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Reconstructing Islamic Education in the Social Media Era: Pedagogical Transformation, Religious Authority, and Digital Ethics

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The development of digital technology and social media has transformed the landscape of Islamic education, particularly in how younger generations access, understand, and produce religious knowledge. This transformation not only creates opportunities for innovative learning but also raises epistemological concerns regarding religious authority, information validity, and the internalization of Islamic values within digital environments. This study aims to examine the transformation of Islamic educational pedagogy, the shifting dynamics of religious authority, and the ethical challenges of digital engagement, while proposing a conceptual framework for reconstructing Islamic education in response to the evolving social media landscape. This study employs a qualitative approach through library research, examining scholarly literature, including journal articles, academic books, and relevant publications, primarily published between 2016 and 2026. The data are analyzed through critical synthesis by identifying major themes, comparing theoretical perspectives, and interpreting the interrelationships among the dimensions under investigation. The findings indicate that digital transformation has expanded access to learning resources and encouraged the development of more participatory pedagogical approaches. However, it has also reshaped the formation of religious authority through the emergence of non-institutional actors on social media. These developments increase the risks of fragmented religious understanding, religious misinformation, and weakened verification of knowledge sources. This study proposes a conceptual reconstruction of Islamic education through the integration of three key dimensions: digital pedagogy oriented toward critical and dialogical learning, the strengthening of religious literacy to develop the capacity to verify religious authorities and knowledge sources, and digital ethics grounded in Islamic values. The integration of these dimensions positions technological adaptation not merely as an instrumental innovation but as a pedagogical and epistemological process that remains oriented toward cultivating knowledgeable, morally upright, and socially responsible individuals.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Over the past decade, the rapid development of digital technology and social media platforms has fundamentally transformed the ways in which Muslim communities, particularly younger generations, access, understand, and disseminate religious knowledge. Platforms such as YouTube, Instagram, TikTok, and WhatsApp have increasingly become important channels through which individuals engage with Qur'anic learning, Hadith studies, and religious guidance. These digital practices now coexist with conventional learning environments, including mosques, madrasahs, and Islamic boarding schools (pesantren), which have historically served as central institutions for transmitting Islamic knowledge through direct teacher–student relationships. Recent studies describe this transformation as a defining feature of twenty-first-century Islamic education, presenting both unprecedented opportunities and emerging challenges (Hajri, 2023). Empirical research has demonstrated the growing role of digital platforms in religious learning, particularly TikTok as a medium for Generation Z's religious engagement during and after the COVID-19 pandemic (Putri & Astutik, 2021). Similarly, thematic digital Qur'anic learning models have been associated with increased student engagement compared with conventional Qur'anic recitation classes (Affandi, 2021). At the institutional level, Islamic schools and madrasahs have increasingly incorporated social media not merely as supplementary communication tools but also as platforms for institutional leadership, educational engagement, and community participation (Asmendri et al., 2023).

In Indonesia, where Islamic education has historically been rooted in the traditions of pesantren and madrasahs, this digital transformation carries particular significance. These institutions occupy a dual position: they function as custodians of long-established traditions of Islamic knowledge transmission while simultaneously becoming active participants in an increasingly interconnected digital public sphere. This dual position creates an important tension between preserving the authenticity of Islamic scholarship and adapting educational practices to changing technological environments. Consequently, the integration of digital media into Islamic education should not be understood simply as the adoption of new instructional technologies. Rather, it represents a broader transformation involving educational authority, knowledge transmission, institutional practices, and the ways in which Islamic values are communicated and internalized in contemporary society.

In this study, Islamic education is understood broadly as a formal and non-formal process through which Islamic knowledge, values, and character are cultivated. It encompasses Islamic learning in madrasahs and pesantren, Islamic Religious Education (Pendidikan Agama Islam) in general schools, and community-based

religious learning, including majelis taklim. Meanwhile, the social media era refers to the contemporary digital environment in which internet connectivity, mobile devices, and social networking platforms have become increasingly significant channels for accessing, producing, and distributing religious information and educational content. This conceptual distinction is important because the transformation under examination extends beyond classroom-based instruction to include broader processes of religious learning, knowledge production, and social interaction within digital communities.

Nevertheless, Islamic education has never been concerned solely with the transmission of information. Its fundamental purpose is to cultivate the intellectual, moral, and spiritual capacities of learners toward the development of an integrated Islamic personality, commonly associated with the concept of *insan kamil*, grounded in the teachings of the Qur'an and Sunnah (Ansanoor, 2022; Anwar, 2016). This formative mission requires sustained guidance, contextual interpretation, ethical conduct, and the transmission of legitimate religious knowledge through established scholarly traditions, including the concept of *sanad*. In contrast, digital and social media environments are characterized by speed, openness, algorithmic curation, and relatively low barriers to content production and distribution. The intersection of these two environments raises a fundamental question: how can Islamic education preserve the intellectual depth, authenticity, and legitimacy of religious knowledge while operating within digital ecosystems that often prioritize virality, brevity, visibility, and user engagement over scholarly rigor? This tension suggests that the digital transformation of Islamic education requires a reconsideration of its pedagogical foundations, epistemological commitments, and ethical responsibilities.

One of the most visible consequences of this transformation is the emergence of new pedagogical practices. Previous studies have reported that social media applications can improve the accessibility and interactivity of Islamic Religious Education by enabling learners to engage with educational materials beyond the temporal and spatial limitations of conventional classrooms (Rizkiyah & Shohib, 2024). Short-form video content on platforms such as TikTok, YouTube, and Instagram Reels has also created new possibilities for communicating religious messages to digitally oriented audiences (Sirait & Nasution, 2024). Broader discussions of Islamic educational transformation emphasize the importance of developing technologically literate Muslim generations capable of navigating contemporary learning environments (Salsabila et al., 2022). Furthermore, teachers who integrate digital tools into Islamic education have reported positive perceptions regarding the usefulness

and accessibility of online learning platforms (Siregar, 2023). At the institutional level, the strategic use of social media has expanded the communication reach of Islamic educational organizations and strengthened their engagement with surrounding communities (Habibullah & Ali, 2024; Jamri & Salehudin, 2025). These developments indicate that digital pedagogy offers opportunities to move beyond predominantly teacher-centered instructional practices toward more participatory, interactive, and contextually responsive forms of Islamic learning. However, technological accessibility and engagement alone do not necessarily guarantee the achievement of Islamic educational objectives. Digital pedagogical innovation must therefore remain connected to the intellectual, moral, and spiritual dimensions of learning.

Beyond pedagogical transformation, the digital environment has also reshaped the dynamics of religious authority. Social media has created an increasingly open arena in which traditional religious scholars, independent preachers, popular religious figures, and digital influencers participate in the production and dissemination of Islamic knowledge. Bunt (2018) describes contemporary online religious environments as *cyber-Islamic environments*, in which established forms of religious authority are continuously negotiated through digital interactions and emerging communication practices. Within these environments, the visibility and influence of religious figures may increasingly depend on audience engagement, algorithmic distribution, and digital representation rather than solely on recognized scholarly qualifications or institutional legitimacy. Consequently, religious authority is no longer mediated exclusively through established educational and religious institutions but is also shaped by the technological and social dynamics of digital platforms. Research on digital religious engagement further suggests that increased dependence on online information sources may influence how academic and religious communities perceive and recognize authority (Laugu et al., 2024). This transformation raises important epistemological questions concerning the credibility of religious sources, the legitimacy of digital interpretations, and the relationship between traditional scholarly authority and emerging forms of online religious influence. For Islamic education, these developments require a stronger emphasis on religious literacy, critical evaluation, and the ability to distinguish between authoritative religious knowledge and unverified digital interpretations.

The transformation of pedagogical practices and religious authority also generates significant ethical challenges. The openness of social media enables wider access to religious information but simultaneously increases the circulation of superficial interpretations, misleading religious content, and unverified claims. Previous studies have highlighted the potential of social media to facilitate the

dissemination of harmful communication practices, including religious misinformation and hate speech, when digital interactions are not accompanied by adequate ethical awareness and critical evaluation (Muannas & Mansyur, 2020; Rohim et al., 2026). Another important concern involves the digital competency gap among Islamic education teachers, many of whom continue to face difficulties in translating their pedagogical expertise into effective digital learning practices (Aziz & Zakir, 2022; Kurnia & Nasution, 2024). These challenges demonstrate that digital adaptation cannot be reduced to technical proficiency or the ability to operate technological platforms. From an Islamic educational perspective, digital engagement must also be guided by moral responsibility, intellectual integrity, respect for others, and the values of *adab* and *akhlaq*. Accordingly, Islamic digital ethics should be understood as an essential educational dimension that guides how religious knowledge is accessed, interpreted, produced, and communicated in online environments.

The theoretical foundation of this study integrates three complementary perspectives. First, the normative conception of Islamic education provides the philosophical foundation for understanding education as a formative process directed toward intellectual development, moral refinement, and spiritual growth (Ansanoor, 2022; Anwar, 2016). This perspective establishes the normative criteria through which digital educational practices can be evaluated. Second, digital literacy provides an analytical perspective for understanding the competencies required to access, evaluate, interpret, and produce information responsibly within digital environments. Digital literacy extends beyond the technical ability to operate digital devices; it also involves cognitive, social, and ethical capacities for critically engaging with information and communication technologies (Buckingham, 2007; UNESCO, 2018). Third, Rogers' (2003) Diffusion of Innovations theory helps explain the adoption of social media and digital platforms in educational settings through factors such as perceived relative advantage, compatibility, and observability. Meanwhile, Bunt's (2018) discussion of cyber-Islamic environments provides a perspective for examining the changing dynamics of religious authority in digitally mediated spaces. The integration of these perspectives enables Islamic education to be examined not merely as a process of technological adoption but as a multidimensional transformation involving pedagogical innovation, the legitimacy of religious knowledge, and ethical responsibility.

Despite the growing body of literature on digital technology and Islamic education, existing studies remain relatively fragmented across different research dimensions. Some studies primarily investigate the pedagogical effectiveness of

specific platforms, such as TikTok and YouTube, in facilitating religious learning (Putri & Astutik, 2021; Sirait & Nasution, 2024). Others focus on the sociological transformation of religious authority and the changing relationships between traditional religious institutions and digital actors (Bunt, 2018; Laugu et al., 2024). Meanwhile, research on digital literacy frequently examines general information and communication competencies without sufficiently connecting them to the normative and ethical foundations of Islamic education (Muannas & Mansyur, 2020). Although these studies provide valuable insights, they do not fully explain how pedagogical transformation, changing religious authority, and digital ethics interact in shaping the contemporary landscape of Islamic education. In particular, there remains a need for an integrative conceptual approach that examines these dimensions collectively and establishes their implications for the reconstruction of Islamic educational practices. Addressing this gap is important because the challenges of digital transformation cannot be adequately understood or addressed through isolated pedagogical, sociological, or technological perspectives.

Against this background, this study aims to critically examine the transformation of Islamic educational pedagogy in the social media era, analyze the shifting dynamics of religious authority and their implications for the authenticity of Islamic knowledge, and explore the ethical challenges arising from digital engagement. Furthermore, it seeks to develop an integrative conceptual framework for reconstructing Islamic education through the interconnected dimensions of digital pedagogy, religious authority, and Islamic digital ethics. Accordingly, the study addresses three research questions: (1) How has the emergence of digital platforms and social media transformed pedagogical practices in Islamic education? (2) How has the digital environment reshaped religious authority and raised ethical challenges concerning the production, dissemination, and validation of Islamic knowledge? (3) How can digital pedagogy, religious authority, and Islamic digital ethics be integrated into a conceptual framework for reconstructing Islamic education in the social media era? The novelty of this study lies in its integrative conceptual approach, which brings together pedagogical, epistemological, sociological, and ethical perspectives to explain the reconstruction of Islamic education in response to digital transformation. Rather than treating technological opportunities, religious authority, and ethical challenges as separate issues, this study conceptualizes them as interconnected dimensions of a broader educational transformation. Its contribution is expected to provide a theoretical foundation and practical direction for Islamic educational institutions and educators seeking to engage with digital environments while maintaining the

authenticity of Islamic knowledge, the integrity of educational purposes, and the ethical foundations of Islamic learning.

2. METHODOLOGY

This study employs a qualitative research approach using library research as its primary methodological design. This approach was selected because the study aims to critically synthesize, compare, and interpret existing concepts, theoretical frameworks, and empirical findings concerning Islamic education, digital technology, and social media, rather than collect new field data or conduct surveys. Library research is particularly appropriate for conceptual inquiry that seeks to examine an evolving and fragmented body of knowledge, identify convergences and tensions across existing studies, and develop an integrative conceptual framework. As a qualitative literature-based study, this research does not test statistical hypotheses. Instead, it develops interpretive arguments grounded in the scholarly sources examined.

The data sources consist of indexed journal articles, academic books, conference proceedings, and institutional reports addressing Islamic education, digital literacy, social media, religious authority, and digital ethics. Priority was given to publications from 2016 to 2026 to ensure the relevance and currency of the analysis, while a limited number of foundational theoretical works were retained where necessary to establish the conceptual basis of the study.

Relevant literature was identified through academic database searches and scholarly search engines using combinations of keywords, including "Islamic education," "digital literacy," "social media," "Islamic Religious Education," "religious authority," "digital da'wah," and "Islamic digital ethics." The selection process was guided by three criteria: (1) direct relevance to Islamic education in relation to digital technology, social media, or digitally mediated religious knowledge; (2) publication relevance and recency, with priority given to studies published within the preceding decade while retaining foundational theoretical contributions where conceptually necessary; and (3) academic credibility, indicated by publication in peer-reviewed journals, reputable academic publishing houses, or credible institutional publications. Following the selection process, twenty-seven sources met the established criteria and were included in the final analysis, consisting predominantly of journal articles.

The collected literature was analyzed using qualitative content analysis combined with critical literature synthesis. The analytical procedure involved three interconnected stages. First, data reduction was conducted by extracting the central arguments, empirical findings, and theoretical propositions from each selected source. Relevant information was then organized into a structured literature matrix to facilitate comparison across studies.

Second, data categorization involved organizing the extracted information into three interconnected analytical dimensions corresponding to the research questions and theoretical framework of the study. These dimensions comprised: (1) digital pedagogy, examining transformations in teaching and learning practices, digital instructional approaches, learner participation, and the integration of technology into Islamic education; (2) religious authority, analyzing changes in the legitimacy, production, dissemination, and validation of Islamic knowledge within social media environments; and (3) Islamic digital ethics, examining moral responsibility, digital literacy, information verification, and the application of Islamic values, particularly *adab* and *akhlaq*, in digital interactions. These categories served as analytical lenses rather than mutually exclusive classifications, allowing relationships and intersections among the three dimensions to be identified.

Third, interpretive synthesis was undertaken by comparing patterns, areas of convergence, and conceptual tensions across the selected literature. Particular attention was given to how pedagogical transformation, changing religious authority, and digital ethical challenges interact in shaping contemporary Islamic education. The findings from this synthesis were subsequently integrated into a conceptual framework for reconstructing Islamic education in the social media era. This framework was developed through the interpretation and integration of recurring concepts and theoretical propositions identified across the reviewed sources, rather than through statistical aggregation or empirical testing.

To strengthen the trustworthiness of the analysis, the study employed source triangulation by comparing findings and theoretical arguments across independent publications addressing different institutional contexts, digital platforms, and dimensions of Islamic education. Convergent findings were used to identify recurring patterns, while contradictory perspectives were retained and critically examined rather than resolved prematurely. This procedure helped ensure that the resulting interpretations were not dependent on individual studies but were informed by a broader range of scholarly perspectives.

Several limitations should be acknowledged. First, the findings are constrained by the availability, language, and geographical distribution of the selected literature. Publications in English and Indonesian received priority, which may limit the representation of relevant scholarship published in Arabic and other languages. This limitation was partly addressed by incorporating both context-specific studies on Islamic Religious Education and broader international scholarship on digital religious authority.

Second, the study is designed as an integrative critical literature synthesis rather than a systematic review conducted under a standardized protocol such as PRISMA. Although the selection of sources was guided by explicit relevance, recency, and

credibility criteria, the process inevitably involved interpretive judgment. Consequently, other researchers applying similar criteria may reasonably include or exclude a limited number of borderline sources. The proposed conceptual framework should therefore be understood as an interpretive synthesis of the selected literature that provides a theoretical basis for subsequent empirical investigation, rather than as an empirically validated model.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The literature synthesis identifies three interconnected dimensions that shape the transformation of Islamic education in the social media era: digital pedagogy, religious authority, and Islamic digital ethics. These dimensions reveal that digital transformation extends beyond the adoption of technological tools or the expansion of access to religious information. Rather, it involves fundamental changes in pedagogical relationships, the production and validation of religious knowledge, and the ethical responsibilities of individuals and institutions within digital environments. The analysis further indicates that these transformations require coordinated institutional and pedagogical responses to ensure that technological innovation remains consistent with the intellectual, moral, and spiritual objectives of Islamic education. Accordingly, the following discussion examines these dimensions and develops an integrative conceptual framework for reconstructing Islamic education in the social media era.

3.1. Digital Pedagogy and the Transformation of Islamic Learning

The literature reviewed demonstrates that digital technology and social media have substantially transformed the accessibility, organization, and delivery of Islamic learning. One of the most significant developments is the expansion of access to religious educational resources beyond the geographical, institutional, and temporal limitations of conventional learning environments. Previously, access to qualified religious teachers and structured learning materials was often dependent on institutional availability, geographical proximity, and the financial resources of learners. Digital platforms have increasingly reduced these limitations by enabling access to Qur'anic recitation classes, tafsir discussions, Hadith studies, and other forms of religious instruction through mobile devices and online learning environments (Susilawati, 2021). This transformation is particularly relevant for learners in remote areas, working adults, and Muslim communities whose geographical circumstances restrict their participation in conventional religious education.

The implementation of thematic digital Qur'anic learning provides an example of how technological integration can support pedagogical development. Affandi (2021) reports that the use of mobile applications and multimedia resources in Qur'anic learning can increase student engagement compared with conventional recitation-

based instruction alone. Similarly, social media platforms provide opportunities to distribute religious learning materials through different formats, ranging from short explanatory videos to comprehensive online lectures. These developments indicate that digital pedagogy can expand the availability of Islamic educational resources while accommodating different learning preferences and circumstances. Nevertheless, increased accessibility should not automatically be interpreted as an improvement in the quality of religious understanding. The availability of information must be accompanied by appropriate pedagogical guidance, contextual interpretation, and critical engagement with religious sources.

Beyond accessibility, digital platforms have also encouraged the emergence of more interactive and participatory learning practices. Short-form video content, live-streamed religious lectures, interactive Qur'anic applications, and online discussion groups create opportunities for learners to engage with educational materials in ways that differ from conventional lecture-based instruction. Putri and Astutik (2021) identify TikTok as an effective medium for religious learning among Generation Z during the COVID-19 pandemic, partly because its communication format corresponds with the media consumption habits of younger audiences. Sirait and Nasution (2024) similarly highlight the capacity of short-form religious content to attract audience engagement on platforms such as TikTok and Instagram Reels. These findings suggest that the effectiveness of digital pedagogy is partly associated with its ability to accommodate contemporary communication patterns and learning preferences.

This transformation can also be interpreted through Rogers' (2003) Diffusion of Innovations theory. The adoption of social media for religious learning reflects several characteristics that facilitate technological diffusion, including perceived relative advantage, compatibility with existing user practices, and observability of participation and engagement. Digital learning platforms offer flexibility and accessibility that may be less available in conventional instructional arrangements. Their compatibility with everyday digital practices also makes them relatively accessible to younger learners. However, the rapid adoption of technological platforms does not necessarily indicate that their pedagogical applications are educationally appropriate. The distinction between technological acceptance and educational effectiveness is particularly important in Islamic education, where learning outcomes involve not only cognitive achievement but also moral development, spiritual awareness, and the cultivation of religious character.

Another important development is the emergence of community-based and peer-to-peer religious learning networks. Online discussion groups, messaging applications, moderated religious forums, and social media communities enable learners to exchange information, discuss religious questions, and reinforce previously acquired knowledge beyond formal instructional settings. These practices

demonstrate similarities with the communal learning traditions of Islamic education, particularly the *halaqah*, while extending interaction beyond geographical boundaries. Such networks can complement formal educational institutions by providing opportunities for continuous engagement and collaborative learning. However, the educational value of peer-to-peer interaction depends considerably on the availability of reliable learning materials and appropriate moderation, particularly when participants discuss complex religious questions without direct supervision from qualified educators.

At the institutional level, social media has increasingly become part of the broader educational communication and management environment. Asmendri et al. (2023) identify the strategic integration of social media into Islamic educational institutions as an important mechanism for strengthening institutional communication, stakeholder engagement, and organizational visibility. Habibullah and Ali (2024) similarly emphasize the importance of coherent digital strategies in aligning institutional communication with educational objectives, while Jamri and Salehudin (2025) highlight the relevance of digital literacy development for improving the capacity of madrasahs to maintain educational quality. These findings suggest that digital pedagogy should not be restricted to individual classroom practices but should also be incorporated into institutional planning, teacher development, and educational quality assurance.

Nevertheless, the transformation of Islamic learning also raises questions concerning the changing relationship between teachers, learners, and educational institutions. In conventional Islamic education, teachers function not merely as providers of information but also as intellectual and moral guides who facilitate contextual understanding and cultivate appropriate learning attitudes. Digital platforms may expand access to religious knowledge, but they cannot automatically reproduce the relational and formative dimensions of direct educational guidance. Consequently, the reconstruction of Islamic pedagogy requires a balance between technological innovation and the enduring educational functions of teachers as facilitators, interpreters, and moral exemplars. Digital pedagogy should therefore be understood not as a replacement for established Islamic learning traditions but as an extension that requires pedagogical direction and normative supervision.

3.2. Religious Authority and the Epistemological Challenges of Social Media

The expansion of digital religious communication has fundamentally reshaped the mechanisms through which Islamic knowledge is produced, disseminated, and recognized as authoritative. One of the most significant developments identified in the literature is the fragmentation and reconfiguration of religious authority within social media environments. Bunt (2018) conceptualizes these environments as *cyber-Islamic*

environments, in which traditional religious authority interacts with emerging digital actors and communication practices. Within these environments, religious knowledge is no longer transmitted exclusively through established scholarly institutions or recognized religious figures. Independent preachers, digital influencers, and popular religious content creators increasingly participate in the interpretation and dissemination of Islamic teachings.

This development represents more than an expansion of access to religious information. It indicates a transformation in the social and technological mechanisms through which religious legitimacy is established. In conventional Islamic scholarly traditions, the credibility of religious knowledge is associated with scholarly qualifications, recognized intellectual traditions, institutional affiliations, and established mechanisms of knowledge transmission, including *sanad*. By contrast, social media platforms frequently distribute visibility through algorithmic recommendation systems, audience engagement, and content popularity. As a result, the visibility of religious figures does not necessarily correspond to their scholarly qualifications or the reliability of their interpretations.

Laugu et al. (2024) provide further evidence concerning the relationship between digital information dependence and changing perceptions of authority within academic and religious communities. This development suggests that religious authority in digital environments is increasingly negotiated through interactions between content producers, platform structures, and audiences. Consequently, the distinction between scholarly authority and popular digital influence may become less visible to ordinary users, particularly younger audiences who encounter religious information primarily through social media.

From the perspective of Islamic education, this transformation creates an important epistemological challenge. The central issue is not whether religious knowledge should be disseminated through digital platforms, but how its authenticity and legitimacy can be maintained when information circulates through environments that do not necessarily prioritize scholarly verification. The widespread availability of religious content may enable learners to encounter diverse interpretations, but it may also expose them to decontextualized explanations, oversimplified religious arguments, and interpretations that lack adequate scholarly foundations. Therefore, religious literacy must include the ability to evaluate the qualifications of religious sources, understand the intellectual context of religious arguments, and distinguish between scholarly interpretation and unverified personal opinion.

The challenge becomes more complex when digital religious content is characterized by misinformation, superficial theological explanations, and potentially extremist narratives. Muannas and Mansyur (2020) identify social media as a potential medium for the dissemination of hate speech when digital communication is not

accompanied by adequate literacy and responsible engagement. Rohim et al. (2026) further emphasize the importance of integrative and multidisciplinary digital literacy strategies to address radicalism and misinformation in social media environments. These findings demonstrate that the accessibility of religious information must be accompanied by the development of critical evaluation skills and appropriate mechanisms for verifying religious claims.

An additional concern involves the relationship between the communication characteristics of social media and the complexity of Islamic knowledge. Short-form content may facilitate initial engagement, but its limited duration can restrict the presentation of interpretive context, scholarly disagreement, and the methodological foundations of religious arguments. Consequently, learners may encounter religious explanations without sufficient understanding of the historical, textual, and jurisprudential contexts from which those explanations emerge. This situation creates a potential gap between the speed of information consumption and the depth of religious understanding.

The reconstruction of religious authority in Islamic education therefore requires a renewed emphasis on the relationship between digital accessibility and scholarly legitimacy. Rather than rejecting digital religious communication, Islamic educational institutions should strengthen their presence in digital environments through credible educational content, transparent scholarly credentials, and accessible explanations of religious sources. Teachers and religious institutions also need to develop learners' capacity to distinguish between the popularity of a religious figure and the scholarly legitimacy of their knowledge. In this respect, the concept of *sanad* remains relevant not as a mechanism that restricts digital communication, but as a reminder that religious knowledge requires intellectual accountability, methodological continuity, and responsible transmission.

Accordingly, digital religious authority should not be understood simply as the disappearance of traditional authority. It is better interpreted as a process of negotiation between established scholarly institutions and emerging digital forms of influence. Islamic education has an important role in mediating this relationship by developing learners who are capable of engaging with diverse digital religious sources while maintaining critical awareness of their intellectual foundations and theological legitimacy.

3.3. Islamic Digital Ethics: Adab, Tabayyun, and Moral Responsibility

The transformation of Islamic education through digital technology also requires attention to the ethical foundations of online interaction. The literature indicates that digital environments create challenges that extend beyond technical competence and information accessibility. The circulation of misinformation,

decontextualized religious explanations, hate speech, and potentially extremist content demonstrates the importance of ethical responsibility in the production and consumption of religious information (Muannas & Mansyur, 2020; Rohim et al., 2026). These challenges suggest that digital literacy in Islamic education should not be restricted to the ability to access and evaluate information but should also include the moral principles governing how information is interpreted, communicated, and distributed.

From an Islamic educational perspective, the concept of *adab* provides an important normative foundation for understanding responsible engagement in digital environments. Adab concerns appropriate conduct in the pursuit, acquisition, transmission, and application of knowledge. In this context, digital engagement should be guided by intellectual humility, respect for differences, responsibility in communication, and recognition of the limitations of individual knowledge. The ability to access religious information does not automatically establish the authority or competence to interpret and disseminate it. Therefore, learners and content producers must recognize that religious communication involves responsibilities that extend beyond personal expression or audience engagement.

The principle of *tabayyun* offers another important ethical perspective. It emphasizes the necessity of verifying information before accepting or disseminating it, particularly when information may affect the reputation, beliefs, or social relationships of others. Within social media environments, where information can circulate rapidly without sufficient verification, tabayyun becomes particularly relevant to the evaluation of religious claims, quotations, interpretations, and public statements. Integrating this principle into Islamic education can strengthen learners' ability to examine the credibility of digital sources, identify misleading information, and avoid the uncritical circulation of religious content.

Similarly, the concept of *amanah* provides a normative basis for understanding the responsibilities of educators, religious authorities, and digital content producers. Individuals who communicate religious knowledge through digital platforms should recognize that their content may influence the beliefs, attitudes, and behavior of large audiences. Consequently, the production of religious content requires accuracy, contextual responsibility, appropriate attribution, and awareness of the potential consequences of misleading interpretations. These responsibilities are particularly important for educational institutions and religious figures whose digital presence may be perceived by audiences as an extension of their scholarly or institutional authority.

Another ethical concern relates to the commercial logic of social media platforms and the emergence of the attention economy. Most major platforms distribute content through systems that prioritize visibility, interaction, and audience

retention. Such mechanisms may create incentives for content producers to simplify, dramatize, or sensationalize religious messages to increase engagement. The monetization of digital content can further complicate the relationship between religious education and commercial interests, particularly when the visibility of religious messages becomes closely associated with financial benefits or audience metrics. Under these circumstances, the educational value of religious communication risks being evaluated primarily through popularity rather than scholarly accuracy, contextual depth, and moral significance.

This tension has important implications for Islamic educational objectives. Religious learning requires reflection, contextual understanding, and sustained intellectual engagement, whereas attention-driven platforms frequently encourage rapid consumption and immediate reactions. The challenge is therefore not simply to produce more attractive digital content but to ensure that its presentation remains consistent with the ethical and educational purposes of Islamic knowledge. Content accessibility and visual attractiveness should support, rather than replace, intellectual rigor and moral responsibility.

The integration of Islamic digital ethics into educational practices also requires attention to the competencies of teachers and institutions. Aziz and Zakir (2022) and Kurnia and Nasution (2024) identify continuing challenges in teachers' digital competencies and their ability to translate existing pedagogical expertise into effective digital learning practices. These limitations indicate that ethical digital engagement cannot be left entirely to individual learners. Educational institutions need to provide structured guidance concerning information verification, responsible communication, digital interaction, and the appropriate use of religious sources. Such guidance should integrate technological literacy with the moral foundations of Islamic education.

Taken together, the concepts of *adab*, *tabayyun*, and *amanah* provide complementary ethical dimensions for reconstructing Islamic education in digital environments. Adab guides the appropriate conduct of knowledge acquisition and communication, tabayyun establishes the importance of verification and critical evaluation, while amanah emphasizes responsibility in producing and disseminating information. Their integration positions Islamic digital ethics as an essential educational foundation rather than an additional technical competency. Through this approach, digital literacy becomes connected to the broader Islamic objective of cultivating individuals who are intellectually discerning, morally responsible, and ethically engaged in contemporary society.

3.4. Institutional and Pedagogical Adaptation in Islamic Education

The findings across the three dimensions indicate that the transformation of Islamic education requires institutional and pedagogical adaptation rather than the

adoption of technology as an isolated innovation. Digital pedagogy, religious authority, and Islamic digital ethics are interconnected, and weaknesses in one dimension may undermine the effectiveness of the others. For example, the availability of interactive learning platforms does not guarantee reliable religious understanding when learners lack the ability to evaluate the credibility of digital sources. Similarly, the presence of qualified religious educators does not necessarily ensure effective digital learning when institutions lack appropriate pedagogical competencies and ethical communication strategies.

One of the most important institutional priorities is strengthening teachers' competencies through the integration of Islamic knowledge, pedagogical expertise, and digital capabilities. Habibullah and Ali (2024) emphasize that effective digital adaptation in Islamic education requires educators to develop technological competencies alongside their religious understanding. Jamri and Salehudin (2025) similarly highlight the importance of structured digital literacy development within Islamic educational institutions. Muhyidin (2022) provides an example of the use of virtual data-based approaches in teaching Qur'anic interpretation and Hadith, illustrating how digital resources can be integrated into the development of religious learning practices.

However, teacher development should not be limited to technical training. Educators also need competencies in digital content evaluation, instructional design, online communication, and the identification of reliable religious sources. These competencies enable teachers to guide learners through digital information environments rather than simply direct them toward available online materials. In this respect, teachers remain central to Islamic education, although their roles increasingly involve facilitating critical engagement, contextual interpretation, and responsible digital participation.

A second institutional priority concerns the production of credible, contextual, and pedagogically appropriate religious content. The increasing influence of social media requires Islamic educational institutions to develop communication strategies that respond to the characteristics of different platforms without compromising scholarly integrity. Short educational videos, structured infographics, interactive Qur'anic applications, and online discussion sessions can be employed to make religious knowledge more accessible to contemporary audiences (Sirait & Nasution, 2024; Susilawati, 2021). Nevertheless, content development should remain connected to appropriate scholarly references, contextual explanations, and the educational objectives of the institution. Jayadi et al. (2024) highlight the relevance of curriculum integration between madrasahs and pesantren in promoting educational orientations grounded in moderation, demonstrating the importance of embedding digital adaptation within broader institutional and curricular frameworks.

Third, digital and religious literacy should be incorporated into Islamic education as interconnected learning competencies. Learners need to understand not only how to access digital information but also how to evaluate the authority, credibility, and context of religious knowledge. This requires educational practices that encourage the verification of sources, critical examination of religious arguments, and responsible participation in online discussions. Kenedi and Hartati (2022) associate structured digital literacy initiatives in madrasahs with the strengthening of religious moderation and reduced vulnerability to extremist narratives. Similarly, Rohim et al. (2026) emphasize the importance of multidisciplinary literacy strategies for addressing misinformation and radicalism. These findings support the integration of digital literacy and religious literacy as essential components of contemporary Islamic education.

Fourth, sustainable adaptation requires institutional policies and cross-sector collaboration. Individual teacher initiatives, although valuable, are insufficient to address the structural challenges associated with digital platforms. Islamic educational institutions need policies governing content standards, digital communication, teacher training, and the responsible use of online learning resources. Collaboration among educational institutions, religious authorities, teacher development organizations, and digital literacy initiatives can help establish shared standards for credible religious communication. Iskandar and Baharuddin (2025) emphasize the importance of maintaining religious values amid rapid technological change, while Wibowo and Triadi (2025) illustrate how religious decision-making is increasingly influenced by social media dynamics. These developments reinforce the importance of proactive institutional engagement with digital environments.

Finally, digital educational initiatives require continuous monitoring and evaluation. Institutions should assess not only the number of views, audience engagement, or frequency of content distribution but also the educational outcomes and ethical quality of digital learning. Relevant indicators may include learners' understanding of religious materials, their ability to verify information, the credibility of published content, and the extent to which digital activities support the institution's educational mission. Feedback mechanisms involving teachers, learners, parents, and institutional administrators can also help identify questionable content and emerging communication risks. Integrating these procedures into existing quality assurance systems can strengthen institutional accountability and ensure that digital initiatives remain responsive to changing educational needs.

Overall, institutional adaptation should be understood as a coordinated process involving teacher development, content governance, curriculum integration, digital and religious literacy, collaborative policy development, and continuous evaluation. These elements provide the organizational conditions necessary to integrate digital

pedagogy, religious authority, and Islamic digital ethics into a coherent educational approach. Therefore, the sustainability of Islamic education in the social media era depends not merely on technological availability but also on the institutional capacity to direct technological development toward legitimate educational and moral objectives.

3.5. An Integrative Framework for Reconstructing Islamic Education in the Social Media Era

The preceding discussion demonstrates that digital transformation creates interconnected pedagogical, epistemological, and ethical challenges for Islamic education. Digital platforms expand learning opportunities and encourage participatory educational practices, but they also reshape religious authority and introduce new risks concerning information credibility and moral responsibility. These developments indicate that the transformation of Islamic education cannot be adequately addressed through isolated technological interventions or individual adaptation strategies. Instead, it requires an integrative framework that connects pedagogical innovation, the legitimacy of religious knowledge, and the ethical foundations of digital engagement.

Based on the literature synthesis, this study proposes an integrative conceptual framework for reconstructing Islamic education through three mutually reinforcing dimensions: digital pedagogy, religious authority, and Islamic digital ethics. These dimensions are not intended to function as independent components. Rather, they represent interconnected foundations that collectively guide the adaptation of Islamic educational practices to contemporary digital environments.

First, digital pedagogy constitutes the instructional dimension of educational reconstruction. This dimension emphasizes the development of learning practices that are interactive, participatory, critical, and responsive to the characteristics of digital platforms. It recognizes the potential of technology to expand access to religious knowledge, support collaborative learning, and facilitate more flexible educational experiences. Nevertheless, digital pedagogy must remain grounded in the formative objectives of Islamic education. Technological innovation should strengthen the intellectual, moral, and spiritual development of learners rather than prioritize engagement metrics or technical novelty as educational outcomes. Teachers therefore retain an essential role in guiding interpretation, contextualizing religious materials, and cultivating meaningful learning experiences.

Second, religious authority constitutes the epistemological dimension of educational reconstruction. This dimension addresses the legitimacy, credibility, and validation of Islamic knowledge within increasingly decentralized digital environments. The growing participation of independent religious content producers

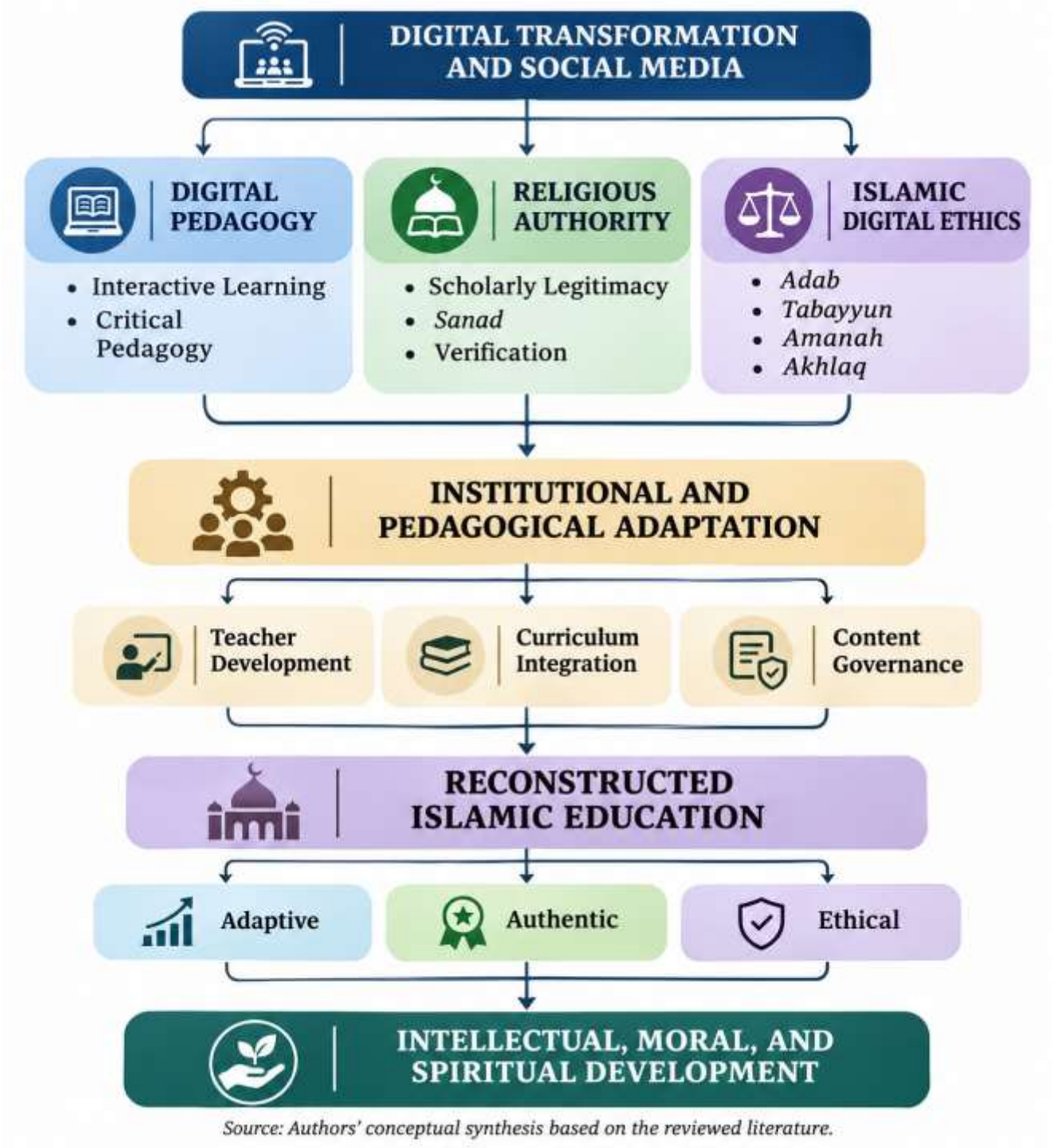
and the influence of algorithmic visibility require educational institutions to strengthen learners' understanding of scholarly qualifications, intellectual traditions, and the principles governing the transmission of religious knowledge. The concept of *sanad* remains relevant as an expression of scholarly continuity and accountability, while digital religious literacy provides learners with the capacity to evaluate the credibility and context of information encountered online. Through this dimension, Islamic education seeks to maintain the authenticity of religious knowledge without rejecting the opportunities created by digital communication.

Third, Islamic digital ethics constitutes the normative dimension of educational reconstruction. This dimension ensures that digital learning and religious communication remain guided by Islamic moral principles. The concepts of *adab*, *tabayyun*, and *amanah* provide complementary foundations for responsible digital participation. Adab emphasizes appropriate conduct in acquiring and communicating knowledge, tabayyun encourages critical verification before accepting or disseminating information, and amanah establishes responsibility for the accuracy and consequences of digital communication. Their integration helps ensure that technological participation contributes to moral development rather than merely increasing the volume and speed of information exchange.

The interaction among these three dimensions creates the foundation for institutional and pedagogical adaptation. Educational institutions must translate the conceptual principles into practical arrangements through teacher development, curriculum integration, content governance, digital literacy programs, institutional collaboration, and continuous evaluation. Such arrangements connect the philosophical and epistemological foundations of Islamic education with the practical demands of contemporary digital learning environments.

The proposed framework can be understood through the following conceptual structure:

Figure 1. An Integrative Framework for Reconstructing Islamic Education in the Social Media Era



Source: Authors' conceptual synthesis based on the reviewed literature.

three dimensions that are frequently examined separately. Previous studies have discussed the pedagogical opportunities of digital platforms, the transformation of religious authority, and the challenges of digital literacy. However, the present synthesis argues that these dimensions should be understood as mutually dependent foundations of Islamic educational transformation. Digital pedagogy without reliable religious authority may increase access while weakening the quality of religious understanding. Religious authority without effective digital pedagogy may preserve scholarly legitimacy but struggle to engage contemporary learners. Similarly, technological innovation and authoritative religious knowledge without ethical guidance may fail to cultivate responsible digital behavior. The interaction of these dimensions therefore provides a more comprehensive basis for understanding the reconstruction of Islamic education.

The framework also extends the application of digital literacy theory (Buckingham, 2007; UNESCO, 2018) by emphasizing the importance of religious and theological literacy in addition to technical and critical information competencies. In Islamic educational environments, learners need to understand not only how to access and evaluate digital information but also how to recognize the scholarly foundations and ethical implications of religious knowledge. Furthermore, the framework develops the discussion of digital religious authority (Bunt, 2018; Laugu et al., 2024) by positioning Islamic educational institutions as active agents capable of shaping digital religious environments through institutional communication, credible content production, and educational guidance. This perspective moves beyond viewing institutions merely as recipients of technological disruption and recognizes their potential role in maintaining scholarly and ethical standards within digital spaces.

From a practical perspective, the proposed framework provides several implications for Islamic educational institutions. First, teacher professional development should integrate religious knowledge, pedagogical competence, and digital literacy. Second, curriculum development should incorporate critical religious literacy and ethical digital participation as integral components of Islamic learning. Third, institutional policies should establish standards for religious content credibility, scholarly accountability, and responsible digital communication. Fourth, collaboration between educational institutions, religious authorities, and digital literacy organizations should be strengthened to support the development of trustworthy religious learning environments.

The framework also recognizes that the reconstruction of Islamic education is not exclusively an institutional responsibility. Families and wider communities play an important complementary role in shaping learners' engagement with religious information encountered through personal digital devices. Open communication about online religious content, parental guidance, and the cultivation of critical evaluation habits can reinforce educational practices developed in formal institutions. Such collaboration is particularly relevant for younger learners whose digital activities frequently extend beyond the direct supervision of teachers and educational organizations.

Ultimately, the reconstruction of Islamic education in the social media era should not be understood as abandoning traditional educational foundations in favor of technological modernization. Rather, it involves critically integrating technological possibilities with the epistemological integrity and ethical commitments of Islamic educational traditions. By connecting digital pedagogy, religious authority, and Islamic digital ethics within a coherent institutional framework, Islamic education can respond to contemporary technological developments while maintaining its fundamental orientation toward intellectual excellence, moral refinement, and spiritual formation. The proposed framework provides a conceptual foundation for this process, although its practical effectiveness requires further examination through empirical research across different Islamic educational contexts.

4. CONCLUSION

This study aimed to develop a conceptual understanding of how Islamic education can be reconstructed in response to the growing influence of digital technology and social media. The findings demonstrate that digital transformation has substantially expanded access to religious learning resources, facilitated more interactive and participatory pedagogical approaches, and created new institutional opportunities for educational outreach, religious engagement, and community participation. However, these developments have also generated significant challenges, including the fragmentation of religious authority, the increasing circulation of religious misinformation and superficial content, and persistent inequalities in digital infrastructure and educators' competencies. These challenges indicate that the opportunities and risks of digital transformation cannot be understood as separate phenomena. Rather, they represent interconnected consequences of the underlying logic of digital platforms, particularly openness, algorithmic amplification, and low barriers to content production. While these characteristics create opportunities for pedagogical innovation, they simultaneously challenge established mechanisms of religious knowledge validation and quality assurance. Accordingly, this study proposes an integrative framework for reconstructing Islamic education through three interconnected dimensions: digital

pedagogy, which promotes interactive, critical, and dialogical learning; religious authority, which emphasizes scholarly legitimacy, knowledge verification, and the continuity of authoritative religious knowledge; and Islamic digital ethics, which incorporates *adab*, *tabayyun*, *amanah*, and *akhlaq* into digital learning and communication practices.

Based on this framework, Islamic educational institutions should approach digital transformation as a strategic priority rather than an incidental technological development. Four interrelated areas require particular attention. First, institutions need to strengthen educators' competencies through continuous professional development that integrates Islamic religious knowledge, pedagogical expertise, and digital capabilities. Such development should extend beyond one-time technical training and support educators' capacity to design critical, interactive, and ethically responsible learning experiences. Second, qualified educators and institutions should actively produce credible and theologically sound religious content in formats appropriate to different digital platforms. This approach can help ensure that algorithmic visibility does not disproportionately favor sensational or inadequately substantiated religious information. Third, digital literacy should be integrated into Islamic religious instruction rather than treated merely as a separate technical skill. Learners need to develop the capacity to evaluate the scholarly credentials of information sources, assess the validity of religious claims, and practice responsible digital communication based on Islamic ethical principles. Fourth, educational institutions, religious authorities, and policymakers should collaborate to establish appropriate quality standards and mechanisms for reviewing and monitoring digital religious content. These mechanisms should promote scholarly accountability and ethical responsibility while remaining sensitive to the diversity and dynamics of digital communication. Collectively, these measures position Islamic educational institutions not merely as recipients of technological disruption but as active agents in shaping a digital learning environment that remains pedagogically effective, epistemologically credible, and ethically grounded.

As a conceptual study based on literature review, this research has several limitations. Its arguments and proposed framework are derived from the literature examined rather than original empirical data. Furthermore, although the study employs a critical and integrative synthesis, its findings remain dependent on the availability, scope, and geographical distribution of existing scholarly publications, many of which focus on the Indonesian context. The proposed framework should therefore be understood as a conceptual contribution that requires further empirical examination rather than an empirically validated model. Future research could investigate the implementation of the framework through surveys, institutional case studies, or mixed-method approaches examining how Islamic educational institutions integrate digital pedagogy, religious knowledge verification, and Islamic digital ethics

into their educational practices. Comparative studies across countries and Islamic traditions would also help determine the extent to which the framework is applicable beyond the Indonesian context. In addition, longitudinal research could examine whether the proposed strategies contribute to measurable improvements in learners' religious literacy, critical evaluation skills, ethical digital engagement, and resilience against religious misinformation. Such investigations would provide an empirical foundation for refining the proposed framework and developing a more comprehensive and evidence-based approach to reconstructing Islamic education in the era of digital technology and social media.

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