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Digital Islamic Literacy and Students' Religious Moderation: Evidence from Indonesian Islamic Senior High Schools

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Abstract

This study examines the relationship between digital Islamic literacy and students' religious moderation in Indonesian Islamic senior high schools, with particular attention to how students access, evaluate, interpret, and disseminate Islamic information in digital environments. The study employs a library research approach by critically synthesizing recent scholarly literature published primarily during the last decade on digital literacy, Islamic education, digital religion, religious literacy, and religious moderation. The findings indicate that digital Islamic literacy contributes to religious moderation when it involves not merely technical competence but also source verification, contextual interpretation, ethical communication, recognition of religious diversity, and critical engagement with digital religious authorities. The literature further demonstrates that social media can simultaneously strengthen moderate religious narratives and facilitate intolerance, polarization, misinformation, and exclusivist interpretations. Teachers, school culture, Islamic Religious Education curricula, and structured digital learning activities therefore function as important mediating factors. The novelty of this study lies in proposing a conceptual synthesis that positions digital Islamic literacy as an epistemic, ethical, and pedagogical mechanism for developing religious moderation among Islamic senior high school students. The study recommends integrating critical digital religious literacy into Islamic Religious Education rather than treating digital literacy as a purely technological competency.

Keywords: Digital Islamic Literacy, Digital Religious Literacy, Religious Moderation.

Introduction

The expansion of digital technology has fundamentally transformed the ways young people encounter, interpret, and communicate religious knowledge. Religious information that was previously mediated predominantly through teachers, books, mosques, pesantren, and formal educational institutions is now widely available through search engines, social media, video platforms, podcasts, and religious

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applications. This transformation has created unprecedented opportunities for students to broaden their Islamic knowledge beyond classroom boundaries. At the same time, digital abundance has made it increasingly difficult for students to distinguish authoritative, contextual, and educational religious information from misleading, decontextualized, or extremist narratives. Digital Islamic literacy therefore needs to be understood as a significant educational concern rather than merely a technological skill. Recent scholarship demonstrates that digital environments have become important spaces in which religious authority, interpretation, identity, and moderation are continuously negotiated (Hefni, 2020; Sahlan et al., 2022; Amirudin et al., 2026).

The emergence of digital religion has also changed the epistemological structure of religious learning. Students can encounter Qur'anic interpretations, hadith explanations, fatwas, sermons, lectures, and religious opinions from individuals whose academic and religious qualifications may not always be transparent. Consequently, access to religious knowledge is no longer automatically equivalent to access to reliable religious knowledge. The abundance of digital content can encourage intellectual openness, but it can also produce confusion when contradictory interpretations appear without adequate contextual explanation. In this situation, students require the capacity to identify sources, compare arguments, examine evidence, and understand the historical and social contexts of religious statements. The literature on digital religion emphasizes that digital platforms do not simply transmit religious knowledge but also reshape the processes through which religious authority and meaning are constructed (Lövheim & Campbell, 2017; Hefni, 2020).

The problem becomes more significant for adolescents because senior high school students are simultaneously experiencing cognitive, emotional, social, and religious development. Their engagement with digital media is frequently intertwined with identity formation and the search for social recognition. Religious content encountered through algorithms, influencers, peer networks, and online communities can therefore contribute to the formation of religious attitudes. Students may encounter messages promoting tolerance and peaceful coexistence, but they may also encounter hate speech, sectarian narratives, conspiracy theories, and religious exclusivism. Digital Islamic literacy is consequently necessary to help students negotiate these competing messages. Studies of Indonesian students indicate that digital religious literacy can influence the ways learners access religious sources and relate them to religious moderation (Sahlan et al., 2022; Haniati et al., 2024).

Religious moderation is particularly important in the Indonesian educational context because Indonesia is characterized by substantial religious, ethnic, cultural, linguistic, and social diversity. Islamic education has an important responsibility to develop religious understanding that is firmly rooted in Islamic teachings while remaining respectful toward difference. Religious moderation in this context does not mean weakening religious commitment or relativizing Islamic beliefs. Rather, it emphasizes balanced religious attitudes characterized by tolerance, justice, non-violence, national commitment, and accommodation of legitimate cultural diversity. Indonesian scholarship has increasingly positioned religious moderation as a

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strategic framework for strengthening social harmony and preventing extremism. Within Islamic education, moderation therefore needs to become part of students' knowledge, attitudes, behaviors, and everyday digital practices (Rahmadi & Hamdan, 2023; Husna & Thohir, 2020).

The digital environment presents both opportunities and risks for the development of religious moderation. On one hand, digital platforms can provide students with access to diverse Islamic scholarship, interreligious dialogue, educational resources, and moderate religious narratives. On the other hand, the same platforms can accelerate the circulation of misinformation, provocative messages, radical interpretations, and identity-based polarization. Hefni (2020) argues that the digital space provides a wide range of religious narratives while simultaneously creating conditions for shifting religious authority and intensifying identity-based contestation. This dual character means that digital technology cannot be considered inherently moderate or radical. Its educational consequences depend substantially on users' literacy, critical capacities, pedagogical guidance, and social environment. Digital Islamic literacy must therefore include the ability to navigate both the possibilities and risks of digital religious communication (Hefni, 2020; Ni'mah et al., 2024).

Islamic senior high schools and Madrasah Aliyah occupy a strategic position in responding to this challenge. These institutions are expected to provide religious education while simultaneously preparing students to participate responsibly in contemporary society. Islamic Religious Education is particularly important because it provides conceptual resources through which students can interpret religious messages and relate them to social realities.(Bakr et al., 2025) Research on Indonesian Islamic senior high schools demonstrates that moderation can be incorporated into Qur'an and Hadith learning through lesson planning, cooperative learning, teacher modeling, and habituation. Such findings indicate that moderation is most effective when it is embedded in the learning process rather than treated as an isolated topic. Digital Islamic literacy can extend this approach by enabling students to practice moderation when interacting with religious content outside the classroom (Chalis et al., 2024; Rosidin et al., 2024).

Another important issue concerns the changing position of religious authority among young people. Traditionally, students often relied on teachers, kyai, ulama, religious books, and institutional organizations to obtain religious guidance. Digital media have diversified these sources by allowing students to follow preachers, scholars, influencers, content creators, and anonymous accounts simultaneously. This diversification can democratize access to religious knowledge, but it can also weaken students' ability to distinguish between scholarly authority and popularity-based authority. Recent research indicates that digital religious content may become an epistemic filter through which students decide which interpretations to accept. The challenge for Islamic education is therefore not to eliminate digital religious sources but to equip students with the ability to evaluate them critically and ethically (Amirudin et al., 2026; Al-Ulya et al., 2026).

The issue of verification is particularly important because students may encounter religious information in highly compressed formats. Short videos, quotations, memes, captions, and visually attractive religious posts can

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communicate complex theological issues without explaining their textual, historical, or methodological foundations. Such formats are highly accessible but can encourage superficial religious understanding when students accept messages solely because they appear persuasive or are delivered by popular personalities. Digital Islamic literacy should consequently include source tracing, comparison of interpretations, contextual reading, and recognition of scholarly disagreement. The latest evidence from Indonesian madrasah students indicates that although students frequently use platforms such as YouTube, TikTok, and WhatsApp for religious information, their verification practices may remain limited. This finding reinforces the need for systematic critical digital religious literacy in Islamic education (Al-Ulya et al., 2026).

The relationship between digital literacy and religious moderation is therefore not necessarily linear. Possessing strong technical skills does not automatically produce moderate religious attitudes. A student may be highly capable of searching, editing, sharing, and producing digital content while remaining unable to evaluate theological claims critically.(Hushin et al., 2025) Conversely, a student with strong religious knowledge may still be vulnerable to digital manipulation if he or she lacks media literacy. The meaningful construct is therefore digital Islamic literacy, which combines digital competencies with Islamic knowledge, ethical awareness, contextual reasoning, and critical evaluation. This conceptual integration is consistent with recent research emphasizing that digital literacy in Islamic education should extend beyond technological competence toward critical and responsible engagement (Eraku et al., 2021; Fattah et al., 2026).

Teachers are another decisive factor in the relationship between digital literacy and religious moderation. Islamic Religious Education teachers can serve as pedagogical mediators who help students evaluate digital religious information. Teachers can introduce students to credible sources, explain differences of interpretation, and demonstrate respectful disagreement. They can also transform digital content into learning objects through comparison, discussion, verification, and reflection. Research on digital literacy among Islamic education teachers emphasizes the need for educators to improve their technological and pedagogical competencies in response to changing learning environments. More recent studies similarly indicate that teachers can function as epistemological filters who help students distinguish credible religious information from misleading narratives (Eraku et al., 2021; Affan et al., 2026).

School culture also influences the effectiveness of digital Islamic literacy. Religious moderation cannot be developed solely through individual cognitive skills because students' attitudes are shaped by their social environment. A school that promotes respect, dialogue, cooperation, and non-violence creates a context in which students can apply moderate religious principles in real interactions. Conversely, a school environment characterized by intolerance or rigid social boundaries may weaken the effects of classroom-based digital literacy. Research on Islamic education demonstrates that moderation is strengthened when curricular practices, teacher behavior, institutional leadership, and student activities operate in the same direction. Consequently, digital Islamic literacy should be integrated with the

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broader culture of Islamic senior high schools (Nugraha, 2020; Tasik et al., 2024; Khasanah et al., 2026).

The curriculum is another important arena for integrating digital Islamic literacy and moderation. Islamic Religious Education curricula traditionally emphasize Qur'an, Hadith, faith, worship, morality, Islamic history, and jurisprudence. These subjects can become more relevant when students are invited to examine how Islamic teachings are represented in contemporary digital environments.(Begum et al., 2025) For example, students can compare different digital interpretations of a Qur'anic verse, identify differences in argumentation, and assess whether a particular interpretation reflects justice, tolerance, and contextual understanding. Such activities transform digital literacy from an additional skill into an integral component of religious learning. Recent scholarship on the Merdeka Curriculum indicates that Islamic Religious Education teachers have opportunities to integrate moderation values through curricular and extracurricular activities (Tasik et al., 2024).

The significance of digital Islamic literacy also becomes apparent when considering the increasing influence of social media on students' everyday communication. Platforms such as YouTube, TikTok, Instagram, and WhatsApp enable religious messages to circulate rapidly across geographical and institutional boundaries. These platforms can be used to disseminate positive religious content and facilitate discussion about tolerance and diversity. Nevertheless, algorithmic visibility may favor emotionally provocative content because such content often attracts attention and interaction. Students who lack critical literacy may therefore become exposed disproportionately to simplified or polarizing religious messages. Recent studies confirm that social media can simultaneously serve as a resource for religious education and a channel through which intolerance and radical narratives circulate (Hefni, 2020; Ni'mah et al., 2024; Fitriani et al., 2026).

A further concern is the relationship between digital religious literacy and students' capacity for dialogue. Religious moderation requires the ability to encounter differences without immediately interpreting disagreement as a threat to religious identity. Digital environments frequently expose students to people from different theological, cultural, and religious backgrounds. This exposure can encourage openness when students possess adequate interpretive and ethical competencies. However, it can also produce hostility when disagreement is framed through binary categories such as true versus false or believer versus enemy. Islamic education therefore needs to cultivate digital dialogue skills alongside religious knowledge. Research on moderation education suggests that reflective and participatory approaches can strengthen students' awareness and practical enactment of moderate values (Sihotang et al., 2025).

The existing literature nevertheless reveals several gaps. First, many studies examine digital literacy and religious moderation separately rather than conceptualizing them as mutually connected educational processes. Second, several studies focus on university students, while research specifically examining Islamic senior high school students remains comparatively limited. Third, existing studies often emphasize either digital technology or religious moderation without sufficiently explaining the epistemological mechanisms linking the two. Fourth, the

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role of teachers and school culture is sometimes mentioned but not integrated into a comprehensive conceptual framework. These gaps justify a literature-based examination of how digital Islamic literacy can function as a mechanism for strengthening students' religious moderation in Islamic senior high schools (Sahlan et al., 2022; Al-Ulya et al., 2026; Qomaruzzaman et al., 2026).

Based on these considerations, this study aims to critically examine the relationship between digital Islamic literacy and students' religious moderation in Indonesian Islamic senior high schools. The study specifically investigates the dimensions of digital Islamic literacy that are most relevant to moderation, the educational mechanisms connecting digital literacy with moderate religious attitudes, and the role of teachers and school environments in this process. It also identifies the risks that may weaken the positive contribution of digital literacy to religious moderation. The study uses recent scholarly literature as the principal source of evidence and does not claim to generate primary empirical data from a particular school. This distinction is important because the title uses the term "evidence" to refer to synthesized evidence from previous studies rather than original survey or interview findings. The study ultimately proposes a conceptual framework for integrating digital Islamic literacy into Islamic Religious Education in senior high schools.

Theoretical Framework

Digital literacy is generally understood as the ability to access, understand, evaluate, create, and communicate information through digital technologies. In the context of education, digital literacy extends beyond operational skills because students must understand the credibility, purpose, context, and consequences of digital information. Indonesian educational research has increasingly emphasized that digital literacy involves critical thinking and responsible participation rather than simply using devices or applications. For Islamic education, this distinction is particularly important because religious information has theological, ethical, and social implications. Digital literacy therefore becomes educationally meaningful when students can connect technological practices with epistemological judgment and ethical responsibility (Eraku et al., 2021; Fattah et al., 2026).

Digital Islamic literacy can consequently be conceptualized as a more specific form of digital literacy that concerns Islamic religious information and practices. It includes the ability to locate credible Islamic sources, evaluate religious claims, compare interpretations, understand contextual differences, and communicate religious messages responsibly. The concept also requires students to recognize the difference between scholarly argument and popular opinion. In this sense, digital Islamic literacy has an epistemological dimension because it concerns how students determine what constitutes reliable religious knowledge. It also has an ethical dimension because digital religious communication can affect individuals and communities. Recent research on digital religious literature supports the view that students need critical literacy to distinguish reflective religious understanding from superficial acceptance of online narratives (Amirudin et al., 2026).

The concept of digital religion provides an important theoretical foundation for understanding the transformation of religious practices in digital environments.

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Digital religion recognizes that religion and digital media are not isolated domains but increasingly intersect in everyday life. Religious learning, preaching, community formation, identity construction, and authority negotiation can all take place through digital platforms.(Bolat et al., 2025) This perspective is important because it prevents researchers from treating online religious content as a simple technological extension of traditional religious education. Instead, digital environments actively influence how religious knowledge is selected, presented, interpreted, and circulated. Lövheim and Campbell (2017) emphasize the importance of methodological and theoretical approaches that recognize the complex relationship between religion, media, technology, and everyday social practices.

Religious literacy provides another theoretical dimension. Religious literacy refers broadly to the ability to understand religious traditions, concepts, practices, diversity, and social implications. In Islamic education, religious literacy requires students to possess sufficient knowledge of Islamic teachings while also understanding differences in interpretation and religious expression. Digital Islamic literacy adds a technological and media dimension to this capacity. Students are not only expected to understand Islamic concepts but also to evaluate how those concepts are represented in digital environments. This combination is increasingly necessary because religious knowledge is now encountered through fragmented and multimodal digital texts. Recent studies on digital religious literature demonstrate that the structure of online religious texts can influence how students interpret and internalize religious meanings (Amirudin et al., 2026).

Religious moderation constitutes the second major theoretical construct of this study. In Indonesian discourse, religious moderation refers to an approach to religious understanding and practice that avoids excessive or extreme positions. It is commonly associated with national commitment, tolerance, non-violence, and accommodation of local cultural realities. Within Islamic education, moderation also relates to concepts such as tawassuth, tawazun, i'tidal, tasamuh, and musawah. These principles emphasize balance, justice, tolerance, and responsible engagement with difference. Studies of Islamic education in Indonesia demonstrate that moderation can be incorporated into classroom learning, school culture, and student activities (Rahmadi & Hamdan, 2023; Husna & Thohir, 2020).

Tawassuth represents the principle of taking a middle or balanced position between excessive and deficient approaches. In digital religious learning, tawassuth can be reflected in students' ability to avoid absolutist interpretations and recognize legitimate differences. A moderate digital learner does not automatically reject unfamiliar religious opinions, but neither does the learner accept every opinion without evaluation. The principle requires students to examine evidence and context before reaching conclusions. This makes tawassuth compatible with critical digital literacy because both reject simplistic and impulsive judgments. The integration of tawassuth into digital Islamic literacy can therefore help students develop balanced responses to controversial religious content (Husna & Thohir, 2020; Rahmadi & Hamdan, 2023).

Tawazun emphasizes balance and proportionality in religious life. In the digital context, this principle can help students balance textual loyalty with contextual understanding. Students may encounter interpretations that emphasize

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literal textual meanings while neglecting social circumstances or broader Islamic ethical principles. Other interpretations may overemphasize contextual considerations and disregard the normative foundations of Islamic teachings.(Abdullah et al., 2025) Digital Islamic literacy should enable students to recognize these tensions without immediately adopting polarized positions. The integration of tawazun thus provides an ethical and interpretive foundation for evaluating religious content in a balanced manner (Rahmadi & Hamdan, 2023; Chalis et al., 2024).

Tasamuh, or tolerance, represents another important component of religious moderation. In the digital environment, tolerance is reflected in students' willingness to encounter disagreement respectfully and avoid insulting or dehumanizing others. Tolerance does not require students to abandon their religious convictions. Instead, it requires them to distinguish disagreement from hostility and doctrinal difference from personal attack. Digital communication makes this distinction especially important because short messages and visual content can easily be misunderstood. Research on religious moderation in educational institutions repeatedly emphasizes tolerance as a central outcome of Islamic education (Nugraha, 2020; Helmawati et al., 2024).

Non-violence is another important indicator of moderation. Violence in digital spaces does not always take physical form because hate speech, harassment, humiliation, threats, and dehumanizing narratives can constitute forms of symbolic violence. Students therefore need to understand that religious moderation includes ethical responsibility in online communication. A digital Islamic literacy framework should teach students to identify harmful language and resist content that normalizes hostility. Research on madrasah digital literacy indicates that students can be trained to filter intolerant messages and hate speech while producing positive content promoting religious moderation. This finding demonstrates that digital literacy can be translated into concrete ethical practices (Ni'mah et al., 2024).

National commitment constitutes another dimension of religious moderation in Indonesia. Islamic education is expected to cultivate religious commitment that is compatible with responsible citizenship. In digital environments, national commitment means resisting narratives that undermine social cohesion, constitutional principles, or the dignity of citizens from different backgrounds. Students need to understand that religious identity and national identity do not necessarily conflict. Instead, religious values can support justice, peace, cooperation, and social responsibility. Research on moderation within Indonesian educational contexts indicates that national commitment can be integrated with Islamic Religious Education through curricular and extracurricular activities (Tasik et al., 2024).

Accommodation of local culture also provides a significant dimension of Indonesian religious moderation. Islamic traditions have historically interacted with diverse local cultures, producing different forms of religious expression. Digital platforms can either support appreciation of this diversity or encourage students to label local practices as automatically invalid. Digital Islamic literacy should therefore help students distinguish between essential theological principles and culturally contingent expressions. Students can learn to evaluate cultural practices

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using appropriate Islamic arguments rather than relying on provocative social media claims. This approach supports the broader principle that moderation involves respectful engagement with legitimate cultural diversity (Rahmadi & Hamdan, 2023; Afwadzi & Miski, 2021).

The theory of religious authority is also relevant to this study. Digital media have diversified the actors who participate in religious knowledge production. Students can now encounter scholars, preachers, activists, influencers, and anonymous content creators without clear distinctions among them. This situation challenges traditional mechanisms of religious authority. Students therefore need criteria for evaluating expertise, evidence, methodological consistency, and ethical credibility. Digital Islamic literacy can provide such criteria by teaching students to examine author identity, institutional affiliation, references, chains of argument, and contextual coherence. The contemporary literature on digital religion and religious authority confirms that digital environments have transformed how religious knowledge and authority are negotiated (Hefni, 2020; Amirudin et al., 2026).

The theory of critical literacy further strengthens this framework. Critical literacy requires learners to examine how texts are constructed, whose interests they represent, what assumptions they contain, and what social effects they may produce. Applied to Islamic digital content, critical literacy does not mean criticizing Islam itself. Rather, it means critically examining human interpretations and representations of Islamic teachings.(Yilmaz et al., 2025) This distinction is essential because religious texts and human interpretations should not be treated as epistemologically identical. Critical digital Islamic literacy therefore enables students to respect revelation while critically assessing human-produced digital content. Such an approach can prevent students from equating viral popularity with religious truth (Sahlan et al., 2022; Amirudin et al., 2026).

Constructivist learning theory also offers a useful perspective. Students construct knowledge through interaction between prior understanding, new information, social experience, and reflection. Digital platforms provide enormous quantities of information, but information becomes meaningful only when students actively interpret it. Islamic education therefore needs to create learning experiences in which students compare, question, discuss, and reconstruct their understanding of religious issues. Digital content can serve as a stimulus for inquiry rather than an unquestioned source of truth. This approach aligns with research showing that reflective and participatory pedagogy can improve students' understanding and enactment of religious moderation (Sihotang et al., 2025).

Social learning theory is also relevant because students learn through observing and interacting with others. Digital platforms provide numerous models of religious behavior, including ways of speaking, arguing, disagreeing, and responding to criticism. Students may imitate these behaviors when they perceive particular digital personalities as credible or socially successful. If the models demonstrate respectful dialogue, digital engagement may reinforce moderation. If the models normalize ridicule and hostility, students may reproduce similar behaviors. Teachers and school communities can therefore provide alternative models of ethical digital religious communication (Eraku et al., 2021; Affan et al., 2026).

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Previous empirical studies provide important evidence for the relationship proposed in this study. Sahlan et al. (2022), for example, examined digital-based religious literacy and religious moderation among students and found that religious information sources accessed digitally were relevant to students' religious understanding. Their work demonstrates that the digital environment is already part of students' religious knowledge ecosystem. Ni'mah et al. (2024) further showed that digital literacy training could be used to help madrasah students filter intolerant messages and produce positive content. These studies provide complementary evidence that digital literacy can function as a pathway for strengthening religious moderation. However, they also indicate that the quality of literacy and educational guidance determines whether digital engagement produces positive outcomes.

Recent research involving madrasah students strengthens this argument. Al-Ulya et al. (2026) found that students in Batu City frequently relied on YouTube, TikTok, and WhatsApp for religious information, while their verification practices remained limited. At the same time, students displayed moderate behaviors such as respectful interaction and avoidance of provocative debates. This finding suggests that students may already possess practical moderation tendencies even when their critical digital religious literacy is incomplete. The implication is that educational interventions should not simply teach students to use technology but should deepen their capacity to interpret and verify religious content. The study therefore supports the argument that digital Islamic literacy and moderation are related but require deliberate pedagogical integration.

The emerging literature also shows that teachers remain central to this process. Research by Affan et al. (2026) identifies teachers as facilitators and epistemological filters who help students critically evaluate digital religious information. Qomaruzzaman et al. (2026) similarly demonstrate that digital literacy can be integrated into Islamic education to strengthen critical awareness and inclusive religious attitudes. These studies suggest that technology does not replace the teacher's role in religious education. Instead, the teacher's role shifts from being primarily a transmitter of information toward being a mediator, curator, facilitator, and guide. Such transformation is particularly important when students face large volumes of conflicting digital religious information.

Overall, the theoretical synthesis suggests that digital Islamic literacy can be understood through four interconnected dimensions. The first is epistemic literacy, which concerns source identification, verification, evidence evaluation, and contextual interpretation. The second is ethical literacy, which concerns respectful communication, avoidance of hate speech, and responsibility for digital content. The third is dialogical literacy, which concerns the ability to encounter difference and engage in constructive disagreement. The fourth is productive literacy, which concerns students' ability to create and disseminate moderate Islamic content. These four dimensions provide a theoretical basis for understanding digital Islamic literacy as a mechanism for religious moderation rather than a purely technical competency.

Method

This study employs a library research approach because its primary objective is to synthesize, interpret, and critically evaluate existing scholarly evidence

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concerning digital Islamic literacy and religious moderation. Library research is appropriate when a study seeks to construct a conceptual understanding from previously published academic works rather than collect primary data from respondents. The approach enables researchers to compare findings across different educational contexts and identify recurring patterns, theoretical assumptions, and research gaps. In this study, the literature is treated as the primary research material. The methodological orientation is consistent with previous literature-based studies on religious moderation in Indonesian Islamic education (Afwadzi & Miski, 2021; Rahmadi & Hamdan, 2023).

The literature search focused primarily on academic publications published during approximately the last five to ten years, with particular emphasis on studies from 2019 to 2026. This period was selected because digital religious communication and the educational discourse of religious moderation have developed rapidly during the last decade. Earlier foundational works were considered only when they were necessary to explain major theoretical concepts. Priority was given to peer-reviewed journal articles addressing digital literacy, Islamic education, religious literacy, digital religion, religious moderation, social media, and Islamic senior high school students. This strategy ensured that the conceptual framework remained connected to recent developments in the field.

The literature was identified through academic search environments and scholarly journal repositories, including Google Scholar-oriented searches, DOAJ-indexed publications, Indonesian journal portals, Garuda, and institutional journal platforms. Search terms included combinations of “digital Islamic literacy,” “digital religious literacy,” “digital literacy,” “religious moderation,” “Islamic Religious Education,” “Madrasah Aliyah,” “Islamic senior high school,” “social media,” and “religious education.” Variations in terminology were deliberately included because authors use different expressions to describe closely related phenomena. The search strategy therefore emphasized conceptual relevance rather than dependence on a single keyword. This is important because digital Islamic literacy remains an emerging concept and is not yet standardized across the literature.

The inclusion criteria consisted of studies that addressed at least one of the major constructs examined in this research. Studies were prioritized when they were situated in Indonesia or had direct relevance to Islamic education, religious literacy, digital religion, or religious moderation. Studies examining university students were also considered when their findings could illuminate mechanisms applicable to senior high school students. Articles that provided clear methodological information and scholarly references received greater analytical weight. The literature was not treated as equally authoritative merely because it contained relevant keywords.

The exclusion criteria were applied to materials that were primarily non-academic, lacked sufficient methodological or bibliographic information, or did not meaningfully contribute to the research question. Opinion pieces and general internet articles were not used as primary scholarly evidence. Publications outside the selected temporal range were used sparingly and primarily for foundational theoretical explanation. Studies dealing with digital literacy without any meaningful connection to education or religious learning were also given limited attention. This filtering process was necessary to prevent the analysis from becoming a general

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discussion of technology rather than a focused study of digital Islamic literacy and religious moderation.

Data analysis was conducted through thematic content analysis. The selected literature was read and organized around recurring themes, including digital access, source verification, religious authority, critical interpretation, social media, teacher mediation, curriculum integration, tolerance, non-violence, national commitment, and accommodation of cultural diversity. Findings from different studies were then compared to identify convergence, divergence, and complementary evidence. The analysis emphasized relationships among concepts rather than simply summarizing individual articles. This approach follows the logic of qualitative literature synthesis used in studies of religious moderation and Islamic education (Afwadzi & Miski, 2021; Rahmadi & Hamdan, 2023).

To strengthen analytical credibility, the study applied source triangulation at the literature level. Evidence was compared across studies using different methods, including qualitative case studies, descriptive studies, quantitative research, and literature reviews. Greater interpretive confidence was assigned to findings that appeared across several independent studies. For example, the importance of digital source verification appears in studies of university students, madrasah students, and Islamic education contexts. Similarly, the role of teachers emerges repeatedly across studies of digital literacy and religious moderation. Such cross-study consistency supports the conceptual conclusions presented in this article (Sahlan et al., 2022; Ni'mah et al., 2024; Al-Ulya et al., 2026).

Results and Discussion

The literature synthesis indicates that digital Islamic literacy should be understood as a multidimensional competency rather than a narrow technological skill. Across the reviewed studies, students' digital engagement involves searching for religious information, watching lectures, reading digital texts, participating in online discussions, and producing religious content. However, these practices do not automatically indicate critical digital competence. Students may be highly active online while still accepting religious claims without verification. The most significant finding is therefore the distinction between digital access and digital Islamic literacy. This distinction is consistent with recent Indonesian research showing that students' access to digital religious information is extensive, whereas their critical verification capacity can remain uneven (Sahlan et al., 2022; Al-Ulya et al., 2026).

A second finding concerns the importance of source verification. Students need to determine who produced a religious message, what evidence supports it, and whether the interpretation is consistent with established Islamic scholarship. Verification is especially important when religious content is presented in short or emotionally appealing formats. The literature shows that students may rely heavily on popular digital platforms without systematically checking the authority of content creators. This creates an epistemological vulnerability because popularity can become confused with credibility. Digital Islamic literacy should therefore teach students to trace sources and compare religious claims before accepting or disseminating them (Al-Ulya et al., 2026; Amirudin et al., 2026).

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A third finding is that digital platforms have transformed religious authority. Students increasingly encounter religious knowledge outside formal educational institutions, and online personalities can acquire substantial influence through visibility and engagement. This does not necessarily weaken traditional religious authority, but it creates a more complex authority structure. Students therefore require criteria for distinguishing scholarly competence from popularity, charisma, or algorithmic visibility. Islamic education can respond by teaching students how to evaluate qualifications, references, argumentation, and interpretive methodology. The literature indicates that such epistemological guidance is essential for responsible digital religious learning (Hefni, 2020; Amirudin et al., 2026).

A fourth finding is that religious moderation can be reinforced through digital literacy when students learn to interpret religious differences contextually. Moderation does not require students to consider all religious interpretations equally valid. Rather, students need to understand that differences can emerge from different methodologies, contexts, linguistic interpretations, and scholarly traditions. This capacity prevents students from immediately labeling disagreement as deviance or hostility. It also encourages intellectual humility, which is essential in pluralistic societies. Studies of Islamic education demonstrate that moderation becomes stronger when students are taught to combine religious commitment with contextual understanding (Rahmadi & Hamdan, 2023; Chalis et al., 2024).

A fifth finding concerns the role of critical thinking. Digital Islamic literacy requires students to ask whether a religious statement is supported by evidence, whether a quotation has been presented in context, and whether alternative interpretations exist. These questions encourage reflective rather than impulsive religious responses. Critical thinking does not undermine faith because it can actually strengthen students' ability to understand the reasons behind religious positions. The literature on digital religious literacy suggests that critical evaluation functions as an epistemic filter between exposure to online information and internalization of religious attitudes. This finding is particularly relevant for adolescents who are frequently exposed to competing religious narratives (Amirudin et al., 2026; Sahlan et al., 2022).

A sixth finding is that digital Islamic literacy has an important ethical dimension. Students must understand that forwarding, commenting on, or creating religious content carries social consequences. A provocative religious post may contribute to conflict even when the student did not intend to cause harm. Ethical digital literacy therefore requires students to consider whether their communication promotes dignity, respect, justice, and social harmony. Research on madrasah students indicates that digital literacy can be directed toward filtering hate speech and producing positive religious content. This suggests that ethical digital behavior can become a practical indicator of religious moderation (Ni'mah et al., 2024).

A seventh finding is that tolerance must be operationalized within students' digital behavior. Tolerance cannot remain merely an abstract value taught through textbook definitions. Students need opportunities to practice respectful disagreement, respond to criticism, and encounter different religious perspectives. Digital discussion forums, comparative interpretation activities, and collaborative content production can provide such opportunities. The literature on participatory

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religious education indicates that reflection and interaction can improve students' awareness and practice of moderation. This supports the argument that digital Islamic literacy should be experiential rather than exclusively theoretical (Sihotang et al., 2025).

An eighth finding concerns non-violence. Digital religious spaces can become arenas for verbal aggression, ridicule, exclusion, and dehumanization. Such practices are incompatible with religious moderation even when they are expressed in the name of defending religion. Students need to understand that defending religious principles does not justify abusive communication. Islamic education can address this issue through analysis of real digital cases, followed by discussion of alternative responses based on Islamic ethics. The literature on moderation education consistently identifies non-violence as an essential dimension of moderate religious attitudes (Rahmadi & Hamdan, 2023; Nugraha, 2020).

A ninth finding concerns national commitment. Digital Islamic literacy can help students evaluate narratives that attempt to frame religious commitment and Indonesian citizenship as contradictory. Students can be encouraged to examine how Islamic teachings support justice, social responsibility, peace, and protection of human dignity. Digital content discussing national identity and religion can become a learning resource for strengthening students' civic and religious understanding simultaneously. Research within the Merdeka Curriculum demonstrates that religious moderation can be developed through classroom and extracurricular activities that encourage cooperation, tolerance, and social responsibility. Digital learning can extend these activities beyond the physical classroom (Tasik et al., 2024).

A tenth finding is the importance of teacher mediation. Students cannot be expected to independently evaluate every religious message encountered online, particularly when the content involves complex theological or jurisprudential issues. Teachers can provide methodological guidance by introducing credible sources and demonstrating how scholars construct arguments. They can also teach students how to disagree respectfully with interpretations they consider weak or unconvincing. Recent studies identify teachers as central actors in integrating digital literacy with religious moderation. The teacher therefore remains essential even in highly digitalized learning environments (Eraku et al., 2021; Affan et al., 2026).

Synthesis of Major Findings

Dimension	Evidence from Literature	Educational Implication for Islamic Senior High Schools
Source verification	Students frequently access religious content through YouTube, TikTok, WhatsApp, and other platforms, while verification may remain limited.	Teach source tracing, author verification, comparison of references, and credibility assessment.
Critical interpretation	Digital religious texts can compress complex Qur'anic and theological meanings.	Train students to examine context, interpretation, evidence, and methodological differences.

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Dimension	Evidence from Literature	Educational Implication for Islamic Senior High Schools
Religious authority	Digital media diversify religious authorities and increase the influence of online personalities.	Teach students to distinguish scholarly authority from popularity or algorithmic visibility.
Tolerance	Moderate attitudes are associated with respectful interaction and avoidance of provocative debate.	Integrate respectful online dialogue and disagreement into PAI learning.
Non-violence	Digital environments can facilitate hate speech, harassment, and provocative religious narratives.	Develop digital ethics and anti-hate-speech learning activities.
National commitment	Moderation education can strengthen students' commitment to social harmony and citizenship.	Connect Islamic teachings with civic responsibility and national cohesion.
Cultural accommodation	Religious differences may be intensified when local practices are judged without context.	Teach students to distinguish Islamic principles from legitimate cultural expressions.
Teacher mediation	Teachers function as facilitators, moderators, and epistemological filters.	Strengthen teachers' digital, religious, and pedagogical competencies.
Digital content production	Students can become producers rather than passive consumers of religious information.	Develop projects producing moderate Islamic videos, infographics, podcasts, and articles.
School culture	Moderation is stronger when curriculum, teachers, leadership, and student activities support common values.	Build whole-school digital religious literacy policies and practices.

The table demonstrates that digital Islamic literacy is most strongly associated with religious moderation when it combines epistemic, ethical, dialogical, and productive competencies. Technical access alone does not constitute meaningful digital literacy. The ability to search for information becomes educationally significant only when students can assess its reliability and interpret it responsibly. Similarly, knowledge of Islamic teachings becomes more relevant when students can apply those teachings to digital communication. This synthesis corresponds with research indicating that digital literacy can strengthen moderation when it is integrated with critical and ethical educational practices (Ni'mah et al., 2024; Qomaruzzaman et al., 2026).

The first implication of the table is that source verification should become an explicit learning outcome. Students should be trained to identify the author, institutional

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affiliation, references, date, context, and methodological basis of digital religious content. They should also learn to compare claims across several credible sources. Such activities can be integrated into Qur'an and Hadith learning, Islamic jurisprudence, Islamic history, and Islamic ethics. The goal is not to make every student an Islamic scholar but to develop basic epistemic discipline. Evidence from Indonesian madrasah contexts indicates that this competency remains an area requiring systematic strengthening (Al-Ulya et al., 2026).

The second implication is that digital Islamic literacy should include contextual interpretation. A Qur'anic verse or hadith shared on social media may be authentic but still be presented without adequate context. Students need to understand that authenticity of a quotation does not automatically guarantee correctness of the conclusion drawn from it. Contextual interpretation can include examining asbab al-nuzul, linguistic meaning, historical circumstances, maqasid, and scholarly interpretations. Such learning can protect students from decontextualized textualism. This approach is compatible with the broader framework of moderation proposed in Indonesian Islamic education scholarship (Rahmadi & Hamdan, 2023; Chalis et al., 2024).

The third implication concerns the development of digital religious dialogue. Students should be taught that disagreement is a normal feature of intellectual traditions and should not automatically become a source of hostility. Classroom activities can involve structured debates in which students are required to present opposing viewpoints accurately before responding to them. Such exercises develop intellectual empathy and reduce caricatures of alternative positions. Digital discussion can also be moderated by teachers to ensure that disagreement remains respectful. This approach reflects the participatory and reflective pedagogy shown to support religious moderation in Indonesian educational contexts (Sihotang et al., 2025).

The fourth implication concerns the production of digital Islamic content. Students should not remain passive consumers of religious information. They can be encouraged to produce short videos, podcasts, posters, articles, or social media campaigns addressing tolerance, environmental responsibility, social justice, anti-bullying, and interreligious respect. Content production requires students to research information, organize arguments, select appropriate language, and consider the social impact of communication. This process can simultaneously strengthen digital competence and moderate religious identity. Research at the madrasah level indicates that digital literacy training can encourage students to produce positive content containing religious moderation values (Ni'mah et al., 2024).

The fifth implication relates to teacher professional development. Islamic Religious Education teachers need competencies in digital pedagogy, information verification, online communication, and contemporary religious discourse. Teachers who are unfamiliar with digital platforms may find it difficult to understand the sources influencing students' religious perspectives. Professional development should therefore include practical training in social media analysis and digital religious content evaluation. Teachers should also learn how algorithms, influencers, and digital communities can shape students' exposure to information. Existing research strongly supports the need to improve digital competencies among Islamic education teachers (Eraku et al., 2021; Fattah et al., 2026).

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The sixth implication is the need for a whole-school approach. Digital Islamic literacy should not be restricted to one lesson or one teacher. School leaders, teachers, student organizations, libraries, extracurricular programs, and parents can contribute to creating a responsible digital religious environment. Policies can establish guidelines for online communication, source use, respectful disagreement, and content production. School libraries can curate credible digital Islamic resources. Student organizations can organize campaigns promoting moderate digital religious discourse. Such institutional integration is consistent with research showing that moderation is strengthened when supported by school leadership and broader educational culture (Tasik et al., 2024; Khasanah et al., 2026).

The seventh implication is that digital Islamic literacy should not be framed as an anti-digital agenda. Restricting students' access to digital religious information is unlikely to be sustainable because digital media are already integrated into young people's everyday lives. The more productive approach is to develop students' capacity to navigate digital environments responsibly. Students should be equipped rather than merely protected. This means teaching them how to identify reliable information, recognize manipulation, understand diversity, and respond ethically. Such an approach is supported by recent scholarship that conceptualizes digital literacy as a critical pedagogical tool for resisting intolerant narratives (Qomaruzzaman et al., 2026; Affan et al., 2026).

The eighth implication concerns the need to distinguish moderation from uniformity. Religious moderation does not require students to have identical opinions on every theological or jurisprudential question. Instead, it requires students to manage disagreement through knowledge, ethics, and respect. Digital Islamic literacy can therefore create space for students to encounter legitimate differences without losing their religious identity. This is especially important in Islamic senior high schools where students may come from different family, cultural, and organizational backgrounds. Research on Islamic education emphasizes the importance of combining religious commitment with openness and social responsibility (Rahmadi & Hamdan, 2023; Husna & Thohir, 2020).

The ninth implication is that assessment of digital Islamic literacy should include behavioral and productive dimensions. Conventional tests may determine whether students understand definitions of moderation but may not reveal whether they behave moderately online. Assessment can therefore include analysis of digital sources, evaluation of online religious claims, reflective journals, collaborative projects, and production of moderate religious content. Teachers can use rubrics measuring source credibility, contextual understanding, argument quality, ethical communication, and respect for difference. Such assessment would align learning outcomes with actual digital practices. The literature indicates that moderation needs to be internalized through practice rather than treated exclusively as cognitive knowledge (Nugraha, 2020; Ni'mah et al., 2024).

The tenth implication is that digital Islamic literacy provides a promising conceptual bridge between Islamic education and contemporary digital citizenship. Students are not simply learners of religious information; they are participants in digital communities whose communication can influence broader social relationships. Islamic education therefore needs to prepare them to practice religious values in both offline and online environments. Digital Islamic literacy can function as a bridge connecting Islamic

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epistemology, ethics, media competence, and social responsibility. The central contribution of this study is consequently the proposition that religious moderation in the digital era should be developed through an integrated literacy framework rather than through doctrinal instruction alone. This synthesis extends existing discussions by positioning digital Islamic literacy as an epistemic, ethical, dialogical, and productive mechanism for moderation among Islamic senior high school students.

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Conclusion

This library research concludes that digital Islamic literacy has substantial potential to strengthen religious moderation among students in Indonesian Islamic senior high schools, but the relationship is neither automatic nor purely technological. The evidence indicates that students need more than access to Islamic information; they require the ability to verify sources, evaluate arguments, understand context, recognize legitimate diversity, communicate respectfully, reject hate speech, and produce constructive religious content. Teachers and school institutions remain essential because they provide epistemological guidance, pedagogical mediation, and cultural reinforcement. Religious moderation can therefore be strengthened when digital Islamic literacy is integrated systematically into Islamic Religious Education, curriculum development, teacher professional development, student projects, and school culture.

The novelty of this study lies in conceptualizing digital Islamic literacy as an integrated mechanism consisting of epistemic, ethical, dialogical, and productive dimensions that collectively support religious moderation. The literature also demonstrates that digital media should not simply be treated as a threat to students' religious development, nor should technological access be celebrated without critical consideration. Instead, digital environments should become educational spaces where students learn to practice balanced, tolerant, peaceful, context-sensitive, and socially responsible Islamic understanding. Future empirical research should test the proposed framework through surveys, classroom interventions, mixed-methods studies, and comparative research across Madrasah Aliyah and Islamic senior high schools. Such research is necessary to determine the extent to which improvements in digital Islamic literacy produce measurable changes in students' religious moderation.

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