

BUILDING THE ISLAMIC CHARACTER OF GENERATION Z THROUGH THE INTEGRATION OF ISLAMIC RELIGIOUS EDUCATION, DIGITAL LITERACY, AND RELIGIOUS MODERATION

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ABSTRACT

The development of digital technology has transformed the way Generation Z acquires, produces, and disseminates religious knowledge. This condition provides an opportunity for Islamic Religious Education (PAI) to develop learning that is more contextual, interactive, and relevant to students' lives. At the same time, the digital environment presents challenges in the form of religious disinformation, the fragmentation of scholarly authority, exclusivism, and a lack of ability among some students to critically evaluate religious information. This article aims to analyze the integration of PAI, digital literacy, and religious moderation as a strategic approach to building the Islamic character of Generation Z. The study uses an integrative literature review approach by analyzing relevant scholarly literature on Islamic religious education, character education, digital literacy, Generation Z, and religious moderation, with particular attention to recent publications. The analysis was conducted through theme identification, comparison of findings, conceptual synthesis, and the development of an integrative framework. The results show that shaping the Islamic character of Generation Z cannot be achieved solely through the transfer of religious knowledge, but requires the integration of religious competence, digital literacy skills, and the internalization of religious moderation values. PAI occupies a strategic position as a pedagogical space for building students' ability to understand Islamic teachings, verify religious information, use digital media ethically, respect differences, and apply Islamic values in real life. This article offers an integrative model consisting of four stages: religious understanding, digital verification, value reflection, and character actualization. This model can serve as a framework for developing PAI instruction that is responsive to digital transformation while remaining oriented toward the formation of moral character, tolerance, responsibility, and social benefit.

Keywords: Islamic Religious Education, Generation Z, Islamic character, digital literacy, religious moderation

INTRODUCTION

Digital transformation has brought fundamental changes to various aspects of human life, including the way young people acquire, process, and disseminate religious knowledge. Generation Z has grown up in a social environment closely tied to the internet, social media, video platforms, search engines, messaging applications, and various other forms of digital technology. The presence of this technology has made digital space no longer merely a means of communication and entertainment, but a space for learning, identity formation, social interaction, and the search for religious information. In daily life, students can obtain knowledge about the Qur'an, hadith, fiqh, creed ('aqidah), Islamic history, and contemporary religious issues through various digital sources. This condition presents both opportunities and challenges for Islamic education, particularly Islamic Religious Education (PAI), in shaping students who have a strong, critical, moderate, and well-charactered understanding of religion. (Yulastri et al., 2025)

This shift in how knowledge is acquired requires Islamic educational institutions to adjust their learning approaches. Education can no longer rely entirely on conventional patterns of knowledge transmission, because students already have access to a vast amount of information outside the classroom. PAI teachers are no longer the sole source of religious

knowledge; instead, they play an increasingly complex role as facilitators, mentors, verifiers, and guides in the process of forming students' religious understanding. Therefore, PAI instruction needs to be developed through a pedagogical approach capable of connecting sources of religious knowledge with the characteristics of the digital environment in which Generation Z grows and develops.

In this context, digital literacy becomes one of the important competencies that needs to be developed in education. Digital literacy cannot be understood merely as the ability to use technological devices, access the internet, or operate various applications. UNESCO views media and information literacy as a set of knowledge, skills, attitudes, and practices that enable a person to access, critically analyze and evaluate, use, create, and disseminate information creatively, legally, and ethically. This understanding shows that digital literacy has a far broader dimension than technical ability. In religious education, digital literacy is closely related to students' epistemological ability to determine trustworthy sources of information, verify the validity of information, understand the context of religious messages, and consider the ethical impact of the information they consume and disseminate. (R. Mardiah et al., 2025)

This issue becomes increasingly important because the religious information received by students comes from a wide variety of sources. In addition to teachers, textbooks, madrasahs, schools, Islamic boarding schools (pesantren), and Islamic educational institutions, students can obtain information through YouTube, TikTok, Instagram, WhatsApp, podcasts, blogs, online forums, and various other social media platforms. This diversity of sources provides students with great opportunities to broaden their Islamic knowledge. At the same time, however, not all information circulating in the digital space has an adequate scholarly basis, authority, and context. Information conveyed briefly through social media can strip away the context of a verse or hadith, oversimplify complex fiqh issues, or even present religious interpretations that are inconsistent with the principles of Islamic scholarship.

Recent research on the religious literacy of students in Indonesia shows that high levels of religious knowledge are not always matched by critical thinking skills when facing religious issues. Challenges remain in students' ability to identify religiously based violence, understand religious texts within their social and political context, engage in interfaith dialogue, and critically evaluate various religious movements and narratives. This condition demonstrates that religious education in the digital era cannot be oriented solely toward mastery of subject matter. Students also need to be equipped with the ability to understand context, carry out verification, compare sources, and use religious knowledge responsibly. (Ihsan et al., 2025)

Religious knowledge that is not accompanied by critical thinking skills can leave students vulnerable to unverified religious information. Conversely, digital literacy that is oriented solely toward technological proficiency without a moral foundation can produce the ability to access and disseminate information without regard for ethical considerations. For this reason, Islamic education needs an integration between digital competence and Islamic values. This integration is important so that students become not merely skilled technology users, but technology users who possess moral responsibility, critical thinking ability, and awareness of the social consequences of their digital activities. In this context, Islamic Religious Education occupies a strategic position. PAI functions not only to convey

knowledge about the Qur'an, hadith, creed, fiqh, Islamic history, and morals (akhlak), but also to shape students' attitudes, values, and behavior. Ideally, religious education bridges knowledge and practice so that students are able to apply Islamic values in real life, including in digital life. The values of honesty, responsibility, tabayyun (verification before acting), courtesy, justice, tolerance, and respect for others are values relevant to be developed in PAI instruction amid the intensity of digital media use.(Widyastuti, 2026)

In addition to digital literacy, another important challenge for contemporary Islamic education is strengthening religious moderation. Generation Z lives in a plural society connected globally. Through digital media, they interact with individuals of different religions, schools of thought (mazhab), religious organizations, cultures, social backgrounds, and views on various Islamic issues. This condition requires a religious understanding capable of holding firm convictions while respecting the existence of others. Religious moderation in the educational context does not mean reducing one's commitment to their religion, but rather building a way of practicing religion that emphasizes balance, justice, tolerance, respect for differences, and the rejection of violence(Rani et al., 2025).

A number of studies on PAI and religious moderation show that moderation values can be integrated into both learning materials and teaching practices. Values such as tolerance, justice, balance, appreciation for differences, and openness can be developed through learning materials as well as pedagogical interaction between teachers and students. PAI teachers play an important role in this process, as they not only convey subject matter but also serve as models in demonstrating how to understand and respond to differences. A dialogic and inclusive school environment can also strengthen the internalization of moderation values in students' lives.

Nevertheless, studies on PAI, digital literacy, and religious moderation are still often developed along separate tracks. Some research focuses on character education through PAI, while other research discusses digital literacy or religious moderation independently. Studies integrating all three aspects as a single pedagogical unit still require more systematic conceptual development. In fact, the three are closely interconnected. Digital literacy provides students with the ability to access and evaluate information, PAI provides a foundation of Islamic values and knowledge, while religious moderation provides orientation for building a balanced and pluralism-respecting religious attitude.(Saleh et al., 2026)

The digitalization of Islamic education for Generation Z thus requires a reformulation of teaching methodology. PAI teachers need to use technology not merely as a medium for delivering material, but as a space for training critical thinking, information verification, dialogue, reflection, and the practice of Islamic values. Students can be guided to compare digital religious sources, examine the credibility of speakers, understand the context of verses and hadith, discuss differences of opinion among scholars, and develop communication ethics in digital spaces. This approach can make PAI instruction more relevant to the everyday experience of Generation Z without losing the substance and basic principles of Islamic education.(Muflihini, 2025)

Based on this condition, a conceptual framework is needed that does not view digital literacy as a standalone technical skill and religious moderation as merely supplementary material in PAI instruction. Both need to be placed as integral parts of the process of forming Islamic character. This integration can be directed toward three main competencies: the

ability to understand Islamic teachings in depth, the ability to critically evaluate religious information, and the ability to ethically actualize Islamic values in social life as well as in digital space.

In this regard, the integration of PAI, digital literacy, and religious moderation has strategic relevance in addressing the challenges of Islamic education in the era of digital transformation. An integrative approach enables PAI instruction to move beyond the mere transfer of knowledge, developing instead into a process of character formation, critical thinking skills, and students' social responsibility. This article aims to analyze how the integration of PAI, digital literacy, and religious moderation can be used as a pedagogical approach to build the Islamic character of Generation Z. In addition, this article offers an integrative conceptual model that can serve as a basis for developing PAI instruction that is adaptive to technological developments, critical of the flow of information, and remains grounded in Islamic values and the principles of a moderate life. (N. I. Mardiah, 2026)

RESEARCH METHOD

This research uses an integrative literature review approach aimed at integrating various conceptual perspectives and empirical research findings on Islamic Religious Education (PAI), character education, digital literacy, Generation Z, and religious moderation. This approach was chosen because the research seeks not only to identify prior research findings, but also to analyze the relationships between concepts in order to gain a more comprehensive understanding of strategies for building the Islamic character of Generation Z amid digital transformation. The literature analyzed includes scholarly journal articles, academic publications, institutional documents, and relevant policy sources. The literature search focused on research discussing Islamic Religious Education, student character and morals, digital literacy or media and information literacy, Generation Z and digital learning, and religious moderation. (Soendari, 2012)

Literature selection prioritized recent publications capable of illustrating the development of Islamic education in the context of digital technology transformation. Older literature was still used where it offered a fundamental theoretical contribution in explaining concepts of Islamic education, character education, digital literacy, or religious moderation. The review process was carried out systematically through several stages: identifying relevant literature, selecting literature based on its relevance to the research focus, categorizing it according to main themes, and critically reading prior research findings. The selected literature was then grouped into several themes: the role of PAI in character formation, the learning characteristics of Generation Z, digital literacy in religious education, and the internalization of religious moderation values in the learning process. (Moleong, 2006)

Data analysis was carried out through a process of comparison and synthesis. In the comparison stage, findings from various studies were compared to identify similarities, differences, tendencies, and limitations in prior research. Subsequently, the synthesis stage was carried out by integrating these various findings into a conceptual framework concerning the formation of the Islamic character of Generation Z through the integration of PAI, digital literacy, and religious moderation. The analysis is conceptual and interpretive in nature, so this research is not intended to produce statistical effect estimates as in a meta-analysis. Through this approach, the research results are expected to provide a deeper

understanding of how PAI can be developed as an educational space that not only transmits religious knowledge, but also builds digital literacy skills, moderate attitudes, social responsibility, and the Islamic character of students in facing the complexity of digital life. (Sukmana, 2021)

RESULTS AND ANALYSIS

Generation Z and the Changing Ecosystem of Religious Learning

Generation Z has grown up in a social environment with characteristics different from previous generations. The presence of the internet, smartphones, social media, video-sharing platforms, search engines, and various digital applications has become an integral part of their daily lives. Digital technology is no longer used solely for communication and entertainment, but also functions as a space for acquiring knowledge, building social relationships, expressing identity, and shaping views on various aspects of life, including religious matters. This condition has caused the boundary between formal educational space and informal learning space to become increasingly blurred. Students may learn in the classroom in the morning, then continue their search for information through YouTube, TikTok, Instagram, WhatsApp, podcasts, or various religious websites after class has ended. This ecosystem shift shows that the process of religious education no longer takes place entirely within educational institutions, but also occurs in a digital space that is open, dynamic, and highly diverse. (Karima et al., 2026)

Within the context of Islamic Religious Education (PAI), these developments have given rise to the phenomenon of digital religious learning, namely the process of acquiring religious knowledge, understanding, experience, and expression through digital media. Students can follow Islamic study sessions online, listen to sermons by scholars through video platforms, read religious articles, access digital tafsir and hadith, join religious communities on social media, participate in discussions through chat groups, and even use artificial intelligence technology to obtain explanations of Islamic concepts. This phenomenon expands the space for religious learning, since learning resources are no longer limited to textbooks, teachers, ustaz, and educational institutions. Students have the opportunity to compare various viewpoints and obtain information from diverse sources. From a pedagogical perspective, this condition can be an opportunity for PAI to develop learning that is more contextual, interactive, and suited to the characteristics of a Generation Z accustomed to multimedia environments and rapid access to information. (Baroya, 2026)

However, the expansion of access to religious information also presents complex epistemological challenges. Information available in digital space varies greatly in validity, authority, and quality. Students may encounter information from Islamic educational institutions, universities, religious organizations, scholars, and preachers, as well as from social media users without adequate scholarly background. In such a situation, the popularity of a piece of content does not always correspond to the quality of its scholarship. Content that garners large numbers of views, likes, comments, or shares does not necessarily rest on strong argumentation. Conversely, religious material with a solid academic foundation and credible references does not necessarily receive the same level of attention in digital space. This condition shows that students need the ability to distinguish

between the popularity of information and the credibility of information.(Ramadhani et al., 2026)

This issue becomes even more complex because the nature of social media allows information to be produced and disseminated very quickly. A clip of a sermon, a quoted verse, hadith, or statement by a religious figure can be taken out of its original context and then redistributed with a different title or narrative. Information that has undergone such a change in context can shape an incomplete religious understanding. Under these conditions, students who do not yet have adequate digital and religious literacy skills are at risk of passively accepting information without any process of verification. Research on the religious literacy of students shows that access to digital religious information does not automatically produce the ability to critically evaluate that information. Therefore, the central challenge of religious education in the digital era is no longer merely providing access to information, but building students' ability to understand, test, compare, and assess that information.(Syarifah & Hidayat, 2024)

Changes in the religious learning ecosystem also have implications for the position of PAI teachers. In conventional learning systems, teachers are often regarded as the primary source of knowledge who provide information to students. In a digital environment, students can obtain information from various sources even before the material is discussed in class. As a result, teachers no longer function merely as transmitters of knowledge, but also as facilitators, mentors, and guides in the process of knowledge-seeking. PAI teachers need to help students develop the ability to examine sources of information, recognize the credibility of content creators, understand the context of verses and hadith, compare scholars' opinions, and distinguish between religious facts, interpretation, opinion, and claims lacking an adequate basis. This shift in role demands an increase in teachers' digital and pedagogical competence so that PAI instruction can adapt to the characteristics of Generation Z's learning environment.(Sari et al., 2026)

In this context, digital literacy needs to be positioned as an integral part of PAI teaching competence. Digital literacy should not be understood merely as the ability to use technological devices, open applications, search for information, or create content. Religious digital literacy encompasses the ability to find relevant sources, evaluate the credibility of information, understand religious context, compare various perspectives, and use information ethically and responsibly. Students need to be trained to ask critical questions when encountering religious content in digital space: Who is conveying this information? What is its source? What is the context of the statement? Does the information have a scholarly basis that can be justified? Are there other relevant viewpoints? And what would be the social impact if the information were accepted or disseminated? The ability to raise such questions is an important part of forming both a critical attitude and an ethic in religious learning.(Fauzianor et al., 2025)

Thus, changes in the religious learning ecosystem in the era of Generation Z need to be viewed as both a challenge and an opportunity for the development of PAI. Digital technology can expand access to learning resources and open up more creative learning spaces, but these benefits can only be realized if students possess adequate digital literacy skills. PAI needs to be present not to restrict students' access to digital space, but to equip them with the ability to use that space critically, ethically, and responsibly. The integration of Islamic knowledge, digital literacy, and critical thinking ability can ultimately shape

students who are not only able to obtain religious information, but also able to assess its truth and context and to wisely actualize Islamic values in digital and social life. From this perspective, digital literacy is not merely an additional competency in PAI instruction, but an important part of forming the Islamic character of Generation Z amid the changes taking place in digital society. (Arli & Isma, 2026)

PAI as a Foundation for Forming Islamic Character

Islamic Religious Education (PAI) holds a fundamental position in the process of shaping students' character, because the substance of its instruction is not oriented solely toward the mastery of religious knowledge, but is also directed toward forming attitudes, values, and behavior in accordance with Islamic teachings. Islamic character is essentially a construct of values reflected in a person's relationship with Allah SWT, with oneself, with fellow human beings, and with the environment. Therefore, Islamic character cannot be reduced merely to politeness or compliance with rules, but encompasses the integration of knowledge, belief, attitude, will, and action. A student can be said to possess Islamic character when the religious knowledge they hold is able to influence the way they think, behave, make decisions, and act in daily life. In the context of education, this character formation requires a systematic and sustained process, since values do not automatically translate into behavior merely through the delivery of subject matter. (Maddu et al., 2025) Substantively, PAI has very rich learning resources for building students' character. The study of the Qur'an and hadith provides a normative foundation for the values of faith, honesty, justice, compassion, responsibility, brotherhood, and concern for others. The study of creed ('aqidah) provides a foundational belief that serves as an orientation in life, while fiqh provides an understanding of the relationship between human beings and Allah and among fellow human beings through various rulings on worship and social transactions (muamalah). Islamic history provides historical experience regarding the exemplary conduct of the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him), his companions, scholars, and Islamic figures in facing social issues and challenges in life. Meanwhile, the study of morals (akhlak) directly provides orientation regarding praiseworthy behavior and helps steer students away from reprehensible conduct. Taken together, these components show that PAI has strong potential to build students' character holistically, provided that the subject matter is not understood merely as knowledge to be memorized, but is connected to students' experiences and the realities of their lives. (Chabibah et al., 2026)

Nevertheless, the presence of character-related material in the PAI curriculum does not automatically guarantee the formation of Islamic character. One issue that deserves attention is the tendency for religious instruction to remain oriented toward mastery of subject matter and the achievement of cognitive evaluation results. Students may understand the definitions of honesty, tolerance, responsibility, trustworthiness, and mutual respect, but this understanding is not necessarily reflected in their behavior. A student may be able to explain that Islam teaches honesty, yet still engage in dishonest conduct during the learning process. Likewise, a student may understand the concept of tolerance theoretically, but may not necessarily be able to respect differing opinions in social interaction. This condition demonstrates a gap between religious knowledge and religious behavior. Therefore, the success of PAI should not be measured solely by students'

ability to answer test questions, but also by the extent to which the values learned have been internalized and realized in behavior (Andriansyah et al., 2026).

In this context, PAI instruction needs to undergo a shift from knowledge-oriented learning toward value-oriented and character-oriented learning. This shift does not mean diminishing the importance of religious knowledge, but rather positioning knowledge as a foundation for building attitudes and actions. Religious knowledge must become a source of reflection and a guide in dealing with real-life issues. PAI teachers need to develop instruction that allows students to connect religious concepts with their life experiences. For example, discussions on honesty can be linked to the practice of cheating, information manipulation, plagiarism, and the use of artificial intelligence in completing assignments. Material on guarding one's speech can be linked to the ethics of commenting on social media, the spread of unverified news, and the practice of cyberbullying. In this way, religious values do not remain abstract concepts but become principles students can use to make decisions in real life. (Fisabilla, 2026)

The development of Islamic character also requires an active and participatory learning approach. Problem-based learning can be used to present moral and religious issues close to students' lives. Teachers can present cases involving the spread of false news, conflicts arising from differences in religious understanding, bullying on social media, or the irresponsible use of technology. Students are then invited to identify the problem, seek information, analyze the issue based on Islamic principles, discuss alternative solutions, and reflect on the values embedded within it. This process enables students to develop critical thinking skills while also building moral awareness. Case discussions and collaborative learning also give students the opportunity to listen to others' viewpoints, present arguments courteously, and learn to respect differences (Pohan et al., 2025).

In addition to problem-based learning, social projects and digital activities can serve as important instruments in the process of character formation. Students can be guided to create digital campaigns on honesty, tolerance, environmental concern, social media ethics, or bullying prevention. Such activities give students the opportunity to translate religious values into concrete action. Thus, they not only learn about values but also experience the process of applying those values in life. Activities of this kind are also relevant to the characteristics of Generation Z, who are closely connected to technology and social media. Digital space can be used as a laboratory for character education, a place where students learn to take responsibility for the information they produce and share.

The formation of Islamic character is also greatly influenced by teachers' exemplary conduct. Students learn not only from what teachers say, but also from how teachers behave and interact. When teachers demonstrate honesty, discipline, openness to differences, courtesy in communication, and responsibility in carrying out their duties, these values become a tangible experience for students. Such exemplary conduct then needs to be reinforced through habituation within the school environment, so that the values being learned receive support from the culture of the institution. In this context, character formation cannot be the responsibility of PAI teachers alone, but requires the involvement of school principals, teachers of other subjects, educational staff, parents, and students' social environment. (Rizki & Siregar, 2026)

Thus, Islamic character is not merely a cognitive output, but the result of a continuous process of value internalization that takes place through learning, exemplary

conduct, habituation, reflection, and social experience. PAI has great potential to become a foundation for character formation if instruction is able to integrate religious knowledge with real-life issues. In the context of Generation Z, this process needs to be extended to include the dimension of digital life. Honesty, responsibility, tolerance, courtesy, justice, and concern for others must be realized not only in face-to-face interaction, but also in behavior within digital space. In this way, PAI can function not merely as a means of transferring religious knowledge, but as an educational process that shapes Muslim individuals possessing Islamic knowledge, moral maturity, critical thinking ability, digital competence, and the capacity to actualize Islamic values in social life.

Applying the Integration of PAI, Digital Literacy, and Religious Moderation in Learning

The integration of PAI, digital literacy, and religious moderation described above has direct implications for how instruction is designed, implemented, and evaluated. Integrating these three components cannot be achieved merely by adding material on digital literacy or religious moderation into PAI instruction; rather, it needs to be translated into learning experiences that allow students to understand Islamic values, test the truth of information, consider various perspectives, and apply these values in real life. Accordingly, integration at the conceptual level needs to be carried forward to the pedagogical level through instructional design that is contextual, dialogic, critical, reflective, and oriented toward character formation. This shift reflects a movement from instruction centered solely on the delivery of material toward instruction that positions students as active subjects in understanding, processing, and actualizing religious knowledge. (Muhtar et al., 2026)

In the context of Generation Z, the implementation of such instruction can begin by making PAI material a foundation for understanding various issues close to students' lives. Issues that arise on social media, video platforms, search engines, and other digital communication spaces can be used as a learning context, as long as they remain directed toward educational goals. In this regard, digital technology functions not only as a medium for delivering material, but also as a space for finding, comparing, examining, and evaluating religious information. Meanwhile, religious moderation serves as an ethical foundation that helps students weigh differing viewpoints, avoid extremism, respect diversity, and determine responses in accordance with Islamic values. Through this interconnection, PAI instruction can proceed as a whole, from acquiring knowledge, identifying issues, verifying information, discussing various perspectives, and reflecting on values, to producing actions that reflect Islamic character. (Ulum & Hasyim, 2024)

Based on this framework, the implementation of PAI instruction can be designed through systematic and interconnected stages. The first stage is religious understanding, in which the teacher provides a conceptual foundation based on the Qur'an, hadith, and relevant sources of Islamic scholarship related to the learning theme. This stage is important so that students have an adequate knowledge base before engaging with various religious information in digital space. The second stage is digital exploration and verification, in which students are presented with religious content or issues found through digital media and are guided to examine the sources, arguments, context, and credibility of that information. At this stage, students do not merely receive information, but learn to question and test its validity. (Zulfiyatunnuha et al., 2025)

The third stage is dialogue and value reflection. After obtaining and verifying information, students are guided to discuss the issue by considering Islamic principles as well as the values of justice, tolerance, responsibility, respect for differences, and public benefit (maslahah). This dialogic process allows students to understand that religious issues can have diverse contexts and perspectives, requiring an open attitude combined with strong argumentative grounding. The fourth stage is actualization, in which students translate the results of their learning into concrete actions or products. Forms of actualization may include creating Islamic educational content, anti-hoax campaigns, posters on social media ethics, social projects, or digital reflections. Through these stages, religious knowledge, digital competence, and character formation are not treated as separate elements, but become part of a single, mutually reinforcing learning experience. This learning framework also brings consequences for the changing role of PAI teachers. Teachers no longer function merely as deliverers of subject matter, but as facilitators who design learning experiences, provide a religious foundation, guide the process of information search and verification, facilitate dialogue, and help students reflect on and actualize the values they have learned. In this position, teachers need the ability to connect PAI material with current issues in digital space without losing the depth of Islamic substance. Teachers also need to create a learning space that allows students to ask questions, express opinions, test arguments, and learn to respect differences. (Alisa & Manshur, 2025)

On the other hand, students are positioned as active subjects who bear responsibility for their own learning process. The success of instruction is measured not only by students' ability to recall or explain PAI concepts, but also by their ability to use that knowledge critically, ethically, and responsibly when facing issues in digital life. Therefore, learning assessment needs to take into account not only the aspect of knowledge, but also the ability to evaluate information, the quality of argumentation, attitudes in dialogue, responsibility in using digital media, and the ability to actualize values in concrete action. (Huda et al., 2026)

Thus, implementing the integration of PAI, digital literacy, and religious moderation requires a learning strategy capable of connecting knowledge, critical thinking, value reflection, and action. Based on this framework, the analysis of digital religious content, problem-based learning, project-based learning, digital reflection, and collaborative learning can be used as concrete forms of implementing this integration. These strategies do not stand alone, but can be placed within a single sequence of instruction that moves from religious understanding toward information verification, value reflection, and character actualization. With this pattern, PAI instruction not only equips Generation Z with knowledge about Islam, but also builds their ability to engage with religious information critically, adopt a moderate attitude in the face of differences, and realize Islamic values in digital and social life. (Faizah, 2026)

CONCLUSION

The formation of Generation Z's Islamic character faces new challenges amid the transformation of the digital environment. Religious knowledge is now obtained not only through teachers, books, and educational institutions, but also through various digital platforms that create opportunities while also presenting risks in the form of religious

disinformation, fragmentation of authority, polarization, and a diminished ability to critically evaluate information. This study shows that Islamic Religious Education needs to be developed through the integration of three main components: PAI knowledge and values, digital literacy, and religious moderation. PAI provides an Islamic foundation, digital literacy builds critical ability in facing information, while religious moderation provides ethical and social orientation in actualizing religious knowledge.

The integration of these three components can be realized through four main stages: religious understanding, digital verification, value reflection, and character actualization. This model positions students not merely as recipients of information, but as active learners capable of understanding religious sources, evaluating digital information, considering various perspectives, reflecting on Islamic values, and actualizing them in real life. Thus, the formation of Islamic character cannot be achieved merely by adding more religious material, but requires learning experiences that connect knowledge, technology, values, and social life. In this context, PAI teachers need to transform into learning facilitators, moral mentors, digital literacy coaches, and guides who help students understand and respond to religious information in digital space.

Accordingly, PAI in the digital era needs to move from a model of transfer of religious knowledge toward a model of critical, ethical, contextual, and character-based Islamic learning. This transformation positions the learning process not only around the mastery of Islamic knowledge, but also around students' ability to use that knowledge critically, ethically, and responsibly. The integration of PAI, digital literacy, and religious moderation can ultimately become a learning framework that connects religious understanding with the competence to face digital information and the formation of character reflected in morality, humanity, justice, tolerance, and public benefit.

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