

Digital Religious Literacy As A Foundation For Strengthening Moderate Islamic Education In The Era Of Information Disruption

Musleh¹, Khoiriyah²

¹ Pascasarjana Institut Ahmad Dahlan Probolinggo; muslehmus88@gmail.com

² Pascasarjana Institut Ahmad Dahlan Probolinggo; riyaahmad89@gmail.com

ARTICLE INFO

Keywords:

Digital Religious
Literacy; Moderate
Islamic Education;
Digital Literacy;
Religious Moderation;
Digital Ethics

Article history:

Received 2026-06-10

Revised 2026-07-19

Accepted 2026-07-30

ABSTRACT

Digital transformation has reconfigured the religious epistemic ecosystem by expanding access to, production of, distribution of, and negotiation over Islamic knowledge across various digital platforms. This condition presents pedagogical opportunities while simultaneously generating challenges in the form of disinformation, information fragmentation, shifts in religious authority, and decontextualized religious interpretations. This study aims to develop a conceptualization of digital religious literacy as an epistemic and pedagogical foundation for strengthening moderate Islamic education. The study employs a qualitative approach using a library research design and content analysis of academic literature, policy documents, and conceptual studies on digital literacy, religious literacy, media and information literacy, religious moderation, character education, and digital ethics. The analysis was conducted through identification, selection, coding, categorization, comparison, and thematic synthesis. The findings indicate that digital religious literacy constitutes a multidimensional construct integrating four key dimensions: epistemic evaluation, contextual interpretation, digital ethics, and responsible social participation. The principles of *tabayyun* (verification), *amanah* (trustworthiness), *sidq* (truthfulness), *'adl* (justice), *rahmah* (compassion), and *maslahah* (public benefit) can serve as normative foundations for developing students' abilities to verify sources, evaluate arguments, understand contexts, reflect on the consequences of information, and communicate ethically. The novelty of this study lies in integrating digital literacy, religious literacy, character education, and religious moderation within a unified epistemic-pedagogical framework. This framework positions students as critical, reflective, ethical, and responsible epistemic subjects in navigating the complexity of religious information in digital spaces.

This is an open access article under the [CC BY-NC-SA](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-sa/4.0/) license.



Corresponding Author:

Musleh

Pascasarjana Institut Ahmad Dahlan Probolinggo; muslehmus88@gmail.com

1. INTRODUCTION

Digital transformation has fundamentally reconstructed the epistemic ecosystem of society, especially in the way knowledge is acquired, produced, distributed, negotiated, and acquired. These changes are no longer limited to the realms of economics, communication, and education, but have

entered religious life through social media, search engines, video platforms, online forums, and artificial intelligence technology. The digital space has then developed into a new arena for the search for religious information, Islamic learning, interpretation exchange, and the formation of religious identity. In these conditions, religious authority has undergone a reconfiguration because the legitimacy of knowledge comes not only from scholars, Islamic boarding schools, universities, and formal institutions, but also from digital figures and social media influencers. Zaid et al. (2022) show that digital platforms allow generations of Muslims to renegotiate the concept of authority and religious practices through a more interactive and participatory form of communication. This shift expands access to Islamic knowledge, but at the same time presents epistemological issues regarding the credibility of sources, the validity of interpretation, and the scientific basis of information (Zaid et al., 2022).

The complexity of this transformation is increasingly evident in the information disorder environment, when the speed of production and distribution of digital information is often not balanced with adequate verification capacity. Religious information in the form of Qur'anic verses, hadiths, fatwas, scholar quotes, lecture pieces, and religious opinions can be reproduced and disseminated without an explanation of the source, historical context, interpretation methodology, and normative purpose. At the same time, the characteristics of social media can form a homogeneous communication space and strengthen users' tendency to interact with information that is in line with previous views. Su et al. (2022) show that the pattern of searching for information through social media is related to the formation of misperceptions, while critical thinking skills play an important role in dealing with an uncertain information environment (Su et al., 2021). In the context of Islam, Aydin et al. (2022) also show that social media can form echo chambers and strengthen the fragmentation of discourse about Islam (Aydin et al., 2022). Therefore, Islamic education needs to develop skills that go beyond understanding religious materials, namely the ability to trace sources, verify information, understand context, evaluate arguments, compare perspectives, and consider ethical consequences before receiving and disseminating religious information.

The urgency of strengthening digital religious literacy is increasingly significant because Islamic education has a strategic function in shaping the way students understand religion while interacting with the diversity of social realities. Islamic education should not stop at the transmission of normative knowledge, but needs to be directed at the formation of character, morals, social responsibility, critical thinking skills, and the ability to apply Islamic principles contextually. In this framework, *wasatiyyah* or religious moderation can be understood as a religious orientation that emphasizes balance, justice, respect for differences, and avoidance of excessive attitudes. Subchi et al. (2022) show that religious moderation is an important construct in the context of Indonesian Muslim religion and is related to the dimension of religious knowledge and attitudes (Subchi et al., 2022). Because students are now faced with the diversity of information and religious interpretations in the digital space, Islamic education requires new competencies that integrate information literacy, media literacy, religious literacy, critical thinking, and digital ethics. With these competencies, students are not only able to understand religious messages, but also able to distinguish credible information from information that is manipulative, provocative, non-contextual, or does not have an adequate scientific basis. Thus, digital religious literacy can be placed as a pedagogical foundation for strengthening moderate Islamic education in the midst of the complexity of the contemporary information ecosystem.

In contemporary academic discourse, digital literacy has evolved from a technical understanding of the ability to use technological tools to a multidimensional competence that includes the ability to access, select, evaluate, understand, create, and communicate information critically and responsibly. These developments show that digital literacy is essentially an epistemic competence that determines how individuals build knowledge in a complex information environment. Heiss et al. (2023), for example, developed the concept of social media information literacy that includes the dimensions of navigation, curation, assessment, understanding, creation, and interaction with digital information (Heiss et al., 2023). Meanwhile, research on information literacy in algorithmic cultures shows that users need to understand how algorithms shape the information environment they encounter (Haider et al., 2022). However, in the context of Islamic education, the integration of these competencies with

the process of acquiring, validating, interpreting, and practicing religious knowledge still requires more systematic conceptual development.

This conceptual gap is becoming increasingly important because religious knowledge has different epistemological characteristics from general information. Information about religion not only requires the ability to find sources, but also requires an understanding of scientific authority, historical context, interpretation methodology, argumentation structure, and normative and ethical implications of an understanding. A study by Ashari et al. (2023) on the digital religious literacy of students in Indonesia and Malaysia shows that technological developments have expanded students' access to digital religious resources, as well as presenting problems regarding the quality and use of these sources (Ashari et al., 2023). Another study on the religious digital literacy of urban Muslim communities also shows that the digital space has become an important part of the process of religious search and learning (Athoillah et al., 2023). These findings show that digital religious literacy is inadequate if reduced to technical ability to use the internet. It needs to be understood as a competency that integrates epistemic, interpretive, reflective, and ethical abilities in interacting with religious knowledge in the digital space.

Based on these gaps, an integrative approach is needed that connects the epistemic, pedagogical, ethical, and social dimensions in Islamic education. Digital religious literacy in this framework does not only refer to the ability to search for religious information through the internet, but also includes the ability to identify source authorities, cross-verify, understand context, evaluate arguments, compare perspectives, conduct ethical reflections, and communicate religious understanding responsibly. This perspective is in line with the research of Fendt et al. (2023) which shows that lateral reading can help users distinguish credible information from misinformation through a more critical process of examining sources (Fendt et al., 2023). At a broader level, studies on media and information literacy show that information literacy has an important function in improving people's ability to deal with disinformation and digital communication disorders (Aly, 2024). Thus, Islamic education needs to place students as active epistemic subjects: not just recipients of religious doctrines, but individuals who are able to examine, understand, reflect, and communicate religious knowledge by considering scientific principles as well as Islamic ethical values.

On the basis of this argument, this research is directed to place digital religious literacy as a conceptual foundation for strengthening moderate Islamic education in the midst of information disruption. This orientation is important because religious moderation is not only related to tolerance or rejection of extremism, but also requires an epistemic capacity that allows students to critically assess religious information and arguments before forming attitudes and actions. Studies on wasatiyyah education in Islamic schools show the importance of integrating the value of moderation into the learning process, while studies on digital citizenship affirm that digital competence needs to include critical, ethical, and social dimensions (Muqowim et al., 2022; Örtengren, 2024). Therefore, the novelty of this research lies in the effort to connect digital literacy, religious literacy, religious moderation, and character education through epistemic-pedagogical mechanisms. The framework views moderate Islamic education as not just a process of transmitting wasatiyyah values, but a process of forming students' ability to access, verify, interpret, reflect, and produce religious knowledge critically, ethically, contextually, and responsibly in the digital space.

2. METHODS

This study uses a qualitative approach with library research design combined with content analysis to conceptually analyze the development of digital religious literacy as the foundation of moderate Islamic education. Data sources include scientific journal articles, academic books, education policy documents, international institution reports, and relevant conceptual literature. The literature selection is based on substantive relevance, academic credibility, up-to-dateness, and theoretical contribution to the issues of digital education transformation, digital literacy, media and information literacy, religious literacy, and religious moderation. This strategy allows researchers to identify conceptual developments, arguments, empirical findings, and theoretical tendencies regarding an individual's ability to access, evaluate, verify, and interpret information critically and responsibly in a digital environment (Caled & Silva, 2022).

Data analysis is carried out systematically through the stages of identification, selection, coding, categorization, and thematic interpretation of the literature that has been collected. The literature is classified based on six main themes, namely digital information ecosystem transformation, digital and information literacy, religious literacy, Islamic education, religious moderation, and digital ethics and citizenship. Furthermore, comparisons between sources are carried out to identify similarities, differences, conceptual gaps, and possible integration between perspectives. The analysis is directed not only at information mapping, but at a critical interpretation of the relationship between digital competence, validation of religious knowledge, construction of meaning, and ethical responsibility in digital communication. This approach is in line with studies that place media literacy as an important ability in recognizing misinformation and building critical assessments of digital information (Su et al., 2021).

The results of the analysis are then synthesized to formulate a conceptual model of digital religious literacy as the foundation of moderate Islamic education. The synthesis is directed to explain the relationship between digital competence, validation of religious sources, contextual interpretation, digital ethics, tolerance, and religious moderation without the intention of producing statistical generalizations. The validity of the argument is maintained through triangulation of sources, consistency of categorization, comparison of original literature, and evaluation of coherence between theoretical propositions and findings of previous research. Thus, this methodology produces a theoretical framework that allows digital religious literacy to be understood as a multidimensional construct that integrates epistemic, digital, social, and ethical capabilities, and can be further developed through empirical research at various levels and contexts of Islamic education (Mukhibat et al., 2024; Mulyana, 2023).

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

3.1. Results

3.1.1. The Concept of Digital Religious Literacy

Digital religious literacy can be understood as the conceptual development of digital literacy that is specifically applied to the process of seeking, understanding, evaluating, producing, and distributing religious knowledge in the digital space. This concept goes beyond the ability to use technological tools because it involves the epistemological ability to distinguish credible information, accountable arguments, and interpretations that have a scientific basis. In this context, religious digitalization not only expands access to knowledge, but also creates new spaces for the formation of religious experiences, identities, and practices (Evolvi, 2022).

Operationally, digital religious literacy is a multidimensional competency that allows individuals to interact with religious information critically, contextually, reflectively, and responsibly. These competencies include the ability to find sources, identify authority, examine the validity of information, compare interpretive perspectives, understand the historical and social context of the text, and recognize biases in the production of digital knowledge. In online religious learning, students are increasingly confronted with a variety of religious sources and actors, so the process of determining credibility cannot depend solely on the popularity of a source. Authority assessment requires social and epistemic considerations simultaneously (Berger & Golan, 2024).

The epistemic dimension is a fundamental element because religious information has a normative and interpretive character that requires a more complex verification process than general information. Users need to trace the origin of information, identify the competence of the author or informant, examine the relevance of the argument to the primary source, and understand the context when a religious text is interpreted. Research on the use of the internet and social media as a source of Islamic learning shows that students use digital space to expand religious understanding, but this practice also requires critical awareness of the quality and character of the sources used (Ashari et al., 2023).

In addition to the epistemic dimension, digital religious literacy has an ethical dimension that directs how knowledge is acquired, interpreted, produced, and disseminated to society. These competencies include the responsibility not to disseminate unverified information, respect for diversity of interpretation, avoid provocative communication, and consider the social consequences of any digital activity. Thus, digital religious literacy can be positioned as an integrative capacity that

brings together technological prowess, critical reasoning, epistemic awareness, scientific authority, and moral responsibility. The framework is important for shaping reflective and constructive digital religious practices (Berger & Golan, 2024; Evolvi, 2022).

3.1.2. Moderate Islamic Education

Moderate Islamic education can be understood as a pedagogical praxis that develops religiosity in proportion while maintaining the normative foundations of Islam. The concept of *wasatiyyah* does not simply designate a middle position, but represents an educational orientation that integrates balance (*tawāzun*), justice (*'adl*), tolerance (*tasāmuh*), and benefit. In the context of education, these principles need to be translated into learning objectives, materials, pedagogical strategies, and institutional culture. Studies of Islamic religious education in Indonesia show that the values of nonviolence, egalitarianism, justice, and tolerance are important components in the construction of religious moderation (Mulyana, 2023).

The implementation of moderate Islamic education requires a shift in orientation from simply the transmission of knowledge to the process of internalizing values through dialogical, reflective, and contextual learning experiences. Students do not know enough about the concepts of tolerance and justice cognitively, but need to gain pedagogical experiences that allow them to dialogue with differences, understand diversity of perspectives, and build the ability to resolve differences without violence. Thus, moderation learning needs to connect religious knowledge with concrete social issues and pluralistic societal life. The development of a moderation curriculum in higher education shows the importance of integrating knowledge, skills, and attitudes in the formation of moderate character (Mukhibat et al., 2024).

In the digital ecosystem, moderate Islamic education faces increasingly complex epistemological challenges because students obtain religious information through various platforms, actors, and social networks. This condition requires the integration of religious literacy, digital literacy, and critical thinking skills so that students are able to evaluate the credibility of sources, identify biases, understand the context of argumentation, and distinguish religious knowledge from popular opinion. Moderation education thus needs to develop interpretive skills as well as digital communication ethics. This approach allows students to respond to differences argumentatively, proportionately, and responsibly in the digital public space (Mulyana, 2023).

At the institutional level, moderate Islamic education requires continuity between the curriculum, learning practices, educator examples, and educational culture. Moderation will not be optimal if it is only placed as additional material, but needs to be a principle that animates the educational process as a whole. Evaluation of the development of a moderate education curriculum shows that the integration of aspects of knowledge, skills, tolerance, national commitment, non-violence, and appreciation for local culture can be a systematic part of education. Therefore, moderate Islamic education needs to be designed as a pedagogical ecosystem that forms the ability to think and act religiously in a balanced manner (Mukhibat et al., 2024).

3.1.3. Media and Information Literacy

The concept of Media and Information Literacy (MIL) can be positioned as an epistemological foundation for digital religious literacy because it integrates the ability to access, select, analyze, evaluate, verify, and produce information reflectively. In the digital ecosystem, these competencies do not stop at technical skills, but include critical reasoning on the credibility, bias, context, and communicative purpose of a message. Al-Zou'bi's findings show that mastery of MIL is related to the development of students' critical thinking skills in understanding and criticizing various media content, including potentially misleading messages. Thus, MIL is an important prerequisite for the formation of responsible digital religious reasoning (Al-Zou'bi, 2021).

In the religious realm, the MIL principle needs to be transformed into religious information verification, which is an epistemic process to test the validity of claims through tracing of sources, scientific authority, context, argumentation, and interpretation coherence. This need is increasingly significant because social media allows information to be produced, replicated, and circulated without always going through academic validation mechanisms. Orhan's research shows that new media literacy and critical thinking dispositions play a role in students' ability to detect fake news on social

media. These findings strengthen the argument that religious information verification should be built as an intellectual habit, not just a technical skill. This requires habituation to verification (Orhan, 2023).

Verification of religious information also requires the ability to distinguish digital popularity from epistemic credibility. The number of followers, intensity of interaction, virality, and algorithmic visibility are indicators of the reachability of a message, but they do not automatically indicate scholarly authority. Berger and Golan found that online religious learners develop strategies to build a network of trusted sources, tailor sources to questions, and consider prestige and epistemic norms when assessing authority. This perspective confirms that digital religious literacy needs to form an evaluative capacity that allows learners to weigh the legitimacy of sources contextually, reflectively, and evidence-based. This approach shapes digital self-aggrandizement evaluators of knowledge (Berger & Golan, 2024).

In the end, digital religious literacy can be understood as an epistemic as well as pedagogical competence that connects media literacy skills with the ethics of seeking religious knowledge. In a digital environment that multiplies forms of religious authority, students need to learn to triangulate sources, compare interpretations, recognize contexts, and delay the dissemination of claims before obtaining an adequate basis. Andok's study shows that online media gives birth to diverse forms of religious authority and continues to be negotiated through identity, authenticity, choice, and platform attention mechanisms. Therefore, religious education needs to develop verification as a reflective and ethical practice. Strengthening students' academic responsibility. (Andok, 2024).

3.1.4. Digital Citizenship and Islamic Ethics

Digital citizenship is a multidimensional construction that integrates technological competence with social responsibility, ethics, law, security, and civic participation in the digital space. This perspective emphasizes that digital skills are inadequate when they are released from the ability to make reflective and responsible decisions. Richardson, Martin, and Sauers' systematic review shows that digital citizenship research includes educational frameworks, contexts, and outputs, so the concept needs to be understood beyond the use of devices. In Islamic education, the framework can be enriched through the values of amanah, sidq, 'adl, rahmah, tabayyun, and maslahah as an ethical orientation for the use of technology (Richardson et al., 2021).

From the perspective of Islamic education, digital citizenship can be constructed as a moral praxis that connects digital competence with the formation of character and social responsibility. The value of trust demands the responsible use of technology, sidq directs honesty-based communication, 'adl affirms fairness in interactions, while rahmah encourages respect for the dignity of other users. A systematic study of digital citizenship shows that education needs to develop digital readiness as well as citizenship, ethics, and security competencies so that students are able to participate constructively in a complex and diverse digital environment in a reflective and sustainable manner in learning (Prasetyo et al., 2021).

The tabayyun principle provides an epistemic-ethical framework for dealing with the flow of digital information, especially when students are faced with unverified religious claims. Pedagogically, tabayyun can be translated into examination procedures through tracing of sources, author identity, date of publication, context, evidence, and suitability of arguments before information is trusted or disseminated to digital audiences responsibly and proportionately in practice. Research findings on information literacy show that evaluative skills are related to the capacity to recognize false information, so verification learning needs to be directed at strengthening critical reasoning, not just operational skills using technology (Orhan, 2023).

The integration of tabayyun with digital citizenship forms a civic orientation that places information verification as an epistemic obligation as well as a social responsibility. Students are not only required to be able to find and assess information, but also consider ethical consequences when sharing content with digital communities. A systematic review of the implementation of digital citizenship in education shows that learning is often reduced to technological activities, while critical digital citizenship practices have not always been explicitly developed. Therefore, Islamic education can use tabayyun as a reflective mechanism to build critical, ethical, and responsible digital participation (Tadlaoui-Brahmi et al., 2022).

3.1.5. Character Education and Moderation

Character education provides affective and behavioral dimensions that complement cognitive competencies in digital religious literacy. The framework of moral knowing, moral feeling, and moral action emphasizes that understanding norms must be transformed into awareness, commitment, and ethical action. In the digital space, students need to develop knowledge about information ethics as well as sensitivity to the social consequences of media activities. Research on adolescents shows that moral decisions when facing online impoliteness are heavily influenced by moral considerations, so that relevant digital citizenship education is developed through approaches to character, virtue, practical wisdom, and ethical reflection in education (Harrison & Polizzi, 2022).

In digital religious literacy, character internalization takes place when normative knowledge, moral dispositions, and actual actions are consistently integrated. Students do not sufficiently understand the importance of verifying religious information, but need to have concern for the epistemic, social, and ethical impacts of the information received or disseminated. Hidayat et al.'s research shows that character education in Indonesia is internalized through habituation, integration, and imitation, although virtual learning presents barriers to direct role models and interactions. The findings confirm the need for a systematic digital pedagogical design to maintain a continuous and consistent character-building process (Hidayat et al., 2022).

The moral dimension in digital religious literacy also demands the formation of dispositions that are able to connect knowledge with consequential considerations before learners act in the digital space. The process includes the ability to recognize dilemmas, weigh the interests of others, control impulses, and choose actions that are in line with the values of honesty, responsibility, and respect for human dignity. Berkowitz and Bier's meta-analysis shows that character education programs produce a positive impact on character output, so that the development of digital literacy can be strengthened through planned, integrated, contextual, and ultimately behavior-change-oriented character interventions (Berkowitz & Bier, 2023).

Thus, character education can be placed as a transformative mechanism that transforms digital religious literacy from mere evaluative proficiency to moral praxis. The integration of reflection, example, ethical dialogue, verification simulations, and behavioral evaluations allows learners to test the suitability between known values, believed attitudes, and actions taken. In the context of virtual learning, the success of internalization is highly dependent on pedagogical consistency and the learning environment. Therefore, digital character education needs to be designed in a sustainable manner so that moral values do not stop as declarative knowledge, but rather develop into the habit of acting responsibly (Hidayat et al., 2022).

3.2. Discussion

3.2.1. Information Disruption and Transformation of Religious Knowledge Authorities

The transformation of digital technology has reconfigured the structure of religious knowledge authority from a relatively hierarchical transmission pattern to a more open, participatory, and differentiated ecosystem. In the conventional paradigm, the legitimacy of knowledge is mainly built through teachers, scholars, books, educational institutions, and religious institutions. Digitalization then expands the arena of knowledge production and distribution by allowing individuals to become consumers as well as producers of religious discourse. These changes not only accelerate communication, but also shift the mechanism of authority formation, as credibility now interacts with visibility, social networks, and the characteristics of digital platforms. This phenomenon shows the need for a more critical and systematic epistemic evaluation of digital religious sources (Berger & Golan, 2024).

Digital openness produces ambivalent epistemological consequences. On the one hand, students gain broad access to interpretations, hadiths, lectures, digital books, scientific articles, and various religious learning resources without being limited by geographical space. This access has the potential to enrich the learning experience and expand opportunities to gain religious perspectives. On the other hand, the heterogeneity of sources creates problems because academic materials, personal opinions, propaganda, misinformation, and religious interpretations can circulate in the same space. Research on online religious authorities shows that users face the need to assess the credibility of sources and the competence of religious actors before accepting information as reliable knowledge (Whyte, 2022).

This condition emphasizes the urgency of developing epistemic competencies in Islamic education, especially the ability to question sources, trace the legitimacy of science, understand interpretation methods, identify context, and evaluate the purpose of communication of information. Digital religious literacy functions as a pedagogical mechanism to build these skills so that students do not receive information based solely on popularity or ease of access. The experience of religious education in the digital environment shows that religious literacy and coaching can shape the ability to navigate social while opening up new configurations of religious authority. Thus, Islamic education needs to integrate source evaluation, epistemological reflection, and digital proficiency to maintain the integrity of religious knowledge (Hefner, 2022).

3.2.2. Information Verification as a Foundation for Religious Moderation

Digital religious literacy contributes strategically to moderate Islamic education through strengthening the culture of verification as an epistemic and ethical mechanism. Religious information has social consequences because erroneous citations, unsourced hadiths, or fragmented statements can disproportionately shape religious understanding and attitudes. Research on social media misinformation shows that religious information is a category that is very easily accepted without adequate evaluation, so the ability to assess the credibility of information is an important pedagogical need in contemporary Islamic education (Alam, 2021).

The tabayyun principle can be reconstructed as an epistemic paradigm in digital learning through systematic verification procedures. Students need to identify primary sources, trace the author's competence, compare claims with credible references, examine context, and delay the distribution of information when its validity is inadequate. The framework shifts tabayyun from mere moral advice to an information literacy competency that can be taught, trained, and evaluated. The study of information literacy explicitly connects tabayyun with information evaluation, especially in dealing with disinformation in the contemporary digital environment (Riza, 2021).

Thus, tabayyun can be placed as an integrative paradigm that brings together Islamic epistemology with digital information literacy competencies. This integration allows students to develop technical skills as well as moral responsibility when receiving, assessing, and disseminating religious information. Verification is not only directed at the question of whether information is true, but also how its source, context, purpose, and social consequences can be accounted for. Such an approach strengthens the relevance of Islamic education in dealing with complex information ecosystems, while building students' epistemic resilience to misinformation, manipulation, and the dissemination of unverified religious content (Putra & Ayyaisy, 2025).

3.2.3. Contextual Interpretation as a Religious Competence

Digital religious literacy requires epistemic abilities that go beyond verifying the authenticity of sources, because the truth of information does not always guarantee the accuracy of meaning if the text is separated from its historical, social, linguistic, and normative contexts. Students need to understand the relationship between the text, the context, the intentions of the teachings, and the social realities that surround it. Thus, religious learning must develop hermeneutical skills that allow students to read information critically, comprehensively, and reflectively, while avoiding interpretive reductionism that has the potential to produce partial religious understanding in the digital space (Rosidin et al., 2024).

Contextual interpretation further places the religious learning process as an intellectual activity that connects texts with historical backgrounds, social structures, linguistic realities, and contemporary life problems. Students need to be directed to compare various interpretations, identify methodological arguments, and understand the reasons for the emergence of differences in interpretation. This approach encourages the formation of religious reasoning that is open to the complexity of meaning without losing its normative footing. Research on moderation in Islamic education shows that contextual and holistic interpretations can strengthen moderate understanding by integrating textual meaning, context, and scientific perspectives in a multidimensional manner (Mulyana, 2023; Rosidin et al., 2024).

Interpretive competence has direct implications for the construction of moderate Islamic education because the ability to understand context can reduce the tendency to read texts literally, partially, and isolatedly from its moral purpose. Moderation demands integration between normative

understanding and sensitivity to social reality so that teachings can be applied proportionately, fairly, and relevantly. From a pedagogical perspective, the development of such competencies requires dialogical, reflective, and case-based learning. The religious moderation curriculum therefore needs to develop interpretive skills while strengthening tolerance, justice, and respect for diversity in Islamic educational practices (Mukhibat et al., 2024).

3.2.4. Digital Ethics as a Manifestation of Morality

The ethics of using information is a fundamental dimension of digital religious literacy because Islamic education is inherently oriented towards the formation of morals and moral responsibility. Digital competence therefore needs to be directed at the ability to use, produce, and distribute information in an honest, proportionate, and benefit-oriented manner. In the digital space, Islamic values can be a normative framework to limit manipulative behavior, insults, slander, and the dissemination of harmful information. The character-based approach is also relevant because research shows that moral considerations play a role in adolescents' moral decision-making when facing the problem of digital interaction (Harrison & Polizzi, 2022).

The values of *amanah*, *sidq*, *'adl*, and *rahmah* can be operationalized as ethical principles in digital information management. *Amanah* demands responsibility for the truth and consequences of information dissemination; *sidq* requires honesty in communication; *'adl* demands fair treatment of others; while *rahmah* directs communication to respect for human dignity. The integration of these values allows Islamic education to develop digital skills that are not only technical, but also moral and reflective. The study of character education emphasizes the importance of integrating values, habituation, and example in shaping students' behavior in the digital environment (Hidayat et al., 2022).

The concept of *maslahah* expands the orientation of digital ethics from individual compliance to consideration of the social impact of information. Each digital action needs to be considered based on its benefits, potential losses, justice, and consequences for individuals and communities. With this perspective, digital religious literacy becomes a space for moral actualization through the practice of verification, polite communication, respect for differences, and self-control before disseminating content. The integration of digital literacy with character education shows that the use of technology needs to be directed at the formation of wise and ethical behavior, not just the improvement of technological competence (Rahayu et al., 2023).

3.2.5. Digital Religious Literacy as the Foundation of Moderate Islamic Education

Based on conceptual synthesis, digital religious literacy can be placed as the foundation of moderate Islamic education through interlocking epistemic, interpretive, ethical, and participatory dimensions. The epistemic dimension requires students to evaluate the credibility of sources based on arguments, evidence, competence, and scientific authority, rather than mere popularity. The interpretive dimension develops the ability to understand texts through historical, social, linguistic, and normative contexts. The integration of these two dimensions builds critical thinking skills that allow students to assess digital knowledge reflectively, systematically, and responsibly in the face of the complexity of contemporary religious information (Audrin & Audrin, 2022).

The ethical and participatory dimensions complement epistemic abilities by directing students to use knowledge in a dignified manner in the digital space. The ethical dimension is based on trust, honesty, justice, grace, and benefit, while the participatory dimension requires the ability to dialogue, respect differences, avoid provocations, and reject communication practices that degrade others. Character-based digital citizenship education shows that moral considerations play a role in adolescent moral decision-making when facing online interaction problems, so digital competence needs to be integrated with the formation of character and social responsibility in a sustainable manner (Harrison & Polizzi, 2022).

These four dimensions form an integrative pedagogical cycle, namely identifying, verifying, understanding, reflecting, dialogue, and then participating responsibly. This cycle shows that digital religious literacy is not just a set of technological skills, but a mechanism for building epistemic, moral, communicative, and social capacity. In the context of Islamic education, students are directed to construct knowledge through resource evaluation while developing moderate religious behavior. Changes in the digital ecosystem that help shape religious authority further emphasize the importance

of evaluative skills so that students do not equate digital visibility with scientific legitimacy (Berger & Golan, 2024).

3.2.6. Novelty and Research Contributions

The novelty of this research is affirmed through the conceptualization of digital religious literacy as an epistemic and pedagogical foundation for moderate Islamic education. This literacy does not stop at the ability to access information, but includes the ability to assess the credibility of sources, understand context, compare religious authorities, and use knowledge ethically in the digital space. This perspective is in line with studies that place religious knowledge as a critical competency and with the transformation of religious practices due to digitalization, thereby strengthening the verifying, reflective, and transformative dimensions of learning conceptually and pedagogically (Franck, 2021; Evolvi, 2022).

The theoretical contribution of the research lies in the integration of four conceptual domains—digital literacy, religious literacy, Islamic education, and religious moderation—into a single relational framework. This integration explains that the quality of religious moderation is not solely formed through the transmission of values, but also through epistemic mechanisms when learners acquire, examine, interpret, and reconstruct religious knowledge. Findings on interfaith literacy, moderation education, and moderation strengthening curricula support the need for such integration, especially to systematically connect the dimensions of knowledge, attitudes, and practices (Mukmin et al., 2021; Mukhibat et al., 2024).

The practical contribution of the research is realized through a pedagogical framework that directs the Islamic Education curriculum to strengthen competencies to face the complexity of digital religious information. Teachers can design learning based on source tracing, claim verification, inter-perspective dialogue, ethical reflection, and production of religious content. Such an approach expands the learning orientation from mastery of the material to the formation of epistemic and social capacity. Studies on the implementation of moderation in Islamic Religious Education show the importance of teacher competence and systematic learning design, as well as strengthen the integration of digital literacy in learning (Mulyana, 2023; Mukhibat et al., 2024).

4. CONCLUSION

This study shows that digital religious literacy has a strategic position in strengthening moderate Islamic education in the midst of information disruption. Changes in the digital ecosystem have expanded access to religious knowledge while increasing the complexity of epistemic issues, such as disinformation, information fragmentation, loss of context, and diversity of religious authorities. In these conditions, Islamic education is not enough to equip students with normative knowledge, but it is necessary to develop the ability to identify sources, verify information, understand religious contexts, conduct ethical reflections, and participate responsibly in the digital space. Digital religious literacy thus functions as a competency that connects religious knowledge, information literacy, character, and social responsibility.

The novelty of this research lies in the conceptualization of digital religious literacy as an epistemic and pedagogical foundation for strengthening moderate Islamic education. The framework offered integrates four main dimensions, namely the evaluation of information credibility, contextual religious interpretation, digital ethics, and responsible social participation. The integration expands the understanding of religious moderation by showing that the formation of moderate attitudes does not only take place through the transmission of values, but also through the process of how students acquire, validate, understand, and use religious knowledge. Islamic principles such as *tabayyun*, *amanah*, *sidq*, *'adl*, *rahmah*, and *maslahah* can be the normative foundation for the development of digital competencies that are both critical and ethical.

Globally, this research contributes to the development of Islamic education studies by linking digital transformation, religious literacy, character education, and religious moderation in one conceptual framework. The framework can be the basis for curriculum development, learning strategies, teacher competency development, and educational policies that are responsive to changes in the information ecosystem. Although this research is conceptual and based on literature studies so that it has not tested the model empirically, its conceptual findings open up space for further research

to develop digital religious literacy measurement instruments, test the effectiveness of pedagogical models at various levels of education, and evaluate their application in different social and cultural contexts. Thus, digital religious literacy can be positioned as one of the important foundations for the development of Islamic education that is critical, contextual, ethical, moderate, and relevant to the challenges of the global digital society.

REFERENCES

- Al-Zou'bi, M. (2021). The impact of media and information literacy on acquiring the critical thinking skill by the educational faculty's students. *Thinking Skills and Creativity*, 39, 100782. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tsc.2020.100782>
- Alam, F. (2021). Social media and COVID-19 misinformation: How ignorant Facebook users are? *Heliyon*, 7(5), e07144. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.heliyon.2021.e07144>
- Aly, M. (2024). Media and information literacy as a model of societal balance: A grounded meta-synthesis. *Heliyon*, 10(3), e25380. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.heliyon.2024.e25380>
- Andok, M. (2024). The impact of online media on religious authority. *Religions*, 15(9), 1103. <https://doi.org/10.3390/rel15091103>
- Ashari, M. K., Faizin, M., & Shiddiq, J. (2023). Religious Digital Literacy of Students in Indonesia and Malaysia. *Tadris Jurnal Pendidikan Islam*, 18(1), 189–210. <https://doi.org/10.19105/tjpi.v18i1.8794>
- Athoillah, S., Ashari, M. K., & Alauddin, M. B. (2023). Religious digital literacy of urban Muslim society in Indonesia: A systematic literature review. *Academic: Journal of Islamic Thought*, 28(2). <https://doi.org/10.32332/akademika.v28i2.7088>
- Audrin, C., & Audrin, B. (2022). Key factors in digital literacy in learning and education: A systematic literature review using text mining. *Education and Information Technologies*, 27, 7395–7419. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10639-021-10832-5>
- Aydin, Z., Fuess, A., Förster, M., & Sunier, T. (2022). When birds of a feather Instagram together: Debating the image of Islam in echo chambers and through trench warfare on social media. *Social Media + Society*, 8(3). <https://doi.org/10.1177/20563051221115211>
- Berger, A., & Golan, O. (2024). Online religious learning: Digital epistemic authority and self-socialization in religious communities. *Learning, Media and Technology*, 49(2), 274–289. <https://doi.org/10.1080/17439884.2023.2169833>
- Berkowitz, M. W., & Bier, M. C. (2023). A comprehensive meta-analysis of character education programs. *Journal of Moral Education*, 52(2), 119–138. <https://doi.org/10.1080/03057240.2022.2060196>
- Caled, D., & Silva, M. J. (2022). Digital media and misinformation: An outlook on multidisciplinary strategies against manipulation. *Journal of Computational Social Science*, 5, 123–159. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s42001-021-00118-8>
- Evolvi, G. (2022). Religion and the internet: Digital religion, (hyper)mediated spaces, and materiality. *Journal of Religion, Society and Politics*, 6, 9–25. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s41682-021-00087-9>
- Fendt, M., Nistor, N., Scheibenzuber, C., & Artmann, B. (2023). Sourcing against misinformation: Effects of a scalable lateral reading training based on cognitive apprenticeship. *Computers in Human Behavior*, 148, 107820. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.chb.2023.107820>
- Franck, O. (2021). Gateways to accessing powerful RE knowledge: A critical constructive analysis. *Journal of Religious Education*, 69, 161–174. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s40839-021-00133-x>
- Haider, J., Johansson, V., & Hammarfelt, B. (2022). Information literacy as a site for anticipation: Temporal tactics for infrastructural meaning-making and algo-rhythm awareness. *Journal of Documentation*, 78(1), 129–143. <https://doi.org/10.1108/JD-11-2020-0204>
- Harrison, T., & Polizzi, G. (2022). (In)civility and adolescents' moral decision making online: Drawing on moral theory to advance digital citizenship education. *Education and Information Technologies*, 27, 3277–3297. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10639-021-10710-0>
- Hefner, C.-M. (2022). Morality, religious authority, and the digital edge. *American Ethnologist*, 49(3), 359–373. <https://doi.org/10.1111/amet.13088>

- Heiss, R., Nanz, A., & Matthes, J. (2023). Social media information literacy: Conceptualization and associations with information overload, news avoidance and conspiracy mentality. *Computers in Human Behavior*, 148, 107908. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.chb.2023.107908>
- Hidayat, M., Rozak, R. W. A., Hakam, K. A., Kembara, M. D., & Parhan, M. (2022). Character education in Indonesia: How is it internalized and implemented in virtual learning? *Jurnal Cakrawala Pendidikan*, 41(1), 186–198. <https://doi.org/10.21831/cp.v41i1.45920>
- Mukhibat, M., Effendi, M., Setyawan, W. H., & Sutoyo, M. (2024). Development and evaluation of religious moderation education curriculum at higher education in Indonesia. *Cogent Education*, 11(1), 2302308. <https://doi.org/10.1080/2331186X.2024.2302308>
- Mukmin, M. I., Ali, N., Afwadzi, B., & Abdullah, I. (2021). Interreligious literacy learning as a counter-radicalization method: A new trend among institutions of Islamic higher education in Indonesia. *Islam and Christian-Muslim Relations*, 32(4), 383–405. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09596410.2021.1996978>
- Mulyana, R. (2023). Religious moderation in Islamic religious education textbook and implementation in Indonesia. *HTS Teologiese Studies/Theological Studies*, 79(1), a8592. <https://doi.org/10.4102/hts.v79i1.8592>
- Muqowim, M., Sibawaihi, S., & Alsulami, N. D. (2022). Developing religious moderation in Indonesian Islamic schools through the implementation of the values of Islām wasatīyyah. *Jurnal Pendidikan Agama Islam*, 19(2), 207–222. <https://doi.org/10.14421/jpai.2022.192-03>
- Orhan, A. (2023). Fake news detection on social media: The predictive role of university students' critical thinking dispositions and new media literacy. *Smart Learning Environments*, 10, 29. <https://doi.org/10.1186/s40561-023-00248-8>
- Örtegren, A. (2024). Philosophical underpinnings of digital citizenship through a postdigital lens: Implications for teacher educators' professional digital competence. *Education and Information Technologies*, 29, 4253–4285. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10639-023-11965-5>
- Prasetyo, W. H., Naidu, N. B. M., Tan, B. P., & Sumardjoko, B. (2021). Digital citizenship trend in educational sphere: A systematic review. *International Journal of Evaluation and Research in Education*, 10(4), 1192–1201. <https://doi.org/10.11591/ijere.v10i4.21767>
- Putra, D. H. A., & Ayyaisy, H. I. (2025). Optimizing digital technology in progressive Islamic education to enhance public literacy and combat hoaxes. *Multicultural Islamic Education Review*, 3(1), 63–74. <https://doi.org/10.23917/mier.v3i1.9915>
- Rahayu, W., Zukri, A., Maimunah, A., Sari, D. M., Jannah, R., & Ikhlas, M. (2023). Character education in Islamic education: Strengthening and implementing in the digital age. *At-Tarbawi: Jurnal Kajian Kependidikan Islam*, 8(2). <https://doi.org/10.22515/attarbawi.v8i2.7498>
- Richardson, J. W., Martin, F., & Sauers, N. (2021). Systematic review of 15 years of research on digital citizenship: 2004–2019. *Learning, Media and Technology*, 46(4), 498–514. <https://doi.org/10.1080/17439884.2021.1941098>
- Riza, M. (2021). Information Literacy as an Implementation of Tabayun Concept in Islam. *Tik Ilmeu Journal of Library and Information Science*, 5(2), 201. <https://doi.org/10.29240/tik.v5i2.2866>
- Rosidin, R., Mardhatillah, M., Andriani, F., & Addakhil, A. R. (2024). Moderate interpretation in Islamic religious education textbooks: A case study in an Indonesian Islamic senior high school. *Jurnal Lektur Keagamaan*, 22(2), 383–420. <https://doi.org/10.31291/jlka.v22i2.1273>
- Su, Y., Lee, D. K. L., & Xiao, X. (2021). I enjoy thinking critically, and I'm in control: Examining the influences of media literacy factors on misperceptions amidst the COVID-19 infodemic. *Computers in Human Behavior*, 128, 107111. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.chb.2021.107111>
- Subchi, I., Zulkifli, Z., Latifa, R., & Sa'diyah, S. (2022). Religious moderation in Indonesian Muslims. *Religions*, 13(5), 451. <https://doi.org/10.3390/rel13050451>
- Tadlaoui-Brahmi, A., Çuko, K., & Alvarez, L. (2022). Digital citizenship in primary education: A systematic literature review describing how it is implemented. *Social Sciences & Humanities Open*, 6(1), 100348. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ssaho.2022.100348>
- Whyte, S. A. (2022). Islamic religious authority in cyberspace: A qualitative study of Muslim religious actors in Australia. *Religions*, 13(1), 69–84. <https://doi.org/10.3390/rel13010069>

Zaid, B., Fedtke, J., Shin, D. D., El Kadoussi, A., & Ibahrine, M. (2022). Digital Islam and Muslim millennials: How social media influencers reimagine religious authority and Islamic practices. *Religions*, 13(4), 335. <https://doi.org/10.3390/rel13040335>