

The Role of Digital Literacy in Strengthening Religious Moderation Values : A Study Of Madrasah Aliyah In Jambi City

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Abstrak

Perkembangan teknologi digital telah mengubah cara siswa mengakses dan menyebarkan informasi, termasuk konten keagamaan, sekaligus meningkatkan risiko paparan misinformasi, intoleransi, dan narasi radikal. Penelitian ini bertujuan menganalisis peran literasi digital dalam memperkuat nilai moderasi keagamaan siswa Madrasah Aliyah di Kota Jambi. Penelitian menggunakan pendekatan kuantitatif dengan desain korelasional terhadap 320 siswa yang dipilih melalui stratified random sampling. Data dikumpulkan menggunakan Skala likert Literasi Digital dan Skala Nilai-nilai Moderasi Keagamaan, kemudian dianalisis melalui statistik deskriptif, korelasi Pearson, dan regresi. Hasil menunjukkan hubungan positif dan signifikan antara literasi digital dan moderasi keagamaan ($r = 0,71$; $p < 0,001$). Literasi digital juga secara signifikan memprediksi moderasi keagamaan dan menjelaskan 50,4% varians ($R^2 = 0,504$; $p < 0,001$). Evaluasi kritis terhadap informasi daring dan perilaku digital etis menjadi prediktor terkuat. Temuan ini menegaskan bahwa penguatan literasi digital berkontribusi terhadap pembentukan nilai-nilai moderasi beragama agamaan yang inklusif, toleran, dan seimbang. Oleh karena itu, literasi digital perlu diintegrasikan secara strategis dalam kurikulum madrasah untuk memperkuat moderasi keagamaan di era digital.

Kata kunci : Literasi Digital; Moderasi Beragama; Pendidikan Islam; Madrasah Aliyah.

Abstract

The rapid development of digital technology has transformed how students access and share information, including religious content, while increasing their exposure to misinformation, intolerance, and radical narratives. This study examines the role of digital literacy in strengthening religious moderation among Madrasah Aliyah students in Jambi City, Indonesia. A quantitative correlational design was employed with 320 students selected through stratified random sampling. Data were collected using Digital Literacy and Religious Moderation scales and analyzed through descriptive statistics, Pearson correlation, and regression analysis. The findings reveal a strong and significant positive relationship between digital literacy and religious moderation ($r = 0.71$, $p < 0.001$). Digital literacy significantly predicted religious moderation, explaining 50.4% of its variance ($R^2 = 0.504$, $p < 0.001$). Critical evaluation of online information and ethical digital behavior emerged as the strongest predictors. These findings demonstrate that strengthening students' digital literacy can foster more inclusive, tolerant, and balanced religious attitudes. Integrating digital literacy into the madrasah curriculum is therefore essential for strengthening religious moderation in the digital era.

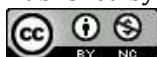
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Introduction

The rapid advancement of digital technology has significantly transformed various aspects of human life, including education, communication, culture, and religion.¹ The emergence of digital media platforms has altered the way individuals access information, interact with others, and construct knowledge. In the educational sector, digital technology has created new opportunities for learning by providing students with unlimited access to information and educational resources.² The integration of digital technologies into educational practices has become increasingly important, particularly in the twenty-first century, where digital competence is recognized as one of the essential skills needed for academic success and social participation.³ However, alongside these opportunities, digital technology also presents numerous challenges, especially regarding the dissemination of misinformation, ideological polarization, online intolerance, and radical narratives. These challenges are particularly relevant for adolescents, who represent one of the most active groups of internet users and are often exposed to diverse forms of digital content without sufficient critical evaluation skills.

Indonesia has experienced a remarkable increase in internet penetration over the last decade. The widespread use of smartphones and social media platforms has enabled students to engage continuously with digital environments. For many young people, digital platforms have become primary sources of information, including religious knowledge. Religious learning is no longer confined to classrooms, mosques, or traditional religious authorities.⁴ Instead, students frequently access religious teachings through YouTube channels, social media influencers, online discussion forums, websites, podcasts, and other digital

¹ Mulkan Azhari, Putri Rizki Syafrayani, and Maulia Rahman, "The Role of Digital Platforms in Islamic Education: Opportunities and Challenges," *Proceeding International Seminar on Islamic Studies* 6, no. 1 (2025): 2124–30.

² Abid Haleem et al., "Understanding the Role of Digital Technologies in Education: A Review," *Sustainable Operations and Computers* 3 (2022): 275–85, <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.1016/j.susoc.2022.05.004>.

³ Muhammad Rafiq-Uz-Zaman, "The Impact of Digital Literacy on Students' Learning Outcomes: A Comprehensive Review," *Inverge Journal of Social Sciences* 2 (June 2023): 194–205, <https://doi.org/10.63544/ijss.v2i2.210>.

⁴ Ridwan Ridwan and Hijrahwaty Abbas, "Social Media Engagement and Its Impact on Learning Achievement in Islamic Religious Education," *Educational Journal of Learning Technology* 3, no. 2 (2025): 157–66, <https://doi.org/10.58230/edutech.v3i2.73>.

platforms. This transformation has democratized access to religious information and expanded opportunities for learning. Nevertheless, the open nature of digital spaces also allows the circulation of inaccurate information, hate speech, religious intolerance, and extremist ideologies that may influence students' perceptions and attitudes.⁵

The increasing exposure of young people to online religious content has raised concerns among educators, policymakers, and religious leaders.⁶ Various studies have shown that digital media can function as both a positive and negative force in shaping religious understanding.⁷ On one hand, digital platforms facilitate access to diverse religious perspectives, encourage intercultural dialogue, and promote inclusive values. On the other hand, they can become channels for the spread of radical narratives, sectarianism, and religious misinformation.⁸ Adolescents are particularly vulnerable because they are still developing their cognitive and social capacities to evaluate information critically. Consequently, the ability to assess the credibility, accuracy, and ideological orientation of online content has become an essential competency in contemporary education.

Educational institutions play a vital role in cultivating religious moderation values among students.⁹ Schools and madrasahs are not only responsible for transmitting knowledge but also for shaping students' character, attitudes, and social values. In Islamic educational institutions, the promotion of religious moderation is particularly important because students are expected to develop religious understanding that is both faithful to Islamic teachings and compatible

⁵ Rifqi Ikhsan and Dewi Anggraeni, "Trends in Learning Religion through Digital Media: A Study of Students' Perceptions of Religious Moderation," *Mozaic: Islam Nusantara* 12 (April 2026): 1–12, <https://doi.org/10.47776/mozaic.v12i1.2038>.

⁶ Liang Zhang, "The Digital Age of Religious Communication: The Shaping and Challenges of Religious Beliefs through Social Media," *Studies on Religion and Philosophy* 1 (January 2025): 25–41, <https://doi.org/10.71204/de63mn10>.

⁷ Syaefuddin Ahrom Al Ayubbi, "Religious Narratives and Diversity on Social Media: Analyzing the Digital Role in Strengthening Pluralism," *Saneskara: Journal of Social Studies* 2, no. 1 (2025): 16–25.

⁸ Hendi Supriatna, Dadang Kuswana, and Acep Saprudin, "Promoting Inclusive Islam: The Role of Social Media in Fostering Religious Tolerance in the Digital Era," *Jurnal Sosiologi Agama Indonesia (JSai)* 6, no. 1 (2025): 1–15, <https://doi.org/10.22373/jsai.v6i1.5754>.

⁹ Hadini Hadini et al., "Implementation of the Program for Strengthening Religious Moderation in Aceh Madrasahs," *AL-ISHLAH: Jurnal Pendidikan* 16, no. 4 (2024): 5409–21, <https://doi.org/10.35445/alishlah.v16i4.5932>.

with democratic, pluralistic, and humanitarian principles.¹⁰ As one of the primary forms of Islamic secondary education in Indonesia, Madrasah Aliyah occupies a strategic position in preparing students to become responsible citizens who contribute positively to social harmony and national development.

However, the implementation of religious moderation education in madrasahs faces new challenges in the digital era. Students increasingly obtain religious information from sources outside formal educational institutions, including social media personalities, online preachers, and digital communities.¹¹ These sources often provide interpretations of religion that differ from those taught by educators in schools. In some cases, online religious content may promote exclusivist attitudes, intolerance, or hostility toward individuals with different beliefs.¹² As a result, the effectiveness of religious moderation education can be undermined if students lack the skills necessary to critically evaluate digital information. Therefore, strengthening digital literacy among students has become an important educational priority.

Theoretical perspectives also support the connection between digital literacy and religious moderation.¹³ Social learning theory suggests that individuals develop attitudes and behaviors through observation and interaction within their social environments, including digital spaces. Likewise, media literacy theories emphasize that individuals who possess critical media competencies are less likely to be influenced by manipulative or extremist content. In the context of religious education, digitally literate students may be more capable of distinguishing between credible and non-credible religious sources, identifying misinformation, and resisting narratives that promote intolerance or violence. Consequently, digital literacy can function as a protective factor that supports the development of moderate and inclusive religious attitudes.

¹⁰ Wiwik Angranti, "The Importance of Teaching Religious Moderation In," 2024, 435–44, <https://doi.org/10.30868/ei.v13i02.6581>.

¹¹ Ferunika et al., "The Implementation of Religious Moderation in Educational Institutions in the Contemporary Era," *Didaktika: Jurnal Kependidikan* 14, no. 2 Mei SE-Articles (2025): 3205–14.

¹² Jurnal Indonesia and Studi Moderasi, "Thematic Exegesis Analysis of Religious Polarization on Social Media" 3, no. 1 (2026): 9–19.

¹³ Moses Adeoye et al., "Digital Learning and Religious Moderation: An Educational Management Perspective," *PAEDAGOGIA* 28 (June 2025): 205, <https://doi.org/10.20961/Paedagogia.v28i2.102178>.

Despite growing recognition of its importance, empirical research examining the relationship between digital literacy and religious moderation remains limited, particularly within Islamic secondary education. Existing studies have generally focused on university students, digital citizenship, or media literacy outcomes. While these studies provide valuable insights, they do not adequately explain how digital literacy influences religious moderation among Madrasah Aliyah students, who represent a critical population due to their active engagement with digital technologies and their developmental stage. Moreover, regional studies investigating this issue within specific Indonesian contexts remain scarce, creating a need for more localized research.

Jambi City provides a relevant context for exploring this relationship. As one of the major urban centers in Sumatra, Jambi has experienced substantial technological development and increasing internet accessibility. Students in Madrasah Aliyah institutions within the city regularly use digital platforms for educational, social, and religious purposes. At the same time, Jambi is characterized by cultural diversity and strong religious traditions, making the promotion of religious moderation particularly important for maintaining social cohesion. Understanding how digital literacy contributes to students' religious moderation values within this context can provide valuable insights for educational practice and policy development. Furthermore, the findings of this study are expected to contribute to broader discussions¹⁴ regarding the role of education in addressing contemporary social challenges. In an era marked by information overload, ideological polarization, and rapid technological change, educational institutions must equip students with competencies that enable them to navigate digital environments responsibly. Digital literacy should not be viewed solely as a technical skill but as a critical component of character education and citizenship development. By fostering critical thinking, ethical awareness, and responsible digital engagement, digital literacy may serve as an effective instrument for strengthening religious moderation and promoting peaceful coexistence in diverse societies.

¹⁴ Charles Charles, Yusutria Yusutria, and Yuherman Yuherman, "Family Role And Religious Moderation Islamic Education Perspective: Millenial Radicalism Prediction," *AL-ISHLAH: Jurnal Pendidikan* 15, no. 3 (2023): 3956–68, <https://doi.org/10.35445/alishlah.v15i3.3141>.

Therefore, this study aims to investigate the role of digital literacy in strengthening religious moderation values among students of Madrasah Aliyah in Jambi City. Specifically, the study seeks to examine the level of digital literacy and religious moderation among students, analyze the relationship between these variables, and determine the extent to which digital literacy contributes to the development of religious moderation values. The results are expected to enrich the literature on digital literacy and religious moderation while providing practical recommendations for educators, policymakers, and curriculum developers seeking to enhance the quality of Islamic education in the digital age. Through a deeper understanding of this relationship, educational stakeholders can develop more effective strategies to prepare students for responsible participation in both digital and social life while fostering values of tolerance, inclusivity, and national unity.

Method

This study employed a quantitative approach using a correlational research design to examine the relationship between digital literacy and religious moderation values among students of Madrasah Aliyah in Jambi City.¹⁵ A correlational design was selected because it enables the researcher to investigate the degree to which digital literacy is associated with and contributes to the development of religious moderation values without manipulating the research variables. The study specifically focused on identifying the strength and direction of the relationship between students' digital literacy competencies and their attitudes and values related to religious moderation.¹⁶ The population of this study consisted of students enrolled in Madrasah Aliyah, or Islamic senior high schools, in Jambi City during the 2025/2026 academic year. To ensure adequate representation across different schools and grade levels, the study employed a stratified random sampling technique based on school affiliation and students' grade levels. A total of 320 students from grades X and XI, aged between 16 and 17 years, were selected as research participants. This sample size was considered sufficient for conducting

¹⁵ Ahmad Mukhtar et al., *Metode Penelitian Pendidikan* (Jln. Sungai Lareh No.26, Kel. Lubuk Minturun, Kec. Koto Tangah, Kota Padang, Sumatera Barat: AIKOMEDIA PRESS, 2024).

¹⁶ Sugiyono, *Metode Penelitian Kualitatif, Kuantitatif Dan R&D* (Bandung: Alfabeta, 2019).

correlational and regression analyses because it exceeded the minimum number of participants generally recommended for multivariate statistical procedures. Furthermore, the selected respondents represented diverse demographic and educational backgrounds, allowing for a comprehensive assessment of the relationship between digital literacy and religious moderation values among Madrasah Aliyah students.

Data were collected using two structured questionnaires developed based on relevant theoretical frameworks and previous empirical studies. The first instrument was the Digital Literacy Scale, which was designed to measure students' competencies in accessing, evaluating, creating, and communicating information through digital technologies.¹⁷ The scale covered several dimensions, including students' ability to search for and obtain relevant digital information, critically evaluate the credibility, accuracy, and reliability of online content, communicate and collaborate responsibly and effectively through digital platforms, create and share digital content appropriately, and demonstrate ethical digital behavior through awareness of digital citizenship, ethical norms, and responsible online conduct. The second instrument was the Religious Moderation Values Scale, which was developed based on the indicators of religious moderation promoted by the Indonesian Ministry of Religious Affairs. This instrument measured four major dimensions of religious moderation, namely tolerance (*tasamuh*), national commitment, anti-violence attitudes, and accommodation of local culture.

Tolerance referred to students' respect for differences in religious beliefs, opinions, and practices, while national commitment referred to their loyalty to national values, Pancasila, and the Constitution of the Republic of Indonesia. Anti-violence attitudes reflected students' rejection of radicalism, extremism, and violence committed in the name of religion, whereas accommodation of local culture referred to students' acceptance of local traditions and cultural diversity as elements that can coexist harmoniously with religious values. All questionnaire items were measured using a five-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (*strongly*

¹⁷ Ifah Rofiqoh and Zulhawati Zulhawati, "Metode Penelitian Kuantitatif, Kualitatif Dan Campuran," *Pustaka Pelajar*, no. 1 (2020): 10–27, <https://medium.com/@arifwicaksanaa/pengertian-use-case-a7e576e1b6bf>.

disagree) to 5 (*strongly agree*), with higher scores indicating stronger levels of digital literacy and religious moderation values.

Prior to the main data collection, the research instruments were subjected to validity and reliability testing through a pilot study involving students who were not included in the final research sample. Content validity was established through expert review involving specialists in educational technology, Islamic education, and educational measurement to ensure that the questionnaire items adequately represented the theoretical constructs and dimensions being measured.¹⁸ Construct validity was subsequently examined using exploratory factor analysis (EFA), while item validity was assessed using corrected item-total correlation coefficients. Questionnaire items with correlation coefficients above 0.30 were retained for use in the final research instrument. The reliability of the instruments was evaluated using Cronbach's Alpha coefficient. The Digital Literacy Scale achieved an alpha coefficient above, while the Religious Moderation Values Scale obtained an alpha coefficient above, indicating that both instruments demonstrated good internal consistency and reliability.

Data collection was conducted between January and March 2026 after obtaining permission from school authorities and relevant educational institutions. Before participating in the study, all respondents were informed about the purpose and objectives of the research, the confidentiality of their responses, and the voluntary nature of their participation. The questionnaires were administered directly in the classroom under the supervision of the researcher or authorized research assistants. Respondents were provided with sufficient time to complete the questionnaires and were encouraged to answer each item honestly based on their personal experiences and perceptions. After the questionnaires were completed, the researcher checked each response for completeness and consistency before entering the data into the statistical database for further analysis. The collected data were analyzed using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS).¹⁹ The analysis was conducted in several stages to provide a comprehensive understanding of the relationship between digital literacy and religious moderation

¹⁸ Mutri Yusuf, "Metode Penelitian Kuantitatif, Kualitatif & Penelitian Gabungan" (Jakarta: Kencana, 2014).

¹⁹ Ridha Ramadhany, "Buku Saku Digital Penggunaan Spss Ver.29 Aplikasi," 2020, 1–50.

values among students. First, descriptive statistical analysis was conducted to describe the general levels of digital literacy and religious moderation values using measures of central tendency, including the mean and standard deviation, as well as percentage distributions. Second, Pearson Product-Moment Correlation analysis was employed to examine the relationship between digital literacy and religious moderation values and to determine both the strength and direction of the relationship between the two variables, with the level of statistical significance set at $\alpha = 0.05$. Third, multiple regression analysis was conducted to determine the extent to which digital literacy predicted students' religious moderation values and to identify the relative contribution of each dimension of digital literacy to the dependent variable.

The coefficient of determination (R^2) was used to determine the proportion of variance in religious moderation values that could be explained by the digital literacy variables. Before conducting the regression analysis, several statistical assumptions were tested, including normality, linearity, multicollinearity, and homoscedasticity. The results indicated that these assumptions were satisfactorily met, thereby supporting the use of parametric statistical techniques for the analysis of the research data. This study adhered to established ethical principles in educational research involving human participants. Participation in the study was voluntary, and informed consent was obtained from all respondents before data collection was conducted. The identities of the participants were kept anonymous, and all information obtained through the questionnaires was treated confidentially and used solely for academic and research purposes. Participants were informed of their right to withdraw from the study at any stage without facing any negative consequences. Throughout the research process, the researcher ensured that the procedures respected the privacy, dignity, confidentiality, and rights of all participants and complied with applicable ethical standards for educational research involving human subjects.

Results and Discussion

Results

Descriptive Statistics of Digital Literacy and Religious Moderation Values

The first objective of this study was to examine the levels of digital literacy and religious moderation values among Madrasah Aliyah students in Jambi City. Descriptive statistical analysis indicated that both variables were generally at moderate to high levels. The overall mean score of digital literacy was 3.94 (SD = 0.51) on a five-point scale, suggesting that students possessed relatively strong competencies in utilizing digital technologies for accessing and evaluating information. Among the dimensions of digital literacy, information access and retrieval obtained the highest mean score (M = 4.12, SD = 0.48), followed by digital communication and collaboration (M = 3.98, SD = 0.54). The dimensions of critical evaluation of online information (M = 3.86, SD = 0.56) and ethical digital behavior (M = 3.81, SD = 0.59) received comparatively lower scores, indicating areas that require further educational attention. As shown in Table 1 below

Table 1. Descriptive Statistics of Digital Literacy and Religious Moderation

Variable	Dimension	Mean (M)	Standard Deviation (SD)	Rank
Digital Literacy	Information access and retrieval	4.12	0.48	1
	Digital communication and collaboration	3.98	0.54	2
	Critical evaluation of online information	3.86	0.56	3
	Ethical digital behavior	3.81	0.59	4
	Overall Digital Literacy	3.94	0.51	—
Religious Moderation	National commitment	4.18	0.44	1
	Tolerance	4.07	0.49	2
	Anti-violence attitudes	3.98	0.52	3
	Accommodation of local culture	3.85	0.55	4
	Overall Religious Moderation	4.02	0.47	—

Note: Scores were measured on a five-point Likert scale. Higher scores indicate stronger levels of digital literacy and religious moderation.

The descriptive results indicate that students demonstrated relatively strong digital literacy (M = 3.94, SD = 0.51) and relatively high religious moderation (M = 4.02, SD = 0.47). Information access and retrieval was the strongest dimension of digital literacy, whereas ethical digital behavior received the lowest score. For religious moderation, national

commitment recorded the highest mean, while accommodation of local culture had the lowest score. These findings suggest that greater attention should be given to students' critical evaluation skills, ethical digital behavior, and capacity to accommodate local cultural diversity. Similarly, students demonstrated relatively high levels of religious moderation values, with an overall mean score of 4.02 (SD = 0.47). Among the four dimensions, national commitment achieved the highest score (M = 4.18, SD = 0.44), followed by tolerance (M = 4.07, SD = 0.49), anti-violence attitudes (M = 3.98, SD = 0.52), and accommodation of local culture (M = 3.85, SD = 0.55). These findings suggest that Madrasah Aliyah students generally possess positive attitudes toward religious moderation while also demonstrating adequate digital competencies. However, the relatively lower scores in critical evaluation and ethical digital behavior indicate the need for strengthening students' abilities to critically assess online content and engage responsibly in digital environments.

Correlation between Digital Literacy and Religious Moderation Values

To determine the relationship between digital literacy and religious moderation values, Pearson Product-Moment Correlation analysis was conducted. The results revealed a strong positive correlation between digital literacy and religious moderation values ($r = .71$, $p < .001$). This finding indicates that students with higher levels of digital literacy tend to exhibit stronger religious moderation values. The correlation coefficient of .71 suggests a substantial relationship between the two variables. As students become more competent in accessing, evaluating, and utilizing digital information, they are more likely to develop tolerant, inclusive, and balanced religious attitudes. Conversely, lower levels of digital literacy may increase vulnerability to misinformation, religious intolerance, and extremist narratives circulating on digital platforms. Further analysis showed that all dimensions of digital literacy were positively associated with religious moderation values. The strongest correlations were found between:

- A. Critical evaluation of online information and religious moderation ($r = .74$, $p < .001$)
- B. Ethical digital behavior and religious moderation ($r = .70$, $p < .001$)

These results indicate that students' ability to critically assess information and behave responsibly in digital spaces plays a particularly important role in fostering moderate religious perspectives.

Multiple Regression Analysis

To examine the predictive contribution of digital literacy to religious moderation values, multiple regression analysis was performed. The regression model was statistically significant, $F(5, 314) = 63.84$, $p < .001$, indicating that the dimensions of digital literacy collectively predict religious moderation values. The model explained 50.4% of the variance in religious moderation values ($R^2 = .504$), demonstrating substantial explanatory power. The regression coefficients revealed that not all dimensions contributed equally to the prediction of religious moderation. The strongest predictors were, as shown in Table 2 below

Tabel 2. Digital Literacy Dimension	β	t	p
Critical Evaluation of Online Information	0.387	7.91	< .001
Ethical Digital Behavior	0.331	6.85	< .001
Digital Communication and Collaboration	0.214	4.42	< .001
Information Access and Retrieval	0.173	3.57	0.001
Content Creation and Participation	0.118	2.29	0.023

Among these dimensions, critical evaluation of online information emerged as the most influential predictor of religious moderation values. This finding suggests that students who are capable of identifying misinformation, verifying sources, and critically analyzing online religious content are more likely to embrace moderate religious perspectives. Likewise, ethical digital behavior significantly contributed to religious moderation, indicating that responsible online engagement promotes respect for diversity, tolerance, and constructive dialogue among students.

Discussion

The findings of this study demonstrate that digital literacy plays a significant role in strengthening religious moderation values among Madrasah Aliyah students in Jambi City. The positive and substantial relationship between digital literacy and religious moderation confirms the growing importance of digital competencies in

shaping students' religious understanding and social attitudes in the contemporary information environment. The relatively high level of digital literacy observed among students reflects the increasing integration of digital technology into educational and social life. As members of Generation Z, students are highly engaged with digital media and rely extensively on online platforms for learning, communication, and information seeking. However, digital exposure alone does not automatically lead to positive outcomes. The present findings suggest that meaningful digital literacy competencies particularly critical thinking and ethical engagement are essential in helping students navigate the complex digital information landscape.

However, on the other hand, this has a negative impact on the instilling of religious values, as students tend to place more trust in information received digitally than in primary sources, such as books, teachers, and religious instructors. This is consistent with research findings²⁰ showing that digital media can shape students' religious understanding by providing rapid and diverse access to religious information, but it can also expose them to misinformation, decontextualized interpretations, and intolerant narratives. Therefore, digital literacy should not be limited to technical skills but should also encompass critical evaluation, ethical digital behavior, and the ability to verify religious information against credible sources. Strengthening these competencies is essential to ensure that students can benefit from digital technologies while maintaining balanced, inclusive, and contextual religious values

The strong correlation between digital literacy and religious moderation supports the theoretical perspective that digitally literate individuals are better equipped to evaluate diverse viewpoints, recognize misinformation, and resist extremist propaganda. Digital literacy enables students to critically examine religious narratives encountered online rather than accepting them uncritically. Consequently, students develop more balanced and contextualized understandings of religious teachings, which are fundamental characteristics of religious moderation.

²⁰ Muaddyl Akhyar, Nurfarida Deliani, and Khadijah Khadijah, "The Importance of Religious Education in the Digital Era," *International Journal of Islamic Educational Research* 2 (January 2025): 15–30, <https://doi.org/10.61132/ijier.v2i1.146>.

These findings are consistent with previous studies highlighting the role of digital literacy in countering radicalization and promoting intercultural understanding. Research has shown that individuals with strong digital literacy skills are less susceptible to online disinformation and hate speech because they possess the cognitive tools necessary to evaluate the credibility of information sources. In the context of Islamic education, such competencies are increasingly important given the widespread dissemination of religious content through social media, video-sharing platforms, and online discussion forums. One of the most important findings of this study is that critical evaluation of online information emerged as the strongest predictor of religious moderation values. This result underscores the importance of critical thinking in the digital era. Students who can verify sources, compare information from multiple perspectives, and distinguish factual information from manipulation are more likely to reject intolerant and extremist narratives. Critical evaluation functions as a protective mechanism against ideological misinformation that often circulates through digital networks. A key novelty of this study is the identification of critical evaluation of online information as the strongest determinant of religious moderation values. Unlike previous research that tends to conceptualize digital literacy as a unified construct, this study disaggregates its dimensions and demonstrates that critical evaluation possesses the highest explanatory power in fostering moderation.²¹

The findings suggest that religious moderation in the digital age is shaped not only by access to information but, more importantly, by students' capacity to critically assess the credibility, accuracy, and ideological orientation of digital content. This contributes a new perspective to the discourse on religious moderation by positioning critical digital reasoning as a central educational mechanism for preventing the spread of extremist narratives and strengthening inclusive religious understanding among young Muslims.

Another significant finding concerns the role of ethical digital behavior. Students who demonstrate responsible online conduct tend to exhibit stronger religious moderation values. Ethical digital behavior includes respecting others'

²¹ Moh Affan et al., "Digital Literacy and Religious Moderation," *DAAR EL-MAKRIFAH: Journal of Islamic Religious Education* 2 (April 2026): 1–16, <https://doi.org/10.66931/jpai.v2i01.342>.

opinions, avoiding hate speech, maintaining civility in online interactions, and adhering to principles of digital citizenship. These behaviors align closely with the principles of religious moderation, particularly tolerance, respect for diversity, and peaceful coexistence. The findings also reveal that digital communication and collaboration contribute positively to religious moderation. Digital platforms provide opportunities for students to interact with individuals from diverse religious, cultural, and social backgrounds. Such interactions can broaden perspectives, reduce prejudice, and foster empathy toward others. Through constructive online engagement, students learn to appreciate differences and develop more inclusive attitudes. A distinctive contribution of this study is the identification of digital communication and collaboration as important predictors of religious moderation values.²² While previous studies have primarily examined these competencies from the perspective of learning effectiveness and digital engagement, this research extends the discussion by revealing their role in fostering interreligious understanding and social inclusivity. The findings suggest that constructive online interactions function as a digital socialization process through which students develop greater tolerance, respect for diversity, and moderate religious perspectives.

From an educational perspective, these findings suggest that religious moderation should not be viewed solely as a matter of religious instruction. Instead, it should be integrated with digital literacy education as part of a comprehensive strategy for character development. Madrasah institutions need to equip students not only with religious knowledge but also with the digital competencies required to engage critically and responsibly with the vast amount of information available online. Furthermore, regarding the regression results The R^2 value of 0.504 indicates that digital literacy explains approximately 50.4% of the variance in students' religious moderation. This suggests that digital literacy represents a substantial predictor of religious moderation and that improvements in students' digital competencies may be associated with more moderate religious attitudes. However, the remaining 49.6% of the

²² Junaidi Junaidi and Sri Wahyuni Tanshzil, "Religious Moderation Research (2016–2025): Systematic Review and Bibliometric Mapping," *Harmoni* 24, no. 2 (2025): 185–214, <https://doi.org/10.32488/harmoni.v24i2.888>.

variance is not explained by the model, indicating that religious moderation is a multidimensional construct influenced by other factors not included in the present analysis. These may include teacher influence, family environment, curriculum implementation, peer interactions, religious understanding, and sociocultural context. Therefore, the findings should not be interpreted as demonstrating that digital literacy is the sole determinant of religious moderation. Rather, they highlight digital literacy as an important contributing factor within a broader set of educational, social, and cultural influences.

Therefore, integrating digital literacy into the Madrasah curriculum represents a strategic approach to strengthening religious moderation in the digital era. Learning activities can include fact-checking exercises, critical analysis of online religious content, digital citizenship education, media literacy training, and collaborative projects that promote intercultural dialogue. Such initiatives can help students become both competent digital citizens and advocates of moderate religious values. Overall, the findings highlight that digital literacy is not merely a technical skill but a critical educational resource that contributes significantly to the development of tolerant, inclusive, and balanced religious attitudes. In an era characterized by rapid information flows and increasing exposure to online ideological influences, strengthening digital literacy among students represents an important pathway toward fostering sustainable religious moderation and social harmony in Indonesia.

Conclusion

This study examined the role of digital literacy in strengthening religious moderation among Madrasah Aliyah students in Jambi City. The findings show moderate to high levels of both digital literacy and religious moderation, with a strong and significant positive relationship between them ($r = .71$, $p < .001$). Digital literacy also significantly predicted religious moderation, explaining 50.4% of its variance ($R^2 = .504$), while the remaining 49.6% was attributable to other factors beyond the model. Critical evaluation of online information and ethical digital behavior emerged as the strongest dimensions. Students who could verify information, assess source credibility, and engage responsibly online were more

likely to demonstrate inclusive, tolerant, and balanced religious attitudes. These findings indicate that digital literacy extends beyond technical competence to support character formation and resilience against misinformation, intolerance, and extremist narratives. The study highlights the importance of integrating digital literacy, critical thinking, fact-checking, and ethical online behavior into madrasah education alongside religious learning. However, the study is limited by its focus on Madrasah Aliyah students in Jambi City and its reliance on self-reported data. Future research should employ broader samples and mixed-method approaches. Overall, strengthening digital literacy represents an important educational strategy for promoting religious moderation in the digital era.

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