

Evaluating Digital Religious Literacy among Madrasah Students in The Era of Algorithm-Driven Social Media

Ari Hasan Ansori¹, M. Arie Firdaus Heriansyah², Ghina Siti Fitria Heriyanti³

¹Sekolah Tinggi Agama Islam Syekh Manshur Pandeglang, Indonesia

²Universitas Islam Negeri Sultan Maulana Hasanudin Banten, Indonesia

³Universitas Sultan Ageng Tirtayasa Banten, Indonesia

cep.arie@gmail.com¹, mariefirdausheriansyah@gmail.com², ghienafitria12@gmail.com³

Corresponding Author: Ari Hasan Ansori Email: cep.arie@gmail.com	Article history: Received: March 6, 2026 Revised: June 05, 2026 Available Online: July 10, 2026.
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Abstract:

This study is motivated by the transformation in students' access to religious information, which is increasingly shaped by algorithm-driven social media platforms. This shift has influenced how madrasah students receive, interpret, and evaluate religious content. In this context, an empirical investigation into students' digital religious literacy is essential, particularly in responding to the rapid circulation of religious information that is not always verified or validated. The study aims to assess the level of digital religious literacy among Madrasah Aliyah students in the era of social media algorithms. A quantitative approach was employed using an evaluative survey design involving 300 students selected through random sampling techniques. Data were collected using a Likert-scale questionnaire consisting of five indicators: the selection of credible religious sources, information verification, comprehension of religious messages, critical attitudes toward religious content, and digital ethics in information dissemination. Data were analyzed using descriptive statistical methods, including mean scores, percentages, and categorical classification of literacy levels. The findings indicate that students' digital religious literacy falls within the moderate category, with an average score of 3.28. The lowest performance was observed in the ability to verify information, while social media usage was dominated by TikTok and YouTube as primary sources of religious content. These findings reveal an imbalance between technical literacy and critical literacy, where access and comprehension skills are relatively more developed than evaluative capacities. In conclusion, students' digital religious literacy is at a moderate level with notable variation across indicators, particularly

in information verification, which remains the most critical weakness in their literacy structure.

Keywords: *digital religious literacy, madrasah, social media*

INTRODUCTION

The rapid advancement of digital technology has fundamentally transformed how young Muslim access and acquire religious knowledge. For students in *Madrasah Aliyah*, religious learning is no longer confined to classrooms, teachers, mosques, or classical Islamic texts. Instead, social media platforms, video-sharing applications, podcasts, and various online learning resources have become important channels for obtaining Islamic knowledge because they provide flexible, immediate, and interactive access to information. This transformation has reshaped students' learning experiences and expanded opportunities for religious education beyond conventional institutional settings.¹

The expansion of digital learning environments has created both opportunities and challenges for Islamic education. On the one hand, digital media enables students to learn from diverse scholars, institutions, and educational resources regardless of geographical and temporal limitations. On the other hand, the same openness exposes students to unverified religious information, fragmented interpretations of Islamic teachings, and competing religious authorities in digital spaces. Consequently, religious understanding is increasingly shaped not only by formal educational institutions but also by algorithm-driven social media platforms that prioritize engagement over credibility.²

These developments make digital religious literacy an increasingly important competence for students. Digital religious literacy extends beyond the technical ability to use digital devices; it also involves the capacity to evaluate the credibility of religious information, distinguish authoritative scholarly sources from unreliable ones, understand Islamic teachings within their broader contexts, and respond critically to diverse religious narratives circulating online. Such competencies are essential because digital environments simultaneously provide valuable educational resources and

¹ Ju'subaidi et al., "Students' Critical Awareness of the Internet and Social Media Use as Resources for Islamic Learning in Indonesian Public Senior High Schools," *British Journal of Religious Education* 47, no. 2 (2025): 140–55, <https://doi.org/10.1080/01416200.2024.2368888>; Mashudi Mashudi and Cecep Hilman, "Digital-Based Islamic Religious Education: A New Orientation in Enhancing Student Engagement and Spiritual Understanding," *Global International Journal of Innovative Research* 2, no. 10 (2024): 2488–501, <https://doi.org/10.59613/global.v2i10.342>.

² Dindin Solahudin and Moch Fakhruroji, "Internet and Islamic Learning Practices in Indonesia: Social Media, Religious Populism, and Religious Authority," *Religions* 11, no. 1 (2019): 19, <https://doi.org/10.3390/rel11010019>; Zainuddin Syarif and Abd Hannan, "ISLAMIC DISRUPTION: How Digital Platform Changes Religious Pattern of Muslim Society in Contemporary Indonesia," *Al-Tahrir: Jurnal Pemikiran Islam* 22, no. 1 (2022): 141–70, <https://doi.org/10.21154/altahrir.v22i1.3730>.

facilitate the spread of misinformation, oversimplified interpretations, and religious hoaxes that may influence students' religious perspectives.³

Within this context, *madrasah aliyah* plays a strategic role in preparing students to become responsible digital citizens while maintaining sound religious understanding. As formal Islamic educational institutions, *madrasahs* are expected to integrate digital competence with Islamic values by developing students' critical thinking, ethical communication, and awareness of religious moderation. Therefore, the use of digital technology should not merely improve instructional delivery but should also strengthen students' intellectual maturity, moral responsibility, and ability to engage constructively with diverse religious perspectives in digital environments.⁴

The need for digital religious literacy becomes even more urgent because social media has become one of the primary arenas through which religious ideas are produced, disseminated, and debated. Short-form religious content, selective quotations from the *Qur'an* and *Hadits*, and highly emotional narratives often receive greater public attention than comprehensive scholarly explanations. Such conditions may create information echo chambers that repeatedly reinforce particular viewpoints and potentially encourage exclusive or polarized religious attitudes if students lack adequate critical literacy. Conversely, students with strong digital religious literacy are more likely to evaluate information carefully, communicate ethically, and develop inclusive attitudes that support religious moderation.⁵

Previous studies have consistently shown that digital technology offers significant opportunities for improving Islamic education through innovative learning models, increased student engagement, and more contextual religious instruction. Other studies have also highlighted the potential of digital platforms to promote peaceful religious values and strengthen religious moderation among Generation Z. Nevertheless, existing research has predominantly emphasized digital technology as a pedagogical tool or examined the effectiveness of digital learning media. Comparatively little attention has been paid to evaluating students' digital religious literacy as a

³ Moh. Miftachul Choiri et al., "The Impact of Social Media on the Formation of Religious Patterns Among Millennial Students in Ponorogo," *Cendekia: Jurnal Kependidikan Dan Kemasyarakatan* 22, no. 2 (2024), <https://doi.org/10.21154/cendekia.v22i2.9870>; Paisal Paisal, "Online Media and Establishment of Students' Religious Understanding in Madrasah Aliyah Kendari City," *Al-Qalam* 27, no. 1 (2021): 143, <https://doi.org/10.31969/alq.v27i1.930>.

⁴ Ari Hasan Ansori and Didih Muhamad Sudi, "Membangun Generasi Digital Berkarakter: Model Pembelajaran Holistik Berbasis Kearifan Lokal," Goresan Pena, 2026.

⁵ Partono Nyanasuryanadi et al., "Mainstreaming the Value of Religious Moderation by Teachers in the Digital Era," *AL-ISHLAH: Jurnal Pendidikan* 15, no. 2 (2023): 1357–68, <https://doi.org/10.35445/alishlah.v15i2.3198>; Syaefudin Achmad, "Digital Literacy as A Foundation for Religious Moderation Learning at Salatiga's Al-Hijrah Tingkir Islamic Boarding School," *Paedagogia: Jurnal Pendidikan* 11, no. 1 (2022): 119–29, <https://doi.org/10.24239/pdg.Vol11.Iss1.208>; Pardianto Pardianto and Abd A'la, "Pengembangan Moderasi Beragama Di Era Teknologi Informasi Dan Komunikasi 4.0," *Jurnal Ilmu Komunikasi* 13, no. 2 (2023): 147–62, <https://doi.org/10.15642/jik.2023.13.2.147-162>.

multidimensional competence encompassing information verification, critical religious understanding, ethical digital communication, and moderation-oriented attitudes.⁶

This limitation indicates an important research gap, particularly in the context of *madrasah aliyah*, where students receive both general and Islamic education within an integrated curriculum. While previous studies have explored digital learning and technology integration, comprehensive evaluation of students' digital religious literacy remains limited. Furthermore, few studies have examined how students' ability to access, evaluate, interpret, and communicate religious information in digital environments contributes to strengthening religious moderation within formal Islamic educational institutions.

Based on this background, this study aims to evaluate the level of digital religious literacy among *madrasah aliyah* students. Specifically, the study examines students' ability to access digital religious information responsibly, verify the credibility of religious sources, understand the diversity of Islamic perspectives, practice ethical communication in digital spaces, and demonstrate attitudes consistent with religious moderation. The findings are expected to contribute to the development of Islamic education evaluation by providing empirical evidence for designing learning strategies and character education programs that strengthen digital religious literacy in the digital era. The remainder of this paper discusses the conceptual framework of digital religious literacy, the research methodology, the empirical findings, and their implications for Islamic education in *Madrasah Aliyah*.

METHOD

This study employed a quantitative approach using an evaluative survey design to measure the level of students' digital religious literacy in madrasahs within the era of algorithm-driven social media. A quantitative approach was selected because it enables the objective and measurable assessment of variables, which can be statistically analyzed to represent the actual conditions of students' digital religious literacy. The evaluative survey design was used to systematically obtain a structured and measurable description of literacy levels based on predefined indicators.⁷

⁶ Mochammad Rizal Ramadhan et al., "Implementing Religious Moderation in Digital Space: Challenges and Opportunities Z Generation," *Aqlamuna: Journal of Educational Studies* 1, no. 1 (2023): 116–35, <https://doi.org/10.58223/aqlamuna.v1i1.234>; Muhammad Choirin et al., "Nurturing Moderate Islam: Strategic Da'wah Communication in The Digital Era for Generation Z," *International Journal Ihya' 'Ulum al-Din* 26, no. 1 (2024): 108–18, <https://doi.org/10.21580/ihya.26.1.20008>; Sabilatus Syarifah and Fahri Hidayat, "The Internalizing Principles of Religious Moderation in Creating a Moderate Islamic Generation," *Nizham Journal of Islamic Studies* 12, no. 02 (2024): 139–58, <https://doi.org/10.32332/nizham.v12i02.8185>.

⁷ Sugiyono, *Metode Penelitian Kuantitatif, Kualitatif, dan R&D* (Bandung: Alfabeta, 2019), 245–247.

The population of the study consisted of all Grade X and XI students at Madrasah Aliyah Negeri 1 Pandeglang, totaling 580 students. The sample was determined using a simple random sampling technique, with 300 respondents selected for participation. This sample size was determined based on the Krejcie and Morgan table at a 95% confidence level, while also considering population representativeness to ensure adequate inferential validity. In addition, the selected sample size was considered sufficient for descriptive statistical analysis in educational survey research.⁸

Data were collected using a closed-ended questionnaire based on a five-point Likert scale, ranging from strongly disagree to strongly agree. The research instrument was developed based on five indicators of digital religious literacy: the ability to select credible religious sources, the ability to verify religious information, comprehension of digital religious messages, critical attitudes toward popular religious content, and ethical behavior in disseminating religious information in digital spaces.

Prior to its implementation, the instrument underwent content validity testing through expert judgment involving specialists in Islamic education and digital literacy. Furthermore, empirical validity testing was conducted using Pearson Product Moment correlation with a significance level of 0.05. The results indicated that all items were valid, with correlation values exceeding the critical r -table value. Reliability testing was conducted using Cronbach's Alpha to measure internal consistency.⁹ The results showed a reliability coefficient of $\alpha > 0.70$, indicating that the instrument had a high level of reliability and was suitable for data collection.

Data analysis was performed using descriptive statistical techniques, including mean scores, percentages, standard deviation, and categorization of literacy levels into three categories: high, moderate, and low, based on score intervals. The analysis was conducted using statistical software to ensure computational accuracy.

The results of the analysis were then interpreted within the framework of Islamic education evaluation in order to map students' digital religious literacy levels and identify patterns of access and evaluation of religious information in digital spaces. Accordingly, this method not only produces quantitative descriptions but also provides an analytical basis for understanding the dynamics of digital religious literacy in madrasah education within the era of algorithm-driven social media.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Digital literacy in contemporary education is understood as an individual's ability to access, evaluate, manage, and produce information

⁸ Ari Hasan Ansori, *Statistika Penelitian* (Staisman Press, 2021).

⁹ Ari Hasan Ansori, *Desain & Analisis Instrumen Penelitian Teori, Praktik Lapangan, Dan Aplikasi SPSS*. (Yayasan Putra Adi Dharma., 2025).

through digital media in a critical and responsible manner. This literacy is no longer limited to technical skills, but also encompasses cognitive and ethical capacities in assessing the validity of information.¹⁰ In various educational studies, digital literacy is positioned as a 21st-century competence that determines the quality of students' participation in technology-based learning ecosystems.¹¹

Within Islamic education, digital literacy has evolved into digital religious literacy, which refers to students' ability to access and evaluate Islamic information circulating in digital spaces. Digital transformation has shifted religious knowledge sources from institutional authority to a more open and decentralized system through social media platforms. This condition creates broad opportunities for knowledge access, yet simultaneously introduces challenges related to uncertainty of scholarly authority and the quality of religious information.¹²

Digital religious literacy is not merely about the ability to search for religious information, but also involves epistemological competence to assess source validity, understand the contextual meaning of scriptural evidence, and distinguish between scholarly authority and popular opinion. In contemporary Islamic studies, this literacy is considered a form of critical competence that students must possess in order to avoid fragmented and overly textual understandings of religion.¹³

¹⁰ Farida Mokhtari, "Fostering Digital Literacy in Higher Education: Benefits, Challenges and Implications," *International Journal of Linguistics, Literature and Translation* 6, no. 10 (2023): 160–67, <https://doi.org/10.32996/ijllt.2023.6.10.19>; Thomas K. F. Chiu et al., "Investigating the Relationship of Technology Learning Support to Digital Literacy from the Perspective of Self-Determination Theory," *Educational Psychology* 42, no. 10 (2022): 1263–82, <https://doi.org/10.1080/01443410.2022.2074966>; Maria Spante et al., "Digital Competence and Digital Literacy in Higher Education Research: Systematic Review of Concept Use," *Cogent Education* 5, no. 1 (2018): 1519143, <https://doi.org/10.1080/2331186X.2018.1519143>.

¹¹ Qun Zheng et al., "Examining the Influencing Effect of EFL Students' Digital Literacy on Their Online Learning Power: The Mediating Role of Perceived Teacher Support," *Asia Pacific Journal of Education* 45, no. 1 (2025): 20–34, <https://doi.org/10.1080/02188791.2024.2404669>; Aprilia Dyah Kriswinahyu and Fidelis Chosa Kastuhandani, "Students' Lived Experiences Practicing Digital Literacy Using Youtube as an English Learning Tool," *Indonesian Journal of Educational Development (IJED)* 4, no. 4 (2024), <https://doi.org/10.59672/ijed.v4i4.3314>; Siti Kustini et al., "Beyond Traditional Literacies: A Multimodal-Based Instruction to Fostering Student Digital Literacy Learning," *Jurnal Pendidikan Bahasa Dan Sastra* 20, no. 1 (2020): 37–47, https://doi.org/10.17509/bs_jpbs.v20i1.25969.

¹² Melly Minarti et al., "Utilization of Social Media in Learning Islamic Religion: Its Impact on Strengthening Student Outcomes and Achievements," *Nidhomul Haq: Jurnal Manajemen Pendidikan Islam* 8, no. 2 (2023): 279–91, <https://doi.org/10.31538/ndh.v8i2.3930>; Muhammad Khakim Ashari et al., "Religious Digital Literacy of Students in Indonesia and Malaysia," *TADRIS: Jurnal Pendidikan Islam* 18, no. 1 (2023): 189–210, <https://doi.org/10.19105/tjpi.v18i1.8794>; Mahmudah Nur, "Literasi Digital Keagamaan Aktivis Organisasi Keagamaan Di Madrasah Aliyah Negeri (MAN) Di Kota Bandung," *Jurnal SMART (Studi Masyarakat, Religi, Dan Tradisi)* 5, no. 1 (2019): 1–14, <https://doi.org/10.18784/smart.v5i1.745>.

¹³ Aang Mahyani et al., "Needs Analysis for the Development of a Mobile Application Design to Strengthen Religious Moderation through Digital Literacy in West Java"; Minarti et al., "Utilization of Social Media in Learning Islamic Religion"; Naomi Ainun Hasanah, "The Urgency of Digital Literacy to Minimize the Spread of Religious Hoaxes Among Students of Islamic University in Pandemic Covid-19," *Mudṣarab: Jurnal Kajian Islam Kontemporer* 3, no. 2 (2021): 1, <https://doi.org/10.18592/msr.v3i2.5957>.

Changes in students' patterns of religious information consumption cannot be separated from the role of social media as the primary space for knowledge dissemination. Platforms such as YouTube, TikTok, and Instagram function not only as communication tools but also as major mediums for informal religious learning. Religious content packaged in short, visual, and emotional formats is more easily received by younger generations compared to more academic and textual religious materials.¹⁴

However, the algorithm-based nature of social media introduces non-neutral information selection mechanisms. Algorithms operate based on user preferences and interactions, resulting in individuals being exposed primarily to content similar to what they have previously consumed. In digital media literature, this condition is known as a filter bubble, a situation in which users are exposed only to information that reinforces their existing views.¹⁵

In addition to filter bubbles, there is also the phenomenon of echo chambers, which reinforces repeated exposure to information within a homogeneous digital environment. In the context of digital religious literacy, this condition may limit the diversity of Islamic perspectives received by students. As a result, religious understanding may become less reflective and more closed to interpretive differences, which in fact constitute an essential part of the Islamic intellectual tradition.¹⁶

To analyze this phenomenon, critical media literacy theory is employed as an analytical framework. This theory asserts that all information conveyed through media is a form of social construction that is not neutral, but influenced by framing, ideology, and specific interests. Therefore, students need to develop the ability to critically analyze media messages, understand information production processes, and compare them with authoritative scholarly sources.¹⁷

¹⁴ Kiki Zakiah et al., "Media Literacy and Involvement of Students of SMK YPC Tasikmalaya in Religious Da'wah Movement in Digital Space," *Ilmu Dakwah: Academic Journal for Homiletic Studies* 18, no. 2 (2024): 337–56, <https://doi.org/10.15575/idajhs.v18i2.40957>; Minarti et al., "Utilization of Social Media in Learning Islamic Religion"; Kriswinahyu and Kastuhandani, "Students' Lived Experiences Practicing Digital Literacy Using Youtube as an English Learning Tool."

¹⁵ Qazi Mohammad Areeb et al., "Filter Bubbles in Recommender Systems: Fact or Fallacy—A Systematic Review," *WIREs Data Mining and Knowledge Discovery* 13, no. 6 (2023): e1512, <https://doi.org/10.1002/widm.1512>; Axel Bruns, "Filter Bubble," *Internet Policy Review* 8, no. 4 (2019), <https://doi.org/10.14763/2019.4.1426>; Ping Liu et al., "The Interaction between Political Typology and Filter Bubbles in News Recommendation Algorithms," *Proceedings of the Web Conference 2021*, April 19, 2021, 3791–801, <https://doi.org/10.1145/3442381.3450113>; Shaina Raza and Chen Ding, "News Recommender System: A Review of Recent Progress, Challenges, and Opportunities," *Artificial Intelligence Review* 55, no. 1 (2022): 749–800, <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10462-021-10043-x>.

¹⁶ Choiri et al., "The Impact of Social Media on the Formation of Religious Patterns Among Millennial Students in Ponorogo"; Abdullah et al., "Religious Confusion and Emptiness"; Muhammad Khakim Ashari et al., "Religious Digital Literacy of Students in Indonesia and Malaysia."

¹⁷ Matthew Deroo, "Seeking Truth about Muslims: Critical Media Literacies in an Era of Islamophobia," *Journal of Media Literacy Education* 13, no. 3 (2021): 49–61, <https://doi.org/10.23860/JMLE-2021-13-3-4>.

From the perspective of Islamic education evaluation, digital religious literacy can be positioned as a measurable competence through specific indicators. Evaluation does not only focus on cognitive aspects but also includes affective and behavioral dimensions that reflect the internalization of Islamic values in digital contexts.¹⁸ This aligns with Islamic educational evaluation approaches that emphasize the balance between knowledge, attitude, and action.¹⁹

Based on this theoretical synthesis, digital religious literacy in this study is conceptualized as a multidimensional competence comprising five main aspects: the ability to select credible religious sources, the ability to verify religious information, comprehension of digital religious messages, critical attitudes toward popular religious content, and ethical behavior in disseminating religious information in digital spaces. These five aspects represent an integration of digital literacy, media literacy, and religious literacy within a unified analytical framework.

RESULTS

The findings of this study present students' digital religious literacy achievements based on five indicators: the ability to select credible religious sources, the ability to verify religious information, comprehension of digital religious messages, critical attitudes toward popular religious content, and ethical behavior in receiving and disseminating religious information in digital spaces. These indicators were used to construct a comprehensive profile of students' digital religious literacy within the social media ecosystem.

Based on descriptive statistical analysis, students' digital religious literacy is generally categorized as moderate, although variations exist across indicators. The highest-performing indicator is information-sharing ethics, while the lowest score is found in the ability to verify information. The overall mean score of students' digital religious literacy is 3.05, which also falls within the moderate category.

The detailed mean scores for each indicator are presented in Table 1 below.

Table 1. Mean Scores of Digital Religious Literacy Indicators

Indicator	Mean	Category
Selecting credible sources	2.55	Low
Information verification	2.48	Low
Comprehension of messages	3.18	Moderate

¹⁸ Ari Hasan Ansori and M. Arie Firdaus Heriansyah, "Evaluasi Pendidikan Islam Dalam Teori Modern: Integrasi Teknologi Dan Nilai Karakter," in *Transformasi Pendidikan Islam: Filosofi, Nilai, Dan Inovasi Menuju Masyarakat Berkeadaban* (Zahir Publishing, 2025); Ansori and Sudi, "Membangun Generasi Digital Berkarakter: Model Pembelajaran Holistik Berbasis Kearifan Lokal."

¹⁹ Ari Hasan Ansori and M. Arie Firdaus Heriansyah, *Transformasi Pembelajaran Abad 21: Sinergi Proyek Kontekstual dan Penilaian Autentik Menuju Pendidikan Mendalam* (Goresan Pena, 2025).

Critical attitude toward popular content	2.52	Low
Information-sharing ethics	3.20	Moderate

A closer examination of the data reveals that the ability to select credible religious sources is in the low category with a score of 2.55. This indicates that students have not yet developed strong source selection skills, making them vulnerable to the dominance of popular content on social media.

The ability to verify information obtained the lowest score of 2.48, also in the low category, and represents the weakest indicator in this study. This suggests that fact-checking religious information has not yet become an established habit in students' digital literacy behavior.

In terms of comprehension of digital religious messages, the score of 3.18 indicates a moderate category. This suggests that students are relatively able to understand religious messages, particularly those presented in visual and concise formats, although limitations remain in understanding conceptual and in-depth religious content.

Meanwhile, critical attitudes toward popular religious content scored 2.52, also in the low category. This finding indicates that widely circulated religious content on social media tends to be accepted without sufficient critical evaluation.

In contrast, the indicator of information-sharing ethics recorded a score of 3.20, placing it in the moderate category. This suggests that students tend to be relatively cautious in sharing information, although this behavior is not yet fully supported by strong verification skills.

Figure 1 presents a visualization of students' digital religious literacy profile based on the five measured indicators. This visualization is used to clarify comparative differences across indicators, allowing clearer identification of strengths and weaknesses in students' literacy profiles within the digital religious environment. The figure indicates noticeable variation across indicators, particularly in information verification and critical attitude, which are relatively lower than the others.

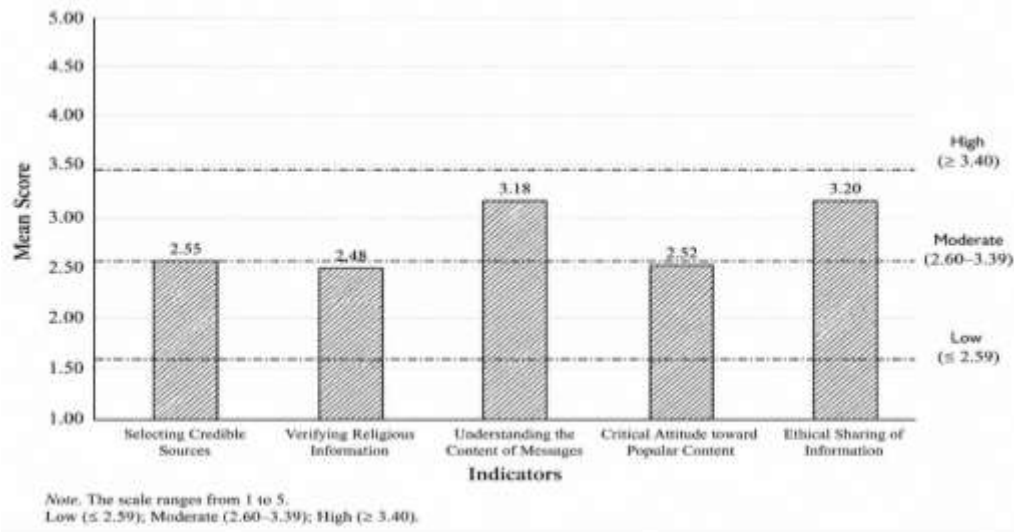


Figure 1. Profile of Digital Religious Literacy Indicators

Furthermore, the distribution of students' digital religious literacy levels is presented in Table 2 below.

Table 2. Distribution of Students' Digital Religious Literacy Levels

Category	Frequency	Percentage
High	86	28.7%
Moderate	152	50.7%
Low	62	20.6%
Total	300	100%

The data show that the moderate category dominates with 50.7%. This indicates that, overall, students' digital religious literacy is at a medium level, with a relatively balanced distribution between high and low categories, although no extreme dominance is observed.

Figure 2 below illustrates the distribution of students' digital religious literacy levels based on the classification of high, moderate, and low categories. This visualization provides a proportional representation of data distribution, facilitating clearer interpretation of general literacy tendencies among respondents. The figure 2 highlights category dominance while also illustrating variability across literacy levels.

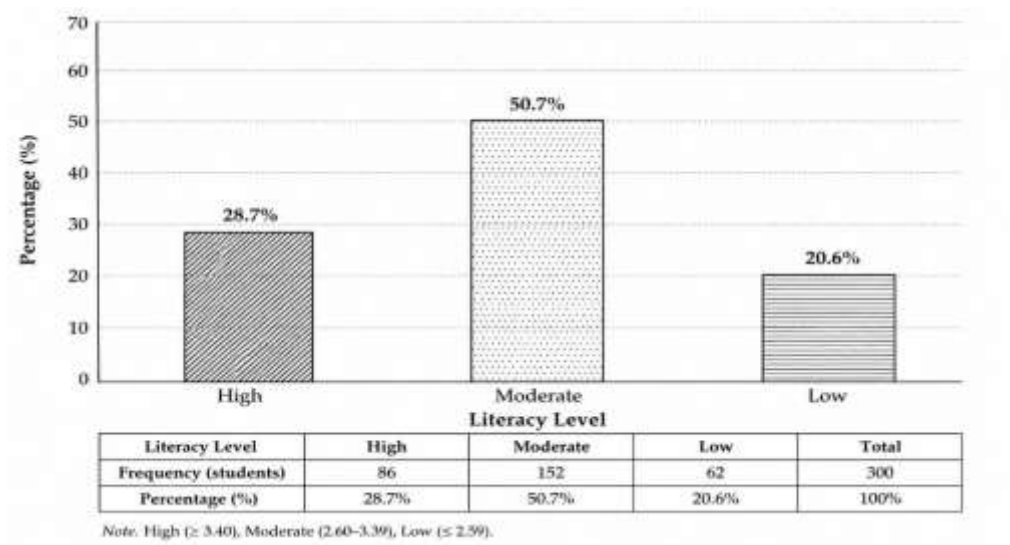


Figure 2. Distribusi of Students's Digital Religious Literacy Level

This condition is further confirmed by patterns of social media usage as sources of religious information among students.

Table 3. Social Media Platforms Used for Religious Information

Platform	Usage Percentage	Category
TikTok	92%	High
YouTube	72%	Moderate
Instagram	85%	High
Facebook	43%	Low

The data indicate that TikTok is the most widely used platform at 92%, followed by Instagram at 85%, YouTube at 72%, and Facebook at 43%. These findings suggest that video-based and visual platforms dominate students' access to religious information, with YouTube categorized as moderate due to its mixed use for both entertainment and educational content.

Based on all measured indicators, the overall mean score of students' digital religious literacy is 3.05, which falls within the moderate category. This value is the aggregated result of all analyzed indicators and indicates that students' digital religious literacy remains imbalanced, particularly between relatively stronger information access skills and weaker verification and critical thinking abilities.

DISCUSSION

The findings of this study indicate that students' digital religious literacy is generally categorized as moderate, with a noticeable imbalance across

indicators. Substantively, this condition confirms that students possess basic competencies in accessing and understanding digital religious information; however, these abilities are not accompanied by adequate evaluative capacities in verifying sources, assessing information validity, and adopting critical attitudes toward religious content in digital spaces. Thus, students' digital religious literacy has not yet developed as a fully integrated competence but is still dominated by instrumental aspects rather than reflective-critical dimensions. This finding reinforces critiques in the literature on Islamic digital literacy, which argue that technological proficiency does not automatically correspond to epistemic depth in religious understanding.²⁰

The dominance of the moderate category across most indicators suggests that students' digital literacy is currently in a transitional phase, moving from purely technical skills toward critical literacy. This aligns with the view that the transformation of Islamic education in the digital era requires integration among technological competence, Islamic values, and critical thinking skills in interpreting religious information.²¹ Nevertheless, these findings also reveal a gap between the ideal of holistic digital literacy and its empirical reality, where evaluative and reflective dimensions have not yet been fully internalized as core competencies.

In relation to the lowest-scoring indicator—information verification—there is a fundamental weakness in students' epistemic dimension of digital religious literacy. Verification has not yet become an internalized cognitive practice but remains incidental in nature. This condition is closely related to the fast-paced, fluid, and minimally validated digital information ecosystem, as highlighted in studies on religious hoaxes in social media.²² Therefore, the main problem does not lie solely in technical ability, but in the weak epistemological awareness in determining the validity of religious information.

Regarding the ability to select credible sources, which is also categorized as low, students have not been able to clearly distinguish between scholarly religious authority based on academic knowledge and popular content driven by algorithms. This phenomenon reflects a disruption of religious authority in digital spaces, where epistemic legitimacy is increasingly eroded by the logic of popularity and virality.²³ In this context, social media

²⁰ Adiyono et al., "Islamic Character Education in the Era of Industry 5.0"; Ansori and Heriansyah, "Evaluasi Pendidikan Islam Dalam Teori Modern: Integrasi Teknologi Dan Nilai Karakter."

²¹ Adiyono et al., "Islamic Character Education in the Era of Industry 5.0"; Ansori and Sudi, "Strengthening Students' Digital Competence through a Holistic Learning Model Based on Local Wisdom."

²² Putri et al., "Exploring the Impact of Religious Hoaxes on Social Media"; Ida Faridatul Hasanah et al., "Qur'anic Learning in the Digital Era: A Study on Digital Applications and Their Impact," *Jurnal Pamator: Jurnal Ilmiah Universitas Trunojoyo* 18, no. 1 (2025): 146–59, <https://doi.org/10.21107/pamator.v17i4.28172>; Ansori and Sudi, "Membangun Generasi Digital Berkarakter: Model Pembelajaran Holistik Berbasis Kearifan Lokal."

²³ Solahudin and Fakhruroji, "Internet and Islamic Learning Practices in Indonesia"; Syarif and Hannan, "ISLAMIC DISRUPTION."

algorithms function as a “new authority determinant” that is often detached from Islamic epistemological foundations.

For the indicator of comprehension of digital religious messages, which is categorized as moderate, students tend to understand religious content presented in visual and simple narrative formats. However, they experience limitations in grasping complex and multidimensional religious concepts. This confirms the characteristics of digital learning, which tends to simplify meaning through multimodal formats.²⁴ As a result, religious understanding risks becoming fragmented and conceptually incomplete.

In terms of critical attitude toward popular religious content, which is categorized as low, students demonstrate a tendency to accept viral content without sufficient reflective evaluation. This condition can be explained by filter bubble mechanisms and algorithmic recommendation systems that limit the diversity of information received by users.²⁵ In this regard, digital space is not neutral, as it actively shapes cognitive patterns and epistemic boundaries in students’ religious understanding.

Regarding information-sharing ethics, which is categorized as moderate, students demonstrate normative awareness in using digital media, particularly caution in disseminating religious information. However, this awareness is not yet fully supported by strong verification skills. Thus, there is a lack of alignment between digital ethics as normative awareness and critical literacy as epistemic competence.²⁶

The distribution of digital religious literacy levels, dominated by the moderate category with a still significant proportion of low-level literacy, indicates that digital religious literacy has not yet developed into a fully integrated competence. Within Islamic education, this condition underscores the need for value-based digital literacy integration to strengthen students’ analytical, critical, and epistemological capacities in responding to the flow of religious information.²⁷

The dominance of platforms such as TikTok, YouTube, and Instagram as primary sources of religious information indicates that students’ religious experiences are increasingly structured by digital platform logic, which is visual, fast-paced, and algorithm-driven. This has contributed to a shift in patterns of religious knowledge consumption toward emotional and instant engagement rather than reflective and analytical understanding. This finding

²⁴ Kustini et al., “BEYOND TRADITIONAL LITERACIES”; Hasanah et al., “Qur’anic Learning In The Digital Era,” 2025.

²⁵ Bruns, “Filter Bubble”; Areeb et al., “Filter Bubbles in Recommender Systems.”

²⁶ Zheng et al., “Examining the Influencing Effect of EFL Students’ Digital Literacy on Their Online Learning Power”; Deroo, “Seeking Truth about Muslims.”

²⁷ Aang Mahyani et al., “Needs Analysis for the Development of a Mobile Application Design to Strengthen Religious Moderation through Digital Literacy in West Java”; Machendrawaty et al., “Da’wah Education Based on Religious Moderation Training Using Digital Technology at Islamic Boarding Schools in East Bandung.”

aligns with studies highlighting the strong influence of social media in shaping the religiosity patterns of younger generations.²⁸

Thus, the results of this study confirm a structural gap between technical literacy and critical literacy in students' digital religious literacy. Technical literacy has developed at a moderate level, whereas critical literacy—encompassing verification, evaluation, and analysis—remains at low to moderate levels. This condition suggests that the main challenge of Islamic education in the digital era is not merely access to information, but the development of critical epistemological awareness in managing and interpreting religious information responsibly.²⁹

CONCLUSION

Students' digital religious literacy is generally categorized as moderate. This condition indicates that students have acquired basic competencies in accessing and understanding digital religious information; however, these competencies are not yet accompanied by adequate evaluative abilities, particularly in terms of information verification and critical attitudes toward religious content on social media. The findings confirm that students' digital religious literacy is still more dominant in the dimension of information consumption rather than in analytical and epistemological capacities for critically interpreting religious content.

The weakest indicator is information verification, while other indicators such as selecting credible sources, comprehension of religious messages, and information-sharing ethics are positioned at a moderate level. This pattern reflects a structural imbalance in digital religious literacy, particularly between technical literacy, which is operational in nature, and critical literacy, which is evaluative and reflective. The dominance of algorithm-based platforms such as TikTok and YouTube further reinforces patterns of fast, visual, and instant information consumption, but does not sufficiently support deeper conceptual and reflective understanding.

The implication is that Islamic education in madrasahs needs to systematically and purposefully integrate digital religious literacy strengthening. Such strengthening should not be limited to technical skills in using technology, but must also include information verification abilities, critical analysis skills, and the development of epistemological awareness in understanding religious sources. In this way, students are expected not only to function as consumers of digital information but also as critical agents capable of evaluating, selecting, and ethically and scientifically accounting for religious information in digital spaces.

²⁸ Minarti et al., "Utilization of Social Media in Learning Islamic Religion"; Choiri et al., "The Impact of Social Media on the Formation of Religious Patterns Among Millennial Students in Ponorogo."

²⁹ Nyanasuryanadi et al., "Mainstreaming the Value of Religious Moderation by Teachers in the Digital Era"; Sahlan et al., "Digital-Based Literacy Analysis of Religious Moderation."

This study is limited by its scope, as it only involves a single madrasah; therefore, the generalizability of the findings remains limited. Future research is recommended to expand the scope to different educational levels and more diverse geographical contexts, as well as to employ a mixed-method approach in order to obtain a more comprehensive understanding of the dynamics of digital religious literacy among Muslim students.

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