mental health, which are often linked to a perceived lack of religiosity. Such narratives perpetuate negative perceptions of religion and hinder constructive dialogue about its role in addressing contemporary challenges. In response, the concept of *wasatiyyah* religious moderation has gained prominence as a significant initiative. Championed by Indonesia's Ministry of Religious Affairs, *wasatiyyah* promotes values like tolerance, non-violence, and the accommodation of local cultures. Rooted in terms like *tawassuṭ* (middle), *i'tidāl* (fair), and *tawāzun* (balanced), *wasatiyyah* advocates a fair, balanced approach to religion, fostering interfaith understanding and ensuring the continued relevance of religious teachings

in a diverse and evolving society.

The principles of wasatīyyah become even more pertinent when paired with innovative strategies for engaging younger generations. As Harambam (2021) demonstrates through David Icke's use of epistemological pluralism, compelling and inclusive narratives can effectively resonate with audiences seeking identity and meaning. Similarly, religious institutions can utilize digital platforms and storytelling to present wasatīyyah as a modern, relatable approach to religion. By emphasizing universal values like empathy, coexistence, and justice within contemporary frameworks, religion can be redefined as both a moral compass and a guide amidst rapid societal and technological transformations. Research supports integrating these values into educational systems. Azqueta (2024), through a critical discourse analysis of materials aimed at preventing violent radicalism, identifies key principles such as tolerance, peace, coexistence, intercultural respect, equality, dialogue, human rights, and empathy. These principles, embedded within both Catholic and Islamic curricula, are powerful tools for fostering fairness, solidarity, and active citizenship in students (Azqueta & Merino, 2025). Such frameworks reflect the ideals of wasatīyyah, showcasing religion's potential as a unifying force for promoting tolerance and preventing extremism by emphasizing shared humanistic and democratic values.

The discussion surrounding faith, religion, and spirituality further enriches this perspective. According to Paul (2020), religion is generally defined as an organized system of beliefs and practices associated with a higher power, often linked to a community or institution. It encompasses traditions, rituals, and collective worship. In contrast, spirituality is more individualized and subjective, prioritizing personal experiences, meaning, and connection with the sacred or transcendent without reliance on structured practices or institutions. Moreover, faith, deeply connected to both religion and spirituality, represents a personal trust in a higher power or the transcendent (Newman, n.d.). These dimensions, while distinct, are interconnected and mutually reinforcing. Religious practices can deepen

spirituality, just as spiritual experiences can inspire greater religiosity, nurturing individual growth while reinforcing societal values of coexistence and mutual respect.

However, according to Riviş (2023) emphasizes that religious affiliations often function as indicators of group identity, influencing social interactions and shaping how communities perceive themselves and others. This interplay between faith, religion, and spirituality, combined with the transformative effects of globalization and media, presents unique opportunities to promote an inclusive worldview grounded in *wasatīyyah* principles. Globalization and modernization have erased many physical and cultural boundaries, creating unprecedented interconnectedness (Riviş-Tipei, n.d.). Moreover, media plays a pivotal role in shaping perceptions and identities, acting as both a mirror that reflects societal realities and a mold that shapes new narratives. Through this “matrix” of influence, media redefines how collective identities, including religious ones, are expressed and understood. As Beyers (2017) highlights, religion plays a crucial role in guiding identity formation, with a focus on actions and practices rather than abstract beliefs. This approach, which integrates religion, spirituality, and media, lays the foundation for fostering a balanced, harmonious, and inclusive society.

The growing influence of digital platforms further amplifies this potential, especially through mediums like podcasts. One such example is the *Login* podcast, hosted by Habib Jafar and Onadio Leonardo as part of Deddy Corbuzier’s broader a YouTube platform. With over 23.6 million subscribers as of November 2024, Corbuzier’s channel exemplifies the shift toward podcasts as powerful tools for public engagement. The *Login* podcast has captured the attention of millions, reaching over 10 million viewers and demonstrating the role of digital media in spreading positive social and religious messages. Through its creative use of humor, casual conversation, and storytelling, the podcast provides a space for interfaith dialogue and promotes religious moderation, making it a compelling example of how media, religion, and spirituality can converge to create meaningful dialogue and foster societal values in the digital age. In this context, religious

moderation is not only limited to efforts to build tolerance between religious communities, but also involves strengthening the character of people who can avoid blind fanaticism towards their own religion. Moreover, religious moderation conveyed through this podcast serves as a collective awareness builder about the importance of coexistence in diversity.

While the Login Podcast has gained popularity, especially among younger audiences, its use of casual, slang, and humor language in episode titles and clickbait maybe has sparked controversy. Some critics argue that such titles, often informal or attention-grabbing, may be seen as disrespectful in the context of religious dialogue. This approach contrasts with traditional Islamic values, which emphasize respect and formality in religious discourse. For devout followers who hold these values close, the use of humour or controversial language in a religious context might be seen as inappropriate or even offensive. The informal tone might undermine the seriousness of religious teachings, as Islam places great importance on decorum in discussions of faith. However, this style also helps make religious topics more approachable for younger listeners, offering a modern, relatable way to engage with complex issues. The tension between making religious content accessible and maintaining respect for tradition highlights a broader challenge in adapting religious discourse to the digital age.

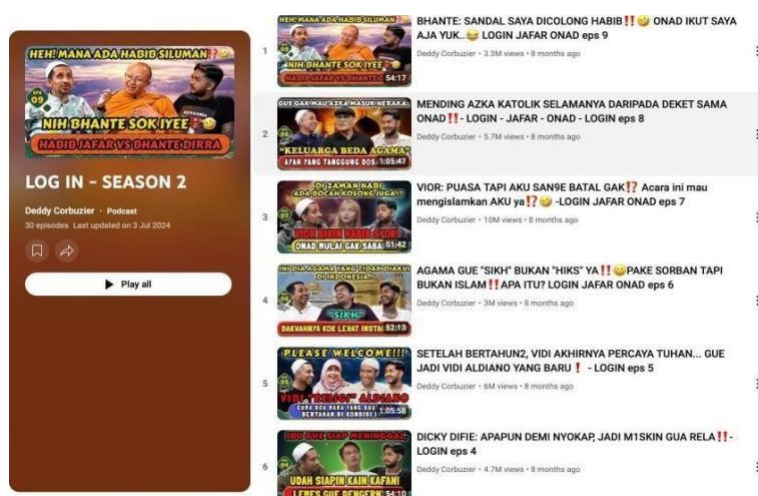


Figure 1. 1 List of Episodes on Login Podcast

To better understand the impact of this content, this analysis applies Stuart Hall's Encoding-Decoding Model. Hall's theory emphasizes the active interplay between media producers and audiences, where producers encode ideological meanings into content, and audiences decode these messages based on their own contexts, experiences, and perspectives (Adibe Nwafor & Chinasa Alegu, n.d.). This dynamic moves beyond traditional linear communication models by underscoring the role of audiences as active interpreters rather than passive consumers. Habib Jafar and Onadio Leonardo craft their content with messages of tolerance, religious moderation, humor and understanding, using an approachable style to engage a diverse audience. Audiences, in turn, decode these messages within their unique contexts, whether as members of religious communities seeking interfaith engagement or individuals grappling with questions of identity and spirituality. This decoding process gains particular significance when viewed through the lens of Salafi ideology, a framework that deeply influences how religious messages are interpreted.

The Salafi group is chosen for this study because they identify as part of Ahlus Sunnah wal Jama'ah and are known for their strong emphasis on the purity of Islam, often categorized under conservative or purist interpretations of the religion. Their theological orientation is rooted in a strict adherence to the Qur'an and Sunnah as understood by the earliest generations of Muslims, with a focus on avoiding innovation and maintaining doctrinal clarity. This perspective stands in contrast to the approach taken by the Login podcast, which features religious discussions that are pluralistic, inclusive, and promote Islamic moderation (wasatiyyah). Hosted by Habib Husein Ja'far and Onadio Leonardo, the podcast adopts a casual, youthful, and conversational style, often engaging in interfaith dialogue with religious leaders from various backgrounds. This modern and relaxed approach to religious discourse has resonated with many young Indonesians who find traditional forms of religious preaching to be rigid or monotonous. As a result, the Login podcast has gained popularity as a platform that bridges faith with contemporary life in an

engaging and accessible way. Given this contrast, the researcher seeks to explore how Salafi youth who come from a purist Islamic background and represent a minority within Indonesia's religious landscape interpret and respond to the themes of pluralism and moderation presented in the podcast. Understanding their perspective is essential to gaining deeper insight into how religious identity is negotiated among conservative Muslim youth in an increasingly pluralistic and digitally mediated society.

Salafism, rooted in the teachings of the Prophet Muhammad and his companions, emphasizes a return to what is seen as the purest form of Islam. In Indonesia, the movement has been shaped by influences from Middle Eastern conservatism and institutions like LIPIA (Tabroni, 2023). Critics argue that Salafi teachings, particularly their strict interpretation of Islam, may conflict with Indonesia's pluralistic society, which values religious diversity. Additionally, the association of some Salafi factions with extremism has sparked debates about the movement's role in Indonesia's social and political landscape (Tabroni, 2023). Its more conservative strands often promote strict adherence to Islamic principles, while more radical factions may seek political and even violent means to implement their vision of Islam. The challenges posed by this movement include navigating tensions between conservative Islamic teachings and Indonesia's broader pluralistic and tolerant societal framework. Furthermore, many in UK Salafi circles appreciated al-Haddad's approach as a departure from the quietist Salafis' emphasis on purifying the faith and rejecting innovations. Moreover, his scholarly background, including studies in Saudi Arabia with prominent Salafi figures like Shaykh Ibn Baz, enhanced his reputation within London's Muslim community (Dawood, 2024). Similarly, Salafism in France, though a small minority, significantly influences debates about Islam by strongly opposing secularism, which it views as a conspiracy against religion, particularly Islam (Belhaj, 2024).

The challenges posed by Salafism in various contexts, from navigating Indonesia's pluralistic framework to influencing debates in the UK and France, highlight the complexities of reconciling conservative Islamic teachings with diverse societal values. In this evolving landscape,

digital platforms have emerged as powerful tools for addressing such tensions. In this context, the Login podcast, serves as an intriguing case study for exploring how digital media can foster religious moderation and promote interfaith understanding, offering a counterbalance to the polarizing narratives often associated with more conservative movements. This aligns with the theory of religious moderation as articulated by figures like Lukman Hakim Saifuddin as a former Minister of Religious Affairs of Indonesia, who highlights the importance of balance, non-extremism, and tolerance in fostering harmonious interfaith interactions. Saifuddin's framework emphasizes an approach that navigates religious diversity with fairness, promoting values that resonate with Indonesia's deeply pluralistic society (Ministry of Religious Affairs of the Republic of Indonesia).

In a broader digital context, Deddy Corbuzier's Close the Door podcast demonstrates how YouTube-based content can become a powerful vehicle for public engagement. With its significant subscriber base and viewership numbers, it reinforces the potential of podcasts as effective tools for disseminating positive social messages. However, as globalization and modernization continue to influence the religious landscape, challenges arise. The importation of conservative Islamic ideologies from the Middle East has sometimes clashed with Indonesia's traditionally accommodative approach to Islam potentially threatening the harmonious religious practices that have long been integral to the nation's identity. Despite these challenges, Indonesia's unique way of blending Islamic values with local traditions has helped shape a national identity centered on inclusivity and moderation. In this environment, initiatives like the Login podcast play a crucial role in bridging divides and promoting understanding, providing a space for dialogue between the differing views of Salafi and moderate groups.

As part of this digital shift, Salafi groups traditionally known for their conservative and strict interpretations of Islam have learned to leverage information technology to spread their message (Ni'am, 2024). This change has allowed Salafi youth to grow their influence through online sermons and digital platforms, appealing especially to younger

generations seeking clear answers in the midst of today's complex world, particularly regarding Islamic law and issues of halal-haram, obedience, and disobedience (Whyte, 2022). However, even as Salafism expands its digital presence, it continues to reinforce negative stereotypes, particularly in a society where Indonesia's large Muslim population remains divided in its views of Salafi beliefs. This division becomes even more apparent when comparing Salafism with moderate groups like NU and Muhammadiyah, which place a strong emphasis on critical thinking, inclusivity, and religious moderation (Aidulsyah, 2023). These groups offer a more balanced approach, appealing to educated youth who value tolerance and coexistence as essential to maintaining national unity in a pluralistic society (Hasan, 2006; Febriansyah & El-Alami, 2021). In contrast, the Salafi movement's rejection of pluralism and focus on religious purity creates a sharp difference with the moderate vision of an inclusive Indonesia. This ideological tension raises important questions about how religious identity and practice are evolving in Indonesia, especially as digital dakwah continues to reshape the country's religious landscape.

1.2 Research Problem

The research problem for this study aims to explore the complexities surrounding young Indonesian Salafi Muslims' acceptance of the pluralistic religious dialogue presented in the Login Podcast by Habib Jafar and Onadio Leonard, which combines a modern casual format, humor, and informal language. The main focus lies on understanding how young Salafis interpret religious discourse that incorporates pluralistic views, which may differ from the more conservative Salafi perspective. This research will examine how humor and the use of slang titles in the podcast affect their engagement with religious teachings, considering whether these elements, commonly used to engage younger audiences, align with or challenge the Salafi emphasis on seriousness, authority, and rigid religious interpretation.

1.3 Objectives

The objective of this research is to find out how Salafi as a strict and conservative Islam interprets religious dialogue that is pluralistic and makes

humor as a concept of religious dialogue in the podcast Login by Habib Jafar and Onadio Leonardo.

1.4 Research Question

1. How do young Salafis interpret the religious dialog in the podcast Login by Habib Jafar and Onadio Leonardo?
2. What are the views and perspectives of young Salafis on the concept of tolerance presented by Habib Jafar in the Login podcast?
3. How young Salafis assume about the humor and slang titles that the podcast login chooses?
4. According to Stuart Hall's encoding and decoding communication model, which group do young Salafis belong to as an audience?

1.5 Limitation

This research has research limitations for a more in-depth discussion in one area in order to avoid a discussion that is too broad often the core of the problem is missed. The scope of this research focuses on how young salafis interpret login podcast as a modern and plural religious dialog. This research will not use other sources of informants other than young Indonesian salafis and will not use other objects other than login podcasts.

1.6 Significance of Research

1.6.1 Theoretical Significance

- a. The results of this study are expected to complement and enrich science knowledge, especially in the field of communication science in the study of culture studies.
- b. The results of this research are expected to provide additional knowledge for student literature sources in the fields of Islamic studies and cultural studies.
- c. The results of this study are expected to be a reference for further research

1.6.2 Practical Significance

a. For Researcher

This research aims to enhance the author's understanding of the ongoing phenomena related to Salafism in Indonesia and its interactions with modern media, particularly through platforms like YouTube. By integrating relevant theoretical frameworks, this study will provide a comprehensive analysis of how Salafi beliefs are expressed and disseminated in contemporary society. It will also offer deeper insights into the ways in which Salafism, as a religious and social movement, adapts to and influences Indonesia's pluralistic environment. Ultimately, this research seeks to contribute to the broader academic discourse on the intersection of religion, media, and societal change, providing valuable perspectives on the role of Salafism in a globalized, media-driven world.

b. For Other Parties

The research is expected to provide insights to the government, educational institutions, and society regarding the dynamics of the Salafi movement in Indonesia, so that it can assist in designing more inclusive and effective policies in managing religious diversity, preventing radicalization, and promoting tolerance and peace in a pluralistic society.

1.7 Time and Research Period

The research process is summarized in the timeline below.

Table 1.1 Table of Research Period

No	Activity	2024				2025					
		9	10	11	12	1	2	3	4	5	6
1	Topic Submission Research										
2	Proposal Preparation										
3	Desk Evaluation										
4	Data Collection										

5	Data Processing													
6	Chapter IV													
7	Chapter V													
8	Thesis Submission													