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The Role of Islamic Religious Education in Shaping Students' Religious Moderation Character in the Era of Educational Digitalization

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Abstract: This study explores the role of Islamic Religious Education (IRE) in shaping students' religious moderation in the context of educational digitalization. It aims to examine how IRE pedagogically adapts to digital learning environments in order to promote values of tolerance, balance, and inclusivity. Employing a library-based research design, data were collected from academic books, peer-reviewed journals, and scholarly reports related to Islamic education, digital pedagogy, and theories of religious moderation. The data were analyzed using qualitative content analysis to identify recurring themes, patterns, and conceptual relationships within the literature. The findings indicate that digitally mediated IRE can effectively foster religious moderation when supported by equitable access to technology, teachers' digital competencies, and coherent institutional policies. The study concludes that adaptive, value-oriented digital IRE plays a crucial role in nurturing moderate, ethical, and globally



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minded Muslim students in the digital era.

Keywords: Islamic Religious Education; Religious Moderation; Educational Digitalization; Digital Pedagogy; Values Education.

伊斯兰宗教教育在教育数字化时代塑造学生宗教温和品格中的作用

摘要：本研究探讨了在教育数字化背景下，伊斯兰宗教教育（Islamic Religious Education, IRE）在塑造学生宗教温和性方面的作用。研究旨在分析伊斯兰宗教教育如何在数字化学习环境中进行教学适应，以促进宽容、平衡与包容等价值观的培养。研究采用文献研究方法，系统梳理了与伊斯兰教育、数字教学法及宗教温和理论相关的学术著作、同行评审期刊论文和研究报告。通过定性内容分析，识别文献中的主题模式及其内在关系。研究结果表明，在技术获取公平、教师具备数字素养以及制度性政策支持条件下，基于数字平台的伊斯兰宗教教育能够有效促进宗教温和品格的形成。研究认为，具有价值导向和适应性的数字化伊斯兰宗教教育在数字时代培养温和、具有伦理意识和全球视野的穆斯林学生方面具有重要意义。

关键词：伊斯兰宗教教育；宗教温和；教育数字化；数字教学法；价值教育

1. Introduction

The rapid advancement of digital technology has brought significant transformations to the field of education, including Islamic education in Indonesia. The massive digitalization of learning has shifted the traditional face-to-face model toward a technology-based system where interactions between teachers and students are no longer limited by time and space. However, alongside these advancements, new challenges have emerged - notably, the erosion of moral values, the rise of intolerance, and the declining understanding of moderate religiosity among students. The widespread dissemination of radical ideologies through digital media and the growing tendency among some students to interpret religion in a textual and exclusive manner highlight the urgent need to strengthen Islamic Religious Education that focuses on developing students' religious moderation character (Putra et al., 2024).

Previous studies have consistently shown that Islamic Religious Education plays a pivotal role in shaping students' faith, moral conduct, and Islamic identity (Hafiz et al., 2025). Nevertheless, most of these studies tend to emphasize normative aspects and have not sufficiently examined how Islamic Religious Education can adapt to the digital era to instill the values of religious moderation. Classical learning theories such as behaviorism and cognitivism, which are often used as pedagogical frameworks, have yet to fully explain how values like tolerance, inclusivity, and wisdom can be effectively nurtured through digital

learning platforms. Moreover, the existing literature connecting Islamic Religious Education with the cultivation of religious moderation in the context of educational digitalization remains limited and primarily conceptual, indicating the need for more empirical and context-sensitive research (Syahrin & Widodo, 2025).

This study aims to analyze the role of Islamic Religious Education in shaping students' religious moderation character in the era of educational digitalization. Specifically, it seeks to identify the strategies, methods, and pedagogical approaches implemented in digital-based Islamic learning to foster the values of moderation. Additionally, the study explores how Islamic Religious Education can serve as an effective instrument in addressing ideological and social challenges that arise from digital disruption in educational settings.

Given the background above, this research is crucial because Islamic Religious Education occupies a strategic position in nurturing students who are moderate, tolerant, and open-minded toward diversity. Amid the flood of digital information often laden with ideological bias, Islamic Religious Education must transform - not merely as a medium for transmitting religious knowledge, but as a vital platform for cultivating moral and social awareness. Accordingly, the hypothesis proposed in this study is that the implementation of Islamic Religious Education that effectively adapts to digitalization significantly contributes to developing students' attitudes of religious moderation. This study is expected to provide both theoretical and practical foundations for

developing a contextual, relevant, and moderation-oriented model of Islamic Religious Education in the digital age (Nurhayati et al., 2025).

2. Methods

Object of the Research

The object of this research is the phenomenon of how Islamic Religious Education functions in shaping students' religious moderation character amid the rapid digitalization of education. This issue arises from the increasing integration of technology in the teaching and learning process, which has altered the traditional dynamics of religious education. The digital transformation has presented opportunities for broader access to Islamic knowledge while simultaneously posing risks such as the spread of radical content, misinterpretations of religious teachings, and reduced personal engagement in the learning process. Therefore, this study focuses on examining how Islamic Religious Education responds to these challenges and contributes to fostering a balanced and moderate religious character among students in the digital era (Hanif et al., 2025).

Type of Research and Data Sources

This study employs a library research design, which relies primarily on textual analysis of existing literature rather than empirical fieldwork. The primary data sources consist of scholarly books, peer-reviewed journals, and academic research that directly discuss the relationship between Islamic Religious Education, religious moderation, and educational digitalization. Meanwhile, secondary data include additional references that provide supporting perspectives on key concepts such as digital pedagogy, character education, and Islamic values in modern education systems. The combination of these sources allows the researcher to build a comprehensive understanding of the theoretical and practical dynamics underlying the issue under investigation (Masturin, 2022).

Theoretical Framework

This study is grounded in several foundational theories that guide its analysis and interpretation. The first is Albert Bandura's Social Learning Theory, which emphasizes that individuals learn behaviors, values, and attitudes through observation and interaction within their environment - a concept highly relevant to the digital learning context. The second theoretical foundation is Moderation Theory in Islamic Education as proposed (Aziz, 2025), which posits that Islamic education should cultivate *wasathiyyah* (moderation) through a balanced understanding of religion, tolerance, and respect for diversity. These theoretical frameworks collectively form the epistemological basis of this study, offering a conceptual lens to examine how Islamic Religious Education can adapt to digital learning while

preserving its role in nurturing moderate religious values.

Research Process and Data Collection Techniques

The process of this library research involves systematic data collection through extensive reading and examination of relevant written sources. The researcher conducted a comprehensive review of books, journal articles, research reports, conference papers, and online academic publications that discuss Islamic Religious Education, digital pedagogy, and religious moderation. Each source was critically evaluated for its relevance, credibility, and contribution to the research focus. The data collection process also involved note-taking, content categorization, and the synthesis of theoretical and empirical findings from the literature to ensure a holistic understanding of the phenomenon being studied (Munawarsyah, 2023).

Data Analysis Technique

The data analysis in this study employs content analysis, a qualitative technique used to systematically interpret textual materials by identifying patterns, themes, and relationships among key concepts. This method enables the researcher to organize and synthesize large volumes of textual data to draw meaningful conclusions about the role of Islamic Religious Education in promoting religious moderation within digital learning environments. The analysis process includes reading, coding, categorizing, and interpreting information derived from the literature to reveal theoretical insights and practical implications. Through this approach, the study aims to produce a comprehensive and integrative understanding of how Islamic Religious Education contributes to building a culture of moderation in the context of educational digitalization (Demina et al., 2025).

3. Result and Discussion

The findings of this library research reveal that Islamic Religious Education (IRE) plays a pivotal role in cultivating students' religious moderation, particularly in the era of educational digitalization. The digital transformation of education has provided both opportunities and challenges in the process of shaping students' character (Nurhasanah, 2024). On one hand, digital technology facilitates easier access to Islamic learning resources, promotes interactive and innovative pedagogy, and broadens students' exposure to global religious discourses. On the other hand, it also opens pathways for exposure to radical ideologies, misinformation, and fragmented interpretations of Islam that may hinder the development of a balanced and tolerant worldview. Within this duality, IRE is required to function not only as a source of religious knowledge but also as a moral compass guiding students to navigate digital spaces responsibly and reflectively (Elfariyah et al., 2024).

The study found that digital-based Islamic Religious Education has begun to adopt various innovative learning strategies. Teachers increasingly utilize e-learning platforms, digital Qur'an applications, and virtual discussion forums to engage students in reflective religious learning. These platforms enable students to participate in collaborative activities that encourage dialogue, tolerance, and mutual respect - essential components of religious moderation. However, the success of these initiatives largely depends on the pedagogical competence of teachers and their ability to contextualize Islamic values within a digital framework. Without appropriate guidance, digital tools risk becoming mere instruments of information transfer rather than transformative media for character formation (Raditya, 2025).

The findings also demonstrate that students' understanding of religious moderation improves when digital learning materials are integrated with real-life ethical issues and social diversity. The incorporation of multimedia resources such as documentaries, case studies, and interactive modules helps learners connect Islamic teachings with contemporary social realities. This pedagogical approach aligns with Bandura's Social Learning Theory, which emphasizes that individuals learn not only from direct instruction but also through observing models and experiences in their environment. In digital contexts, these "models" can take the form of online educators, digital mentors, or curated media content that embodies the values of *wasathiyah* (moderation) (Zahrah et al., 2024).

Furthermore, the analysis indicates that IRE has a strategic role in counteracting the spread of religious extremism and intolerance within digital ecosystems. By promoting critical thinking and digital literacy, Islamic educators can empower students to discern credible sources, evaluate religious content objectively, and resist manipulative narratives that exploit religious sentiment. This process supports Azyumardi Azra's notion of moderate Islamic education, which underscores the balance between *iman* (faith), *'ilm* (knowledge), and *'amal* (practice). Digital learning environments thus become an arena for nurturing an inclusive and adaptive Islamic identity - one that harmonizes religious commitment with social harmony and technological progress.

Another finding highlights that the success of digital Islamic Religious Education is influenced by institutional policies and the integration of moderation values into curricula. Schools that explicitly include moderation-based competencies - such as tolerance, respect for diversity, and social empathy - within their digital lesson plans tend to produce students with stronger attitudes of religious moderation. This institutional commitment ensures that moderation is not treated as a supplementary value but as an essential outcome of religious education. The collaboration between teachers, curriculum developers, and

policymakers is therefore crucial to maintaining coherence between educational objectives and digital pedagogical practices.

The data analysis also identifies a gap between the technological infrastructure available in different educational institutions. Urban schools with adequate access to digital tools tend to show more progressive implementation of digital Islamic Religious Education than rural schools, which often face limitations in connectivity and resources. This disparity affects the uniformity of religious moderation education outcomes across regions. Addressing this inequality requires systematic support from both government and private sectors to ensure equitable access to digital learning facilities, teacher training, and resource development in Islamic education.

In terms of learning outcomes, the study observes that digital learning platforms can effectively enhance cognitive and affective aspects of religious moderation when they are designed interactively and reflectively. Students who engage in virtual discussions, online reflection journals, and project-based religious learning activities demonstrate higher levels of empathy, tolerance, and critical awareness. The success of these outcomes, however, hinges on the teacher's ability to integrate technology with moral pedagogy - transforming abstract digital interactions into meaningful ethical reflections. This reinforces the notion that digitalization should be viewed not merely as a technological shift but as an educational transformation that redefines how Islamic values are internalized.

Finally, the overall results of this study affirm that Islamic Religious Education, when effectively adapted to digital environments, contributes significantly to the cultivation of students' religious moderation (Saparudin et al., 2025). Through innovative pedagogy, content contextualization, and a strong theoretical foundation, IRE can serve as a bridge between tradition and modernity - preserving Islamic values while fostering openness, critical thinking, and compassion. The success of this transformation depends on the synergy among educators, institutions, policymakers, and digital platforms to sustain a learning ecosystem that upholds both spiritual integrity and intellectual inclusivity in the digital era.

Discussion

1. The Transformation of Islamic Religious Education in the Digital Era

The digitalization of education has fundamentally redefined how Islamic Religious Education (IRE) is delivered, accessed, and internalized. Traditional face-to-face instruction, once characterized by direct moral guidance and spiritual mentoring, has transitioned into hybrid or fully online learning systems. This transformation introduces flexibility and accessibility

but simultaneously reduces personal spiritual interaction between educators and students. Despite this limitation, digitalization offers a vast opportunity for IRE to broaden its influence and make religious knowledge more engaging through interactive platforms, multimedia content, and collaborative online forums.

In this context, IRE must adapt pedagogically by embracing technology as a *means* of value transmission rather than a *barrier* to spirituality. The use of virtual classrooms, e-learning modules, and religious apps allows for personalized learning experiences that cater to students' diverse needs and learning styles. When designed thoughtfully, digital religious education can encourage active reflection and moral reasoning rather than rote memorization of doctrines. The adaptability of IRE to this technological shift will determine its effectiveness in nurturing moderation, tolerance, and inclusivity among students.

Nevertheless, the transformation also requires educators to develop new competencies - not only in using technology but also in maintaining the integrity of Islamic teachings in digital settings. Teachers play a dual role as both *digital facilitators* and *spiritual mentors*. Their task is not only to convey knowledge

but also to ensure that students interpret Islamic values contextually and critically. Hence, teacher training and professional development become central to ensuring that digital Islamic education continues to promote moral authenticity and humanistic values within a rapidly evolving digital landscape (Ramadhan et al., 2023).

2. The Role of Religious Moderation as a Core Value

Religious moderation (*wasathiyyah*) serves as the central pillar of Islamic Religious Education in the digital age. It represents the essence of Islam as a religion of balance, justice, and compassion. In educational contexts, moderation encourages students to understand religion not as a rigid or exclusive system but as a source of harmony and coexistence. Through digital platforms, IRE can introduce moderation as a dynamic framework for engaging with global diversity and social pluralism. Interactive discussions, digital storytelling, and online interfaith exchanges can cultivate empathy and cross-cultural understanding - key competencies for peaceful coexistence.

Table 2. Religious Moderation (Wasathiyyah) as the Central Pillar of Islamic Religious Education in the Digital Era

Aspect of Religious Moderation (Wasathiyyah)	Educational Application in Digital IRE	Digital Strategy/Tool Used	Expected Learning Outcome	Core Value Promoted
Balance (Tawazun)	Encouraging students to maintain harmony between faith and rationality through reflective digital learning activities	Use of blended learning models combining Qur'anic interpretation videos and online discussion forums	Students develop balanced perspectives integrating religious understanding with scientific reasoning	Intellectual and spiritual balance
Justice ('Adalah)	Teaching fairness and objectivity in evaluating online religious content and social media narratives	Digital literacy modules focused on evaluating sources, identifying bias, and ethical online behavior	Students become critical digital citizens who promote justice and equity in digital interactions	Objectivity and fairness
Compassion (Rahmah)	Promoting empathy and care for others through community-based digital projects	Virtual interfaith dialogue, digital storytelling on humanitarian values, and online charity campaigns	Students internalize compassion and cooperation, fostering inclusive religious attitudes	Empathy and social responsibility
Inclusivity (Tasamuh)	Encouraging openness toward diversity through collaborative	Cross-cultural webinars, online group tasks with diverse	Students develop tolerance, respect for difference, and	Tolerance and coexistence

Aspect of Religious Moderation (Wasathiyyah)	Educational Application in Digital IRE	Digital Strategy/Tool Used	Expected Learning Outcome	Core Value Promoted
	digital learning	participants, and moderated social media interactions	intercultural communication skills	
Harmony (Silmi)	Integrating moderation as a central theme in digital curriculum and multimedia content	Interactive e-learning modules focusing on peace education and moral reasoning	Students appreciate Islam as a religion of peace and coexistence in plural societies	Peacefulness and unity

However, the digital environment is also a double-edged sword. While it enables the dissemination of inclusive Islamic perspectives, it equally provides space for extremist ideologies to proliferate. Students frequently encounter fragmented or distorted religious content through social media and online forums. Here, the role of IRE becomes preventive and corrective - equipping students with digital literacy, critical thinking, and theological discernment to distinguish authentic Islamic teachings from manipulative rhetoric. This capacity to filter information critically is an essential expression of moderation in the digital realm.

Embedding moderation values into digital Islamic education requires a holistic and consistent approach. It must go beyond moral exhortation to become part of the cognitive and affective learning process. Lesson plans, assessment systems, and learning activities should all reflect moderation-oriented objectives, such as tolerance, dialogue, empathy, and rational understanding. By

integrating moderation into every pedagogical layer, Islamic education becomes not only a moral guide but also a transformative medium for building civic responsibility and digital ethics among youth.

3. Challenges and Strategic Solutions in Implementing Digital-Based IRE

One of the most pressing challenges in implementing digital-based IRE lies in the disparity of technological infrastructure and teacher readiness. Schools in urban areas often have access to stable internet connections, interactive learning tools, and digital literacy programs, while rural institutions continue to struggle with limited resources. This digital divide affects not only the quality of instruction but also the consistency of religious moderation education nationwide. To address this, national education stakeholders must ensure equitable resource distribution and capacity-building initiatives to empower educators in both urban and rural settings.

Table 1. The Digital Divide in Implementing Islamic Religious Education (IRE) Between Urban and Rural Schools

Aspect	Urban Schools	Rural Schools	Impact on Religious Moderation Education	Recommended Strategies
Technological Infrastructure	Stable internet access, availability of computers, and digital learning management systems (LMS)	Limited or unstable internet connection, minimal digital devices, lack of LMS	Unequal access to digital religious learning resources; restricted participation in online religious activities	Government and private sector collaboration to improve ICT infrastructure and provide subsidies for digital equipment

Aspect	Urban Schools	Rural Schools	Impact on Religious Moderation Education	Recommended Strategies
Teacher Digital Readiness	High level of digital literacy; trained in using e-learning tools and multimedia platforms	Low digital competence; minimal exposure to online teaching methods	Ineffective digital content delivery; reliance on traditional teaching methods	Continuous professional development programs focusing on digital pedagogy and religious moderation integration
Learning Resources	Access to diverse online materials, e-books, and interactive modules	Dependence on printed materials; limited access to up-to-date digital Islamic content	Inconsistent learning quality; limited innovation in teaching religious moderation	Development of centralized open-access digital repositories for Islamic education materials
Student Engagement	High participation in online discussions and digital religious projects	Low participation due to limited access and motivation	Gaps in understanding and practicing moderation values	Implementation of hybrid learning models combining online and offline activities
Institutional Support	Supported by school policies promoting ICT-based religious learning	Weak institutional frameworks; lack of technical and administrative support	Fragmented policy implementation across regions	National standardization of digital IRE policy and integration into education reform plans

Another major challenge is ensuring that the use of digital tools aligns with Islamic pedagogical ethics. In some cases, digital learning tends to prioritize efficiency and entertainment over reflection and sincerity (*ikhlas*). The abundance of online content may lead students to treat religion as consumable information rather than a lived moral experience. Therefore, IRE educators must carefully curate learning materials, selecting sources that uphold scholarly credibility and align with the spirit of moderation. Digital learning design should encourage contemplation, self-assessment, and dialogue rather than passive consumption (Zahrah et al., 2024).

To overcome these challenges, strategic collaboration between educational institutions, government agencies, and technology developers is essential. Institutions should integrate moderation education into digital curricula, promote teacher training on digital pedagogy, and establish content moderation systems to prevent the spread of intolerant materials. Furthermore, partnerships with digital media organizations can

help create platforms that emphasize authentic Islamic knowledge and interreligious dialogue.

These efforts collectively ensure that digital Islamic Religious Education becomes a catalyst for both intellectual enlightenment and moral resilience.

4. Integrating Theory and Practice in Digital Islamic Education

The theoretical underpinnings of this research - particularly Bandura's Social Learning Theory and Azra's Moderation Theory - provide a strong conceptual basis for bridging theory and practice. Bandura's theory suggests that students learn values not merely through direct instruction but by observing and imitating models in their environment. In digital contexts, this implies that educators and digital role models must exemplify moderation through their communication, interaction, and content creation. Positive digital role modeling reinforces the internalization of balanced religious perspectives among learners.

Azra's Moderation Theory further emphasizes the pedagogical role of Islamic

education in cultivating *wasathiyyah* through intellectual, social, and emotional balance. When applied to digital pedagogy, this theory encourages the creation of learning experiences that combine rational inquiry with spiritual depth. For instance, online discussions about contemporary ethical dilemmas - such as technology use, tolerance, and social justice - can help students connect Islamic principles with modern challenges. This integration ensures that moderation is not only understood cognitively but also practiced behaviorally.

In practical terms, integrating theory and digital learning requires continuous reflection and innovation from educators. It demands the use of pedagogical models that are flexible, contextual, and learner-centered. Teachers must design digital activities that encourage students to explore, analyze, and apply Islamic teachings to real-world contexts. Such approaches enable the fusion of intellectual exploration and spiritual awareness, ensuring that IRE remains both relevant and transformative in shaping moderate, critical, and ethically grounded digital citizens.

5. Implications and Future Directions

The findings of this study carry significant implications for the future of Islamic education in Indonesia and beyond. As digitalization becomes inevitable, Islamic Religious Education must evolve into an adaptive and proactive system that harmonizes faith with technology. This evolution calls for a paradigm shift - from viewing digital media as a threat to religious authenticity toward recognizing it as a strategic tool for moral development. By embracing technology with ethical awareness, IRE can play a leading role in fostering an inclusive and tolerant society grounded in Islamic values (Sitti & Rosyalita, 2025).

Furthermore, the success of digital Islamic education requires continuous evaluation and research. Scholars and practitioners must collaboratively explore new pedagogical models, assess learning outcomes, and refine digital moderation frameworks to ensure sustainability. Future research could focus on developing specific indicators for measuring digital religious moderation or designing AI-based platforms that support ethical Islamic learning. Such advancements would not only strengthen IRE's

relevance but also contribute to global conversations on moral education in the digital era.

The discussion affirms that the integration of Islamic Religious Education and digital technology presents both challenges and transformative opportunities. When guided by strong theoretical foundations, ethical principles, and pedagogical innovation, IRE can effectively nurture students' religious moderation. It can empower them to navigate digital spaces with critical intelligence, compassion, and balance - embodying the essence of *wasathiyyah* that harmonizes faith, knowledge, and humanity in the 21st-century educational landscape.

5. Conclusion

The findings of this study confirm that Islamic Religious Education (IRE) holds a crucial role in fostering religious moderation (*wasathiyyah*) among students in the digital era. Digital transformation has provided both opportunities and challenges for IRE, requiring it to adapt pedagogically without compromising the authenticity of Islamic values. When effectively integrated with technology, IRE can move beyond conventional didactic instruction to become an interactive, reflective, and character-building process. Through digital media such as online discussions, storytelling, and interfaith collaborations, Islamic Religious Education can strengthen students' capacity for empathy, critical reasoning, and tolerance - key components of a moderate and inclusive religious identity.

Furthermore, the study underscores that the success of digital-based IRE in promoting moderation depends on three interrelated dimensions: equitable technological infrastructure, teacher digital competence, and institutional policy support. Addressing disparities between urban and rural schools, enhancing digital literacy among educators, and embedding moderation values within national curricula are essential steps toward sustainable implementation. By aligning Islamic pedagogy with digital innovation, IRE can serve as a transformative force that bridges faith and technology, ensuring that religious education remains relevant, inclusive, and ethically grounded in shaping a balanced Muslim generation for the 21st century.

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