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## THE INTEGRATION OF THE IQRA PARADIGM AND THE VALUE OF TABAYYUN: STRENGTHENING CHARACTER-BASED DIGITAL LITERACY TO COUNTER MISINFORMATION ON SOCIAL MEDIA

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### ABSTRACT

*The massive spread of hoaxes and disinformation on social media in the digital age poses serious challenges to literacy, communication ethics, and religious authority. Conventional models of digital literacy are considered inadequate because they focus more on technical aspects and pay less attention to character development and spiritual values. This study aims to reconstruct the Iqra paradigm and the value of Tabayyun as a model of Islamic digital literacy to address disinformation in cyberspace. The study employs a qualitative approach using library research. The primary data sources are drawn from the Qur'an, specifically Surah Al-'Alaq, verses 1-5, and Surah Al-Hujurat, verse 6, as well as various exegetical works and studies on digital literacy. Data analysis was conducted using a thematic exegesis (tafsir maudhu'i) approach and thematic analysis. The results indicate that the Iqra' paradigm serves as the foundation for critical thinking in understanding and analyzing information, while Tabayyun functions as a verification mechanism through the validation of sources (sanad), content accuracy (dhabt), and consideration of social impact (masalah). The integration of these two concepts forms a character-based digital literacy model that emphasizes the values of shidq, amanah, adl, and iffah in digital behavior. This study recommends strengthening digital literacy in Islamic Religious Education through curriculum reorientation, enhancing teachers' digital competencies, and building an ethical and responsible digital ecosystem.*  
**Keywords:** Islamic Digital Literacy, Iqra, Tabayyun, Misinformation, Islamic Religious Education.

### ABSTRAK

Masifnya penyebaran hoaks dan disinformasi di media sosial pada era digital menimbulkan tantangan serius terhadap literasi, etika komunikasi, dan otoritas keagamaan. Model literasi digital konvensional dinilai belum memadai karena lebih berfokus pada aspek teknis dan kurang memperhatikan dimensi karakter serta nilai spiritual. Penelitian ini bertujuan merekonstruksi paradigma Iqra dan nilai Tabayyun sebagai model literasi digital Islam dalam menghadapi disinformasi di ruang siber. Penelitian menggunakan pendekatan kualitatif dengan jenis studi kepustakaan (library research). Sumber data utama berasal dari Al-Qur'an, khususnya QS. Al-'Alaq ayat 1-5 dan QS. Al-Hujurat ayat 6, serta berbagai literatur tafsir dan kajian literasi digital. Analisis data dilakukan melalui pendekatan tafsir maudhu'i dan analisis tematik. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa paradigma Iqra berfungsi sebagai fondasi berpikir kritis dalam memahami dan menganalisis informasi, sedangkan Tabayyun menjadi mekanisme verifikasi melalui validasi sumber (sanad), akurasi konten (dhabt), dan pertimbangan dampak sosial (masalah). Integrasi keduanya membentuk model literasi digital berbasis karakter yang menekankan nilai shidq, amanah, adl, dan iffah dalam perilaku digital. Penelitian ini merekomendasikan penguatan literasi digital dalam Pendidikan Agama Islam melalui reorientasi kurikulum, penguatan kompetensi digital guru, dan pembangunan ekosistem digital yang etis dan bertanggung jawab.

**Kata Kunci:** Literasi Digital Islam, *Iqra*, *Tabayyun*, Hoaks, Pendidikan Agama Islam.

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## INTRODUCTION

The digital revolution has fundamentally transformed the global communications landscape, accelerated the flow of information while simultaneously triggered massive information disruption. In the post-truth era, objective truth is often overshadowed by emotional appeal and personal beliefs, making it difficult for the public to distinguish between authentic information and manipulative content <sup>1</sup>. This phenomenon is exacerbated by the dominance of social media algorithms, which create echo chambers and influence the way people understand social and religious realities <sup>2</sup>. As a result, authority on knowledge no longer rests entirely on scientific competence and validity, but is often determined by digital popularity and the number of followers on social media.

This situation is reflected in the increasing spread of hoaxes and disinformation in Indonesia's digital space. The Ministry of Communication and Digital Affairs (Komdigi) recorded 1,923 instances of hoax content identified throughout 2024, with the largest categories being fraud, politics, government, and health <sup>3</sup>. In addition, data from the Ministry of Communication and Information Technology shows that from 2018 to 2023, more than 12,547 pieces of hoax content were circulated in Indonesia's digital space <sup>4</sup>. A 2023 study by The Safer Internet Lab (SAIL) even showed that about 42% of Indonesians still believe disinformation related to public and political issues <sup>5</sup>. This situation indicates that the issue of hoaxes is not merely a matter of information technology, but has evolved into an epistemological and social issue that influences the mindset and behaviour of the digital community.

A crucial problem in today's educational landscape is the conventional model of digital literacy, which tends to be limited to technical skills (hard skills) and the mere use of devices. This type of literacy is considered inadequate for fostering ethical and prudent behaviour because it often overlooks the moral, character, and spiritual dimensions of the

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<sup>1</sup> Amilin Amilin, "Pengaruh Hoaks Politik dalam Era Post-Truth terhadap Ketahanan Nasional dan Dampaknya pada Kelangsungan Pembangunan Nasional," *Jurnal Lemhannas RI* 7, no. 3 (2020): 5–11, <https://doi.org/10.55960/jlri.v7i3.73>.

<sup>2</sup> Jumarni Fepriani dan Dwi Ratnasari, "Algorithmic Ethics and Qur'anic Tabayyun: Knowledge Authority and AI Bias in the Digital Age," *QiST: Journal of Quran and Tafseer Studies* 5, no. 1 (2026): 345–68, <https://doi.org/10.23917/qjst.v5i1.16001>.

<sup>3</sup> Adyaksa Vidi, *Komdigi Ungkap Konten Hoaks Penipuan Paling Banyak Ditemukan pada 2024*, News (Liputan 6, 2025), <https://www.liputan6.com/cek-fakta/read/5871698/komdigi-ungkap-konten-hoaks-penipuan-paling-banyak-ditemukan-pada-2024>.

<sup>4</sup> Dewi Arianti Saptoyo dan Bayu Galih, *Kominfo Temukan 12.547 Konten Hoaks 5 Tahun Terakhir, Terbanyak soal Kesehatan dan Penipuan*, News (Kompas, 2024), <https://www.kompas.com/cekfakta/read/2024/01/03/171700782/kominfo-temukan-12.547-konten-hoaks-5-tahun-terakhir-terbanyak-soal>.

<sup>5</sup> Setiyo Bardono, *Tangkal Hoaks Pemilu 2024, Kominfo Gencarkan Tiga Inisiatif*, News (Technology Indonesia, 2024), <https://technologyindonesia.id/ict/tangkal-hoaks-pemilu-2024-kominfo-gencarkan-tiga-inisiatif>.

user<sup>6</sup>. Digital literacy that is purely technocratic is considered insufficient to foster critical and responsible digital behaviour. As a result, a culture of instant information consumption has emerged, in which individuals receive and disseminate information without verification, critical evaluation, or fact-checking. In the context of Islamic Religious Education (PAI), the weakness of these ethical and spiritual filters risks amplifying the negative impacts of hoaxes, hate speech, and social polarization, which can undermine the framework of religious values in cyberspace.

To address these challenges, a revitalization of fundamental Islamic values is needed as the pillars of holistic digital literacy. Islam lays an epistemological foundation through the first revelation, "Iqra" (Quran 96:1–5), which does not merely mean reading texts literally but also encompasses the activities of understanding, analyzing, observing, and reflecting on both verbal (qauliyah) and natural (kauniyah) realities in a critical and responsible manner<sup>7</sup>. In the digital context, the Iqra paradigm can be understood as the foundation of critical literacy that encourages individuals not to passively accept information, but rather to analyze and reason before believing or sharing it. This principle is closely linked to the concept of Tabayyun as outlined in Quranic Surah Al-Hujurat, verse 6, which emphasizes the importance of verifying information before making a decision or disseminating it to the public. Tabayyun is not only about validating the source of information but also involves scrutinizing the content of the message and considering the social impact of that information<sup>8</sup>.

In several previous studies, such as those by Wasilatul Ibad (2024) and Masyhur (2025), it was found that the majority of studies on Tabayyun to date have remained confined to the normative-moral level and purely thematic textual analysis, without linking them to a structured verification system<sup>9</sup>. On the other hand, Oktahariana et al. (2025) and Adima et al. (2025) emphasize that current studies on digital literacy are still dominated by secular subjects and tend to overlook its integration into values-based or religious education<sup>10</sup>. Therefore, there remains scope for research to reconstruct a model of Islamic digital literacy through the integration of the Iqra paradigm and the principle of Tabayyun as a response to the disinformation crisis in the post-truth era.

Based on these issues, this article aims to reconstruct the paradigm of Islamic digital literacy through the integration of the concepts of Iqra and Tabayyun as an epistemological framework for addressing disinformation in the digital age. Furthermore, this study seeks to formulate the implications of these concepts for strengthening Islamic

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<sup>6</sup> Muannas Muannas dan Muhammad Mansyur, "Model Literasi Digital untuk Melawan Ujaran Kebencian di Media Sosial (Digital Literacy Model To Counter Hate Speech On Social Media)," *Jurnal Ilmu Pengetahuan dan Teknologi Komunikasi* 22, no. 2 (2020): 125–42, <https://doi.org/10.33164/iptekom.22.2.2020.125-142>; Andi Warisno dkk., "Islamic Education Management, Sufism, and Digital Literacy: An Interdisciplinary Approach," *Qubahan Academic Journal* 6, no. 1 (2026): 257–71, <https://doi.org/10.48161/qaj.v6n1a2127>.

<sup>7</sup> Bidasari Pauspaus dkk., "The Concept of Iqra' as a Pillar of Islamic Epistemology in Tafsir al-Munir by Wahbah Az-Zuhaili," *Arfannur: Journal of Islamic Education*, no. Vol. 6 No. 3 (2025) (2025), <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.24260/arfannur.v6i3.4533>.

<sup>8</sup> Fepriani dan Ratnasari, "Algorithmic Ethics and Qur'anic Tabayyun."

<sup>9</sup> Dzakifachruddin Masyhur, "Qira'atul Qur'an sebagai Model Verifikasi Informasi dalam Islam: Telaah terhadap Fenomena Disinformasi," preprint, Zenodo, 24 Desember 2025, <https://doi.org/10.5281/ZENODO.18044666>; Wasilatul Ibad, "Tabayyun: Adab Bermedia Sosial Di Era Digital," *Mukammil : Jurnal Kajian Keislaman*, no. Vol. 7 No. 2 (2024) (2024): 70–88.

<sup>10</sup> Mohamad Fauzan Adima dkk., "Digital Literacy Trends in Islamic Perspective in Higher Education: A Bibliometric Review," *Jurnal Penelitian Pendidikan IPA* 10, no. 12 (2025): 1012–26, <https://doi.org/10.29303/jppipa.v10i12.9847>; Alifia Oktahariana dkk., *Digital Literacy in Problem-Based Learning for Islamic Religious Education*, 6, no. 1 (2025).

Religious Education (PAI) in order to foster a critical, ethical, and responsible digital society.

## **METHOD**

This study employs a qualitative research approach in the form of a literature review (library research). This approach was chosen because the study focuses on a conceptual and interpretive analysis of the Iqra paradigm and the principle of Tabayyun from the perspective of the Qur'an to address the issue of disinformation in the digital age. Through this literature review, the study seeks to reconstruct a framework for Islamic digital literacy grounded in Qur'anic values by integrating the study of exegesis, digital literacy, and cyber communication ethics.

The data sources in this study are categorized into two parts. Primary data comes directly from the text of the Qur'an, with a primary focus on Surah Al-Alaq, verses 1–5, as the foundation of epistemological literacy, and Surah Al-Hujurat, verse 6, as the normative basis for information verification. Meanwhile, secondary data includes authoritative exegetical literature, namely *Tafsir Al-Munir* by Wahbah Az-Zuhaili, *Tafsir Ibn Kathir* by Ibn Kathir, and *Tafsir Al-Mishbah* by M. Quraish Shihab, as well as articles from nationally and internationally reputable scientific journals discussing digital literacy, disinformation, media ethics, and Islamic education.

Data collection was conducted through a documentary study involving a systematic literature search across various academic databases, including Scopus, Sinta, and Google Scholar. The search was conducted using strategic keywords such as "Islamic digital literacy," "Iqra epistemology," "digital Tabayyun," "disinformation," "post-truth," and "hoaxes." The retrieved literature was then screened based on inclusion criteria—namely, substantive relevance, journal quality, and most recent publication year—to ensure the research's currency.

The data analysis technique integrated two approaches: Thematic Analysis and Maudhu'i (thematic) Exegesis. Thematic analysis was used to identify patterns of meaning and group categories regarding contemporary Islamic literacy strategies. Meanwhile, the Maudhu'i Exegesis approach was conducted in several stages: (1) defining the issue of disinformation as the focus of the study; (2) compiling relevant verses; (3) understanding the correlation or munasabah (contextual relationship) among the verses; and (4) developing a comprehensive synthesis framework to construct a character-based digital literacy model.

To ensure data validity, this study employs source triangulation by comparing various exegetical texts, scholarly articles, and contemporary digital literacy theories. This step is taken to achieve a more comprehensive understanding and minimize interpretive bias in the analysis process.

## **RESULT AND DISCUSSION**

### **1. The "Iqra" Paradigm as the Foundation of Islamic Digital Literacy**

#### **1.1. The Epistemological Meaning of "Iqra" from a Qur'anic Perspective**

Epistemologically, the command "Iqra" (Quran 96:1–5) is the cornerstone of a knowledge-based Islamic civilization. Etymologically, the root word "qara'a" means "to gather," indicating that the act of reading is not merely the pronunciation of sounds, but

rather the process of piecing together letters, words, and meanings into a coherent whole<sup>11</sup>. M. Quraish Shihab asserts that the object of the command “Iqra” is general in nature because it is not explicitly mentioned in the verse, and thus encompasses everything within the reach of human reason<sup>12</sup>.

The multidimensional meaning of Iqra divides the objects of literacy into two broad domains: *ayat qauliyah* (the written revelations in the Qur’an) and *ayat kauniyah* (phenomena of the universe and social realities). Wahbah az-Zuhaili, in *Tafsir al-Munir*, explains that Islamic literacy requires people to engage in observation, in-depth analysis, research, and an understanding of various phenomena of life<sup>13</sup>. In the context of digital literacy, this paradigm requires each individual not only to read digital texts literally, but also to be able to gather data, analyze context, and verify the accuracy of information before drawing conclusions<sup>14</sup>.

### 1.2 Iqra as a Framework for Critical Literacy in the Digital Age

Iqra is not merely a technical skill, but rather an instrument for activating ontosemantic consciousness—that is, the ability to recognize the structure of meaning that connects the subject to the highest reality<sup>15</sup>. This first revelation shifts the paradigm from that of a “passive learner”—who merely receives information—to that of a “critical subject” who actively seeks out and tests the truth. This transformation is based on the principle of Tawhid through the phrase “bismi rabbika” (in the name of your Lord), which affirms that all intellectual activities and the pursuit of information must not be value-free but must be grounded in an awareness of God and moral responsibility<sup>16</sup>.

In a digital age rife with simulations and disinformation, the Iqra paradigm serves as a spiritual algorithm for validating reality. This awareness shields social media users from ontological hallucinations—a condition in which a person believes a hoax to be true solely because of emotional influence or its virality<sup>17</sup>. Iqra-based literacy requires healthy skepticism and critical thinking to filter out provocative narratives, so that all information consumed and distributed remains within the bounds of honesty (*shidq*) and divine mandate.

### 1.3 The Relationship Between Iqra and Qalam in Islamic Literacy Culture

The command “Iqra” in the first revelation is always associated with the Qalam (pen), as mentioned in verse 4. The Qalam symbolizes the process of documenting, preserving, and transmitting knowledge across generations<sup>18</sup>. If Iqra represents the collection and analysis of information, then Qalam highlights the importance of responsibly recording, managing, and disseminating knowledge. The synergy between the two fosters

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<sup>11</sup> Aulia Sabina Anantasari, “Konsep Iqra Dan Qalam Dalam Al-Qur’an,” preprint, Open Science Framework, 21 April 2022, <https://doi.org/10.31219/osf.io/78pww>.

<sup>12</sup> Moh Quraish Shihab, *Tafsir al-Mishbāh: pesan, kesan, dan keserasian al-Qur’an*, Cet. 6 (Lentera Hati, 2005).

<sup>13</sup> Pauspaus dkk., “The Concept of Iqra’ as a Pillar of Islamic Epistemology in Tafsir al-Munir by Wahbah Az-Zuhaili.”

<sup>14</sup> Tatang Tatang dkk., “The Qur’anic Concept of Truth and The Correspondence Theory in Countering Digital News Hoaxes,” *ALSUNYAT: Jurnal Penelitian Bahasa, Sastra, dan Budaya Arab* 8 (April 2025): 71–85, <https://doi.org/10.17509/alsunyat.v8i1.76706>.

<sup>15</sup> Jimmy Y. Mahardhika, *Iqra’as Ontosemantic Revelation Language as a Mirror between Machine Understanding and Divine Meaning*, 2025.

<sup>16</sup> Eva Nuraeni dkk., “Interpretation of the Iqra’ Verse as the Foundation of Literacy in the Development of Islamic Education Management,” *Journal of Educational Management Research*, no. 4(4) (2025): 1933–47.

<sup>17</sup> Mahardhika, *Iqra’as Ontosemantic Revelation Language as a Mirror between Machine Understanding and Divine Meaning*.

<sup>18</sup> Tatang dkk., “The Qur’anic Concept of Truth and The Correspondence Theory in Countering Digital News Hoaxes.”

a strong culture of literacy, in which knowledge is not only understood orally but also preserved in writing to prevent it from being distorted or lost<sup>19</sup>.

In the contemporary context, the meaning of “Qalam” has evolved from the conventional pen to digital technologies, such as social media, information systems, and artificial intelligence. The use of these digital pens demands greater responsibility in terms of the accuracy of news transmission. The history of Islamic civilization has proven that progress is achieved only when Muslims become outstanding readers and writers who maintain the accuracy of information through strict mechanisms.<sup>20</sup> Therefore, the integration of Iqra and Qalam into digital literacy is key to building a cyber society that is not only technologically proficient but also steadfast in upholding the integrity of information and scientific truth.

## 2. Tabayyun as a Mechanism for Verifying Digital Information

### 2.1 Theological Foundation: The Mandate of Fatabayyanu in Surah Al-Hujurat: 6

The primary basis for verifying information in Islam rests on Allah SWT’s command in Surah Al-Hujurat, verse 6, which requires believers to carefully verify (*fatabayyanu*) any news they receive from sources whose credibility has not yet been established<sup>21</sup>. Etymologically, “*tabayyun*” refers to the process of investigating, sifting through, and examining information until its clarity is established and it is proven to be true and unambiguous. Ibn Kathir explains that this command is intended to prevent erroneous decision-making, social conflict, and regret resulting from the spread of invalid information<sup>22</sup>.

M. Quraish Shihab, in his *Tafsir Al-Mishbah*, emphasizes that *tabayyun* is not merely a technical procedure, but rather an active epistemological stance that involves a balance between reason and conscience. In the digital age, the term *fasiq* can be contextualized to refer to anonymous sources, biased algorithms, or accounts spreading misinformation whose integrity has not been verified. Therefore, disregarding this principle—or acting hastily (*al-‘ajalah*) in disseminating information—is considered a form of moral negligence that can undermine social order and trigger conflict.<sup>23</sup>

### 2.2 The Dimension of Tabayyun: A Framework for Verifying Sanad, Dhabt, and Maslahah

A model for verifying information in Islam can be reconstructed by integrating the principles of sanad and dhabt from the traditions of hadith and qira’at, as well as the principle of maslahah from *usul al-fiqh* and Islamic communication ethics, into the framework of contemporary digital literacy.

- a. Source Validation (Sanad): In the tradition of Hadith transmission, the validity of information is largely determined by the credibility of the sanad, or chain of transmission. This principle is relevant in the digital realm through the process of tracing the source of information, verifying the author’s identity, and assessing the

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<sup>19</sup> Masykur H. Mansyur, “Iqra’ Sebagai Bentuk Literasi Dalam Islam,” *HAWARI: Jurnal Pendidikan Agama dan Keagamaan Islam* 2, no. 1 (2023), <https://doi.org/10.35706/hw.v2i1.5304>.

<sup>20</sup> Muhammad Syukri dkk., “The Role of Digital Literacy in Learning Media According To Islam,” *FALASIFA: Jurnal Studi Keislaman* 14, no. 1 (2023): 1–11, <https://doi.org/10.62097/falasifa.v14i1.1244>.

<sup>21</sup> Ahmad Salman Farid dan Sirajul Munir, “Destroying Hoaxes by Framing the Justice of the Qur’an,” *Al-I’lam: Jurnal Komunikasi dan Penyiaran Islam* 9, no. 1 (2025): 96, <https://doi.org/10.31764/jail.v9i1.35493>.

<sup>22</sup> Ibad, “Tabayyun: Adab Bermedia Sosial Di Era Digital.”

<sup>23</sup> Fepriani dan Ratnasari, “Algorithmic Ethics and Qur’anic Tabayyun.”

credibility of the media outlet or account disseminating the information<sup>24</sup>. As a result, social media users do not focus solely on the content of a message, but also consider the legitimacy and authority of its source.

- b. Content Accuracy (Dhabt): This dimension emphasizes the accuracy, precision, and integrity of the information's content. In the digital context, dhabt is realized through efforts to verify the accuracy of data, the authenticity of images, the validity of quotations, and the context of the information presented. This principle is essential for preventing distortions of meaning, visual manipulation, and the misuse of religious narratives for specific interests<sup>25</sup>.
- c. Social Impact Analysis (Maslahah): Verification in Islam does not stop at factual aspects, but also considers the social implications of disseminating such information. The principle of Maslahah requires social media users to weigh whether a piece of information—even if factually accurate—is appropriate to share in the public sphere or whether it will instead cause harm (mudharat) and slander<sup>26</sup>. Thus, Islamic digital literacy is not only focused on the accuracy of information, but also on social benefits and the ethics of public communication.

### **2.3 Tabayyun in Cyberspace: The Digital Implementation of Tabayyun and Fact-Checking**

In the age of algorithms, the concept of Tabayyun must evolve into Digital Tabayyun—that is, the integration of Qur'anic values into technology-based information verification practices. This concept can be implemented through the use of fact-checking applications, digital content moderation, and the promotion of a culture of independent verification among social media users

Various platforms, such as Hoax Buster Tools and CekFakta.com, can be utilized as supporting tools to validate information more quickly and systematically. In addition, advancements in artificial intelligence (AI) also open up opportunities for the development of automated verification systems capable of helping the public detect disinformation more effectively<sup>27</sup>.

Furthermore, Digital Tabayyun highlights the need to develop social media algorithms grounded in Islamic ethics, where information filtering systems prioritize not only virality but also fairness and accuracy. Through Fatwa No. 24 of 2017, the Indonesian Ulema Council (MUI) has established operational guidelines stating that interactions on social media must be based on the principles of Amanah (responsibility) and Shidq (honesty), whereby every click, keystroke, and content share is an action for which one will be held accountable before God. Thus, Tabayyun in cyberspace can be understood as an ethical effort to uphold the truth amid a flood of disinformation<sup>28</sup>.

## **3. The Information Crisis and the Threat of Misinformation on Social Media**

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<sup>24</sup> Masyhur, "Qira'atul Qur'an sebagai Model Verifikasi Informasi dalam Islam."

<sup>25</sup> Masyhur, "Qira'atul Qur'an sebagai Model Verifikasi Informasi dalam Islam."

<sup>26</sup> Ulil Fauziyah, "Tabayyun dan hukumnya sebagai penganggulangan berita hoax di era digital dalam perspektif Fiqih," 2020, <https://api.semanticscholar.org/CorpusID:229093389>.

<sup>27</sup> Muannas Muannas dan Muhammad Mansyur, "Model Literasi Digital untuk Melawan Ujaran Kebencian di Media Sosial (Digital Literacy Model To Counter Hate Speech On Social Media)."

<sup>28</sup> Muannas Muannas dan Muhammad Mansyur, "Model Literasi Digital untuk Melawan Ujaran Kebencian di Media Sosial (Digital Literacy Model To Counter Hate Speech On Social Media)."

### **3.1 The History of Hoaxes: Lessons from the Hadith of al-Ifk**

The phenomenon of hoaxes or disinformation is not a new issue in human civilization. In Islamic tradition, the practice of spreading false news has been recognized through Qur'anic terms such as al-ifk, buhtan, and qaul al-zur, which refer to lies, slander, and false testimony<sup>29</sup>. One of the significant events illustrating disinformation in Islamic history is the Hadith of al-Ifk, as described in Surah An-Nur, verses 11–16—a vile slander against Ummul Mukminin Aisha, may Allah be pleased with her—which serves as a prototype of systematic slander or disinformation. The main lesson from this event is how a group of hypocrites led by Abdullah bin Ubay bin Salul used hoaxes as a socio-political strategy to destroy the reputation of the Prophet's family and undermine public trust in religious authority<sup>30</sup>.

From a socio-historical perspective, this incident demonstrates that disinformation can be used as a tool to damage an individual's reputation, undermine authority, and create social instability. This slander illustrates how the spread of false information can influence public opinion when society lacks adequate verification mechanisms.

Other historical events, such as the allegations of nepotism against Uthman ibn Affan's close associate, also demonstrate that disinformation often stems from political animosity and a desire to sow division (slander) within society. False narratives at that time spread rapidly by word of mouth, much like the virality of digital content today, demonstrating that without robust verification mechanisms, people can spread information simply by following trends without regard for the moral consequences.<sup>31</sup>

### **3.2 The Democratization of Authority and Digital Polarization**

The development of digital media has given rise to the phenomenon of the democratization of religious authority—that is, the opening up of a space where anyone can produce and disseminate religious narratives without going through a rigorous process of scholarly authorization. Traditional Islamic authority, which previously relied on chains of transmission (sanad), methodological competence, and scholarly legitimacy, now faces a challenge from the emergence of popular figures or influencers on social media who wield significant influence even though they do not always possess adequate scholarly expertise<sup>32</sup>.

This phenomenon has led to a shift in the authority of knowledge, where digital popularity often carries more weight than the depth of scholarship and the validity of methodology. As a result, the public has become susceptible to accepting religious interpretations that are instantaneous, partial, and emotional, without undergoing a comprehensive process of scrutiny.

In addition to triggering a crisis of authority, digital disinformation also reinforces social polarization through the formation of echo chambers on social media<sup>33</sup>. Digital platform algorithms tend to display information that aligns with users' preferences and beliefs, thereby narrowing the space for healthy dialogue and causing differences of opinion

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<sup>29</sup> Fauziyah, "Tabayyun dan hukumnya sebagai penganggulan berita hoax di era digital dalam perspektif Fiqih."

<sup>30</sup> 'Abdullah ibn Muhammad ibn 'Abd al-Rahman ibn Ishaq Al Shaykh dan M. Abdul Ghoffar, *Tafsir Ibnu Katsir*, Cet. 2 (Pustaka Imam Asy-Syafii, 2009).

<sup>31</sup> Siti Nur Kholifah, "Qur'anic Interpretation of Hoax News: A Sociohistorical Approach and Its Relevance in the Digital Era," *ALSYS* 5, no. 6 (2025): 2016–32, <https://doi.org/10.58578/alsys.v5i6.7642>.

<sup>32</sup> Muhammad Asyraf Mohd Ridzuan dkk., "Ethical Framework for the use of Contemporary Media: A Conceptual Approach Based on Shariah Principles," *International Journal of Research and Innovation in Social Science* IX, no. VII (2025): 4356–65, <https://doi.org/10.47772/IJRISS.2025.907000353>.

<sup>33</sup> Muannas Muannas dan Muhammad Mansyur, "Model Literasi Digital untuk Melawan Ujaran Kebencian di Media Sosial (Digital Literacy Model To Counter Hate Speech On Social Media)."

to often escalate into hatred and hostility (namimah). In extreme cases, disinformation that manipulates sacred verses is often used as a propaganda tool to spread radical ideologies online. Weak information filters expose many individuals to fanatical ideologies that legitimize violence in the name of religion, ultimately threatening national stability and the unity of the Muslim community<sup>34</sup>.

### **3.3 The Technology Paradox: Ease of Access vs. Weak Methodological Filters**

Advances in information technology have created a significant communication paradox. Information can be obtained quickly, easily, and without geographical boundaries. However, this ease is not always accompanied by adequate digital literacy and methodological skills.

Research shows that the majority of digital users today are caught up in the behavior of instant information consumption (al-'ajalah), in which they tend to read provocative headlines and share them without verifying (cross-checking) the original sources<sup>35</sup>. This gap leads to a phenomenon known as "culture shock" or cognitive confusion, in which individuals find it difficult to distinguish between objective facts and manipulative opinions. Among teenagers, the ability to evaluate the credibility of online content remains low, making them more susceptible to emotional viral content than to accurate information<sup>36</sup>. This paradox underscores that internalizing the Iqra paradigm (critical analysis) and the value of Tabayyun (verification procedures) is essential for building a digital society that is more critical, selective, and responsible in responding to the flow of information.

## **4. A Character-Based Model for Strengthening Digital Literacy**

### **4.1 The Integration of Iqra and Tabayyun as a Model of Islamic Digital Literacy**

A model for strengthening digital literacy from an Islamic perspective is based on the integration of the Iqra paradigm as an intellectual foundation and Tabayyun as an operational standard for verification. Iqra requires individuals not merely to passively accept information, but to actively engage in the process of critically reading, understanding, analyzing, and interpreting both qauliyah and kauniyah realities<sup>37</sup>. In the digital context, this paradigm encourages social media users to develop the ability to think reflectively and critically about the flow of information they receive<sup>38</sup>.

Furthermore, the principle of "bismi rabbika" in the concept of "Iqra" indicates that literacy activities in Islam are not value-neutral; rather, they must be oriented toward the value of tawhid, which directs reason toward the common good. Therefore, the process of seeking and disseminating information is directed not only toward cognitive aspects but also toward the formation of ethical awareness in the digital space.

On the other hand, the value of "Tabayyun" serves as a quality control mechanism for the results of that reading. If 'Iqra' is a process of thinking, then "Tabayyun" is a procedural action to validate the accuracy of the content (dhabt) and the authority of the source (sanad)<sup>39</sup>. The integration of these two elements creates a spiritual algorithm that

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<sup>34</sup> Usman Usman dkk., "Religious Digital Literacy in Islamic Higher Education: Student-Perceived Benefit," *Sosiohumaniora* 25, no. 1 (2023): 98, <https://doi.org/10.24198/sosiohumaniora.v25i1.41113>.

<sup>35</sup> Fepriani dan Ratnasari, "Algorithmic Ethics and Qur'anic Tabayyun."

<sup>36</sup> Suryani Suryani dkk., "Digital Literacy Based on Islamic Values to Improve Risk Perception and Critical Thinking among Muslim Adolescents," *Psikis: Jurnal Psikologi Islami* 10, no. 1 (2024): 80–90, <https://doi.org/10.19109/psikis.v10i1.19067>.

<sup>37</sup> Pauspaus dkk., "The Concept of Iqra' as a Pillar of Islamic Epistemology in Tafsir al-Munir by Wahbah Az-Zuhaili."

<sup>38</sup> Mahardhika, *Iqra' as Ontosemantic Revelation Language as a Mirror between Machine Understanding and Divine Meaning*.

<sup>39</sup> Masyhur, "Qira'atul Qur'an sebagai Model Verifikasi Informasi dalam Islam."

ensures every piece of information received is not only cognitively understood but also methodologically validated before being disseminated.

This model offers an alternative approach to contemporary digital literacy, which has traditionally tended to focus solely on technological proficiency. Through the integration of Iqra and Tabayyun, digital literacy is understood as a process of shaping digitally literate individuals who are critical, selective, and responsible in both producing and distributing information.

#### **4.2 Character-Based Literacy: Internalizing Shidq, Amanah, and Adl**

Effective digital literacy from the perspective of Islamic Religious Education must ultimately lead to the development of ethical behavior among users. Therefore, a model of Islamic digital literacy needs to be developed through the internalization of moral values that form the foundation of social media behavior.

- a. *Shidq* (Honesty): The value of shidq is the foundation of digital integrity, whereby users commit to producing and sharing only content that is authentic, non-manipulative, and factually accurate<sup>40</sup>. Digital integrity stands in stark contrast to a culture of hoaxes that often obscures the facts for personal gain.
- b. *Amanah* (Responsibility): This value emphasizes that every click, keystroke, and sharing of information is an action for which one will be held accountable before God and society. In practice, amanah is demonstrated through respect for privacy, protection of personal data, respect for intellectual property rights, and ensuring that content is beneficial to others<sup>41</sup>.
- c. *Adl* (Justice): In digital interactions, justice means maintaining an objective and impartial stance toward information, as well as avoiding emotional biases that could trigger conflict. The Adl mindset encourages users to give others a voice and to avoid getting trapped in exclusive echo chambers<sup>42</sup>.

#### **4.3 Digital Sufism: The Role of Tazkiyatun Nafs and Iffah in Cyberspace**

The Digital Sufi Approach makes a unique contribution to this literacy model by positioning Tazkiyatun Nafs (purification of the soul) as an internal defense mechanism. Amid a flood of disinformation, the spiritual dimension helps individuals control the urge to seek popularity (riya) or status recognition (jah) through the spread of viral news that may not necessarily be true. Through the practice of Muraqabah (awareness of Allah's watchful eye), social media users will exercise heightened vigilance in filtering information, recognizing that cyberspace is also a testing ground for moral character<sup>43</sup>.

One of the key values in the digital Sufi approach is Iffah (self-restraint)<sup>44</sup>. In the context of digital literacy, iffah refers to the ability to refrain from spreading negative content, hate speech, or gossip about others (ghibah)—even if the information is factual. This value is reinforced through the practice of muhasabah (self-reflection), which encourages individuals to evaluate the impact of their digital activities.

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<sup>40</sup> Kholifah, "Qur'anic Interpretation of Hoax News."

<sup>41</sup> Rizky Salsabila Fitri dkk., "The Role of Islamic Values in Addressing Hoaxes and Misinformation in Digital Media: A Systematic Literature Review," bag. 66-79, *Al-I'lam; Jurnal Komunikasi Dan Penyiaran Islam* 9, no. 1 (2025).

<sup>42</sup> Kholifah, "Qur'anic Interpretation of Hoax News."

<sup>43</sup> Warisno dkk., "Islamic Education Management, Sufism, and Digital Literacy."

<sup>44</sup> Hardiantama Rizki Putra dkk., "Empowering Muslim Adolescents through Progressive Islamic Digital Literacy to Combat Cyberbullying," *Multicultural Islamic Education Review* 3, no. 1 (2025): 53–62, <https://doi.org/10.23917/mier.v3i1.9916>.

The synergy between Iffah and Muhasabah (self-reflection) shapes the character of the cyber community, making them not only technologically proficient but also spiritually mature enough to maintain social harmony. Thus, digital Islam transforms from merely a cognitive skill into a form of righteous deeds that contribute to a more humane and religious digital civilization <sup>45</sup>.

## **5. Transformation Strategies in Islamic Religious Education (PAI)**

### **5.1 Integrating Digital Literacy into Islamic Education Curriculum**

The transformation of Islamic Religious Education (PAI) in the digital age calls for a reorientation of the curriculum that can integrate Islamic values with digital literacy skills. The PAI curriculum must be designed in an integrative and holistic manner, with digital literacy serving as an essential component of every subject. The implementation of the Kurikulum Merdeka policy has provided madrasahs with the flexibility to integrate digital literacy projects and religious moderation into their learning structures <sup>46</sup>.

In the Aqidah Akhlak course, digital literacy can be integrated through material on social media ethics (adab al-siber) that emphasizes the values of honesty (shidq) and responsibility (amanah) in disseminating information. In the Fiqh aspect, a reorientation is carried out by incorporating the study of contemporary Islamic law regarding the spread of hoaxes, slander, and the protection of personal data as part of Maqasid al-Shariah. Meanwhile, in the History of Islamic Culture (SKI), the curriculum can focus on a critical analysis of past disinformation incidents, such as the Hadith of al-Ifk, to draw lessons for dealing with smear campaigns on social media today.

### **5.2 Islamic Education Teachers as Digital Literacy Facilitators**

In this era of the democratization of authority, the role of Islamic Education (PAI) teachers must evolve from that of a transmitter of knowledge to that of a facilitator and agent of digital moderation. PAI teachers have a moral responsibility to guide students so they do not get caught up in provocative narratives, online radicalism, or exclusive religious ideologies. As facilitators, teachers must be able to build students' critical thinking skills through a dialogic process, so that students do not merely become passive consumers of information but rather active participants capable of self-filtering <sup>47</sup>.

To fulfill this role, improving teachers' digital competencies has become an urgent necessity. Islamic Education teachers are not only required to master technical tools but also to possess digital pedagogical skills to align technological content with spiritual values. By positioning themselves as ethical role models (uswah hasanah) in cyberspace, Islamic Education teachers can guide students to use social media as a means of da'wah that is inclusive, wise, and enlightening.

### **5.3 Active Learning Methods: Problem-Based Learning (PBL) and Case Studies**

Strengthening digital literacy in Islamic Education (PAI) requires an active learning approach that encourages student engagement in critical thinking and problem-solving. One relevant model is Problem-Based Learning (PBL), which focuses on solving real-world problems that are relevant to students' lives.

Through PBL, students are confronted with moral dilemmas—such as the prevalence of religious hoaxes or cyberbullying—that require them to think critically and seek solutions based on Islamic values. <sup>48</sup>. Using real-life hoax case studies in the classroom

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<sup>45</sup> Warisno dkk., "Islamic Education Management, Sufism, and Digital Literacy."

<sup>46</sup> Ardhyta Furqon Wicaksono dkk., "Bibliometric Analysis of the Integration of Da'wah Values and Digital Literacy in Formal Islamic Education in Yogyakarta 2020-2024," *Berkala Ilmiah Pendidikan* 5, no. 1 (2025).

<sup>47</sup> Oktahariana dkk., *Digital Literacy in Problem-Based Learning for Islamic Religious Education*.

<sup>48</sup> Oktahariana dkk., *Digital Literacy in Problem-Based Learning for Islamic Religious Education*.

allows students to directly practice the Tabayyun procedure: tracing the source of the news, verifying facts through fact-checking apps, and analyzing the social impact of the information <sup>49</sup>.

In addition to PBL, other learning models such as LOK-R (Literacy, Orientation, Collaboration, Reflection) can be used to enhance the sociocultural and religious literacy of madrasah students. Integrating technology—such as a Learning Management System (LMS), interactive quizzes (Quizizz), and multimedia content (YouTube/TikTok)—into these methods can boost students' motivation to learn and improve their conceptual understanding of religious material that was previously considered conventional <sup>50</sup>.

#### **5.4 Collaborative Ecosystem: Synergy Among the Three Pillars of Education**

The success of character-based digital literacy initiatives depends heavily on synergy within a collaborative ecosystem involving schools, families, and the community. Schools cannot operate in isolation; parents must play an active role through “digital parenting” to monitor their children’s digital behavior at home and instill fundamental Islamic values from an early age. Effective communication between teachers and parents is key to establishing consistent standards of digital ethics for students.

On the other hand, collaboration with religious leaders, scholars, and the digital community is crucial for providing moderate and authoritative religious content to counter radical narratives. Islamic educational institutions must work together with IT experts and policymakers to develop safe and credible learning platforms grounded in Islamic values. Through the development of this healthy and collective digital culture, Islamic Education (PAI) can make a tangible contribution to raising a generation of Muslims who are not only technologically savvy but also morally steadfast and spiritually mature.

### **CONCLUSION**

This study concludes that the crisis of disinformation and hoaxes in the digital age is an epistemological challenge that cannot be resolved through a purely technological approach alone. The Iqra paradigm and the value of Tabayyun offer an integrative solution that combines intellectual strength and ethical integrity. The concept of Iqra (QS. Al-Alaq: 1–5) has evolved from a mere command to read text into a spiritual algorithm that activates human critical thinking to validate reality and prevent disinformation in cyberspace. Meanwhile, Tabayyun (QS. Al-Hujurat: 6) functions as a systematic quality control mechanism, encompassing source validation (sanad), content accuracy (dhabt), and social impact analysis (maslahah). The synergy between the two forms a robust cognitive defense for the Muslim community to navigate the massive flow of information intelligently and responsibly.

Both theoretically and practically, this study implies that digital literacy from an Islamic perspective must not be limited to the mastery of technical skills (hard skills) alone. Digital literacy must be reconceptualized as a form of righteous deeds and the embodiment of moral responsibility toward God and society. Every interaction on social media—whether in consuming, producing, or disseminating information—is an action with spiritual and social consequences for which one will be held accountable before Allah SWT. Therefore, strengthening character-based digital literacy through values such as Shidq (honesty), Amanah (responsibility), and Adl (justice) is key to creating a healthy, civilized, and enlightening cyber ecosystem.

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<sup>49</sup> Kholifah, “Qur’anic Interpretation of Hoax News.”

<sup>50</sup> Warisno dkk., “Islamic Education Management, Sufism, and Digital Literacy.”

Based on the above findings, the researchers propose several strategic recommendations for the future development of Islamic Religious Education (PAI), namely: (1) Development of PAI Digital Literacy Modules: Islamic educational institutions and the Ministry of Religious Affairs need to develop learning modules that are more practical and adaptable to technological challenges. These modules can explicitly integrate the Iqra-Tabayyun principles into the subjects of Aqidah Akhlak, contemporary Fiqh, and Islamic History and Culture; (2) Value-Based Application Innovation: There is a need to develop digital verification tools, such as artificial intelligence (AI)-based chatbot assistants or fact-checking applications (hoax busters) designed with input from experts in Islamic law and technology. This aims to make it easier for the public to practice Tabayyun instantly and accurately; (3) Collaborative Ecosystem: Synergy among the three pillars of education—schools, families (digital parenting), and the digital community—is needed to build a collective culture of digital literacy. PAI teachers must continuously improve their digital pedagogical competencies so they can serve as agents of moderation who guide the younger generation to become wise digital users.

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