



Digital literacy and gender in Islamic religious education: Challenges and opportunities in the Indonesian context

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ARTICLE INFO	ABSTRACT
<i>Keywords:</i> digital literacy gender Islamic religious education women digital space Indonesia	The advancement of digital technology has transformed how Islamic knowledge is accessed, studied, and disseminated within Islamic Religious Education (PAI) in Indonesia. While these developments create new pedagogical opportunities, they also raise gender-related issues concerning access, participation, moral control, and women's authority in digital spaces. This study examines the relationship between digital literacy, gender, and Islamic Religious Education (PAI), positioning women as both learners and educators. Using a library research approach, it reviews scholarly literature on digital literacy, Islamic education, gender, and digital learning, focusing primarily on Indonesia while drawing on selected global scholarship for conceptual support. A critical gender-sensitive perspective is employed to analyze digital literacy not merely as a technical skill but as a form of critical religious competence. The findings indicate that digital literacy in PAI encompasses the ability to evaluate Islamic information, identify authoritative sources, practice digital ethics, and interpret religion contextually. Although digital spaces can expand women's access, participation, and authority, they also reproduce social surveillance and gender-based restrictions. Therefore, PAI should foster digital literacy that is critical, ethical, inclusive, and gender-sensitive, particularly in formal educational settings such as schools and madrasahs.

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Introduction

The advancement of digital technology has fundamentally transformed the production, dissemination, and acquisition of religious knowledge, including within Islamic Religious Education (PAI) in Indonesia. These changes extend beyond the adoption of modern learning media to encompass core issues such as the transformation of religious authority, access to learning, student participation, and teaching practices in digital environments (Ghufron et al., 2023). Islamic Religious Education now occurs not only in classrooms, textbooks, religious gatherings, or formal institutions, but also through digital platforms, social media, online classes, virtual lectures, and internet-based learning communities (Laily et al., 2022). This development suggests that digitalization should be understood not only as a technical tool but as a new social arena that shapes how Muslims comprehend, teach, and negotiate religious knowledge.

Within this context, digital literacy has emerged as an essential competency in Islamic Religious Education. Digital literacy encompasses not only the ability to use technology, but also the skills required to evaluate religious information, assess the credibility of sources, understand the ethics

of digital communication, and prevent the dissemination of misguided, extreme, or decontextualized interpretations of religion (Putra & Ayyaisy, 2025). Students and educators in Islamic Religious Education are exposed to a continuous flow of often unverified religious information. Consequently, critical thinking skills are indispensable for religious practice in the digital era. Digital literacy in this context includes pedagogical, ethical, and theological dimensions, as it pertains to learning processes, moral responsibility, and the interpretation of Islamic teachings in digital spaces (Chukwuji & Echedom, 2025; Sampurna et al., 2025).

The complexity of digital literacy in Islamic Religious Education (PAI) increases when examined through a gender perspective. Access to technology and digital spaces is not always equitable for men and women (Klinger & Svensson, 2021). In socio-religious contexts, women often face stricter limitations than men (Erwani & Siregar, 2024), justified by considerations of morality, security, propriety, or prevailing religious and cultural norms. Such restrictions may involve increased supervision of internet use, limited participation in digital public spaces, or the belief that women should not express their religious views openly.

Therefore, the challenge of digital literacy in Islamic Religious Education extends beyond device or internet access. It is also deeply intertwined with power relations, social norms, and gender constructs that influence who is permitted to learn, speak, and serve as sources of religious reference in digital spaces (Hefner, 2022; Uyuni et al., 2023).

Women in Islamic Religious Education should be examined from two interrelated perspectives. First, as students, women require equal access to digital learning resources, including diverse materials, videos, online learning applications, high-quality Islamic educational content, and safe, supportive learning environments. Disparities in digital access, whether in technological skills or opportunities to use devices and the internet, can impede the expansion of religious understanding, comparison of perspectives, and development of critical thinking regarding widely circulated Islamic information (Hefner, 2022). Second, as educators, women need digital literacy to effectively use information technology and the internet for developing teaching methods, establishing academic and religious authority, and actively contributing to the production of Islamic knowledge in digital spaces. Without sufficient digital literacy, female educators risk remaining passive consumers of technology rather than becoming active contributors who shape Islamic education in the digital era, including the renewal of methods, curricula, and inclusive discourse (Reksiana et al., 2024).

Conversely, digital spaces offer significant opportunities for women in Islamic Religious Education. Digitalization allows women to access Islamic studies, participate in religious classes (Lyngsøe, 2022), establish intellectual networks (Syamsiah & Aisyah, 2025), and create

innovative educational media (Ismah et al., 2026). For female educators, digital platforms provide effective channels to communicate religious ideas (Nasri & Rahmatullah, 2025; Uyuni et al., 2023), enhance pedagogical roles, and build academic authority beyond the hierarchical boundaries of traditional institutions. Therefore, digital literacy can serve as a tool for empowerment, provided that digital spaces are managed ethically, critically, and with attention to gender disparities (Rustandi & Kusnawan, 2023).

A significant gap in the literature is the tendency to address digital literacy, gender, and Islamic Religious Education as distinct topics. Studies on digital literacy primarily focus on technical competencies, such as operating digital devices, applications, and software, utilizing educational media, and evaluating the credibility and validity of online information (Hariyadi et al., 2023; Indah, 2025; Lisyawati et al., 2023; Setyowati et al., 2025; Slamet et al., 2023; Sulistyo & Smarti, 2022; Wiyono, 2025). Research on Islamic Religious Education often examines the transformation of teaching methods, technology adoption, and the adaptation of Islamic educational institutions to digital developments (Ghufron et al., 2023; Hamilaturroyya & Hadi, 2025; Mahmuda et al., 2025; Mufti et al., 2024; Widodo & Hadi, 2026). In contrast, gender studies in Islamic education address issues of access, the construction of gender roles, and the representation of women in educational contexts (Rais et al., 2025; Ilyas & Sukari, 2024).

These observations underscore the need for research that integrates digital literacy, gender, and Islamic Religious Education within a unified analytical framework, particularly to explore how gender constructs influence digital literacy experiences and how digital learning environments serve

as arenas for negotiating women's roles as both students and educators. Although the discussion draws on selected international literature, this article primarily positions the issue within the Indonesian context because many of the reviewed studies address Islamic education, digital literacy, gender relations, and women's religious participation in Indonesia. This positioning is important because the Indonesian context provides a distinctive socio-religious setting in which digital learning, Islamic authority, and gender norms intersect within formal and informal educational spaces.

In response to this gap, the present article contends that digital literacy in Islamic Religious Education should not be viewed as a neutral competency applicable to all groups. Instead, digital literacy constitutes a domain that reveals and negotiates gender relations, access to knowledge, moral control, and religious authority. Focusing primarily on the Indonesian context, this article examines how women, as both students and educators, address challenges and leverage opportunities in digital spaces within Islamic Religious Education. This perspective contributes conceptually by framing digital literacy not solely as a technological skill but as a central arena for advancing Islamic Religious Education that is more critical, inclusive, and gender-equitable.

Method

This article is a conceptual study based on library research. It examines the relationship between digital literacy, gender, and Islamic Religious Education, with particular attention to the Indonesian context. Library research was used because this study aims to develop a conceptual argument through the examination, interpretation, and synthesis of relevant academic literature rather than

to collect field data through interviews, observations, surveys, or experiments. In this sense, library research enables researchers to examine concepts, theories, and previous findings as the main basis for constructing academic arguments (Zed, 2014).

The sources used in this article were obtained through searches in Google Scholar, Scopus, and manual searches of relevant academic articles, books, and scholarly documents available online. The sources were chosen based on their relevance to the main themes of the article, namely digital literacy, Islamic Religious Education, gender, women's participation in Islamic education, digital learning, religious authority, and digital ethics. Recent publications were prioritized to maintain the relevance of the discussion, while older works were used when they provided important methodological or conceptual foundations.

This study does not adopt a systematic literature review, scoping review, or meta-analysis design. Therefore, the reviewed literature was not treated as a fixed corpus of articles selected through a strict database protocol. Instead, the sources were used as conceptual references to support, compare, and develop the article's main arguments. The reading process focused on identifying key concepts, theoretical insights, and relevant findings that explain how digital literacy intersects with gender relations in Islamic Religious Education.

The literature was analyzed using qualitative content analysis. The analysis followed three interconnected stages, namely data condensation, data display, and conclusion drawing (Miles et al., 2014). Data condensation was carried out by selecting and focusing relevant ideas from the literature. Data display was conducted by organizing the literature into thematic discussions. Conclusion drawing was

performed by synthesizing the arguments to formulate conceptual insights on the relationship between digital literacy, gender, and Islamic Religious Education. The themes developed in this article include digital literacy as a critical religious competence, gender disparities in digital access and participation, women's roles as learners and educators, digital space as an ambivalent arena, and the implications of gender-sensitive digital literacy for Islamic Religious Education.

Results and Discussion

The discussion in this article primarily focuses on Islamic Religious Education within the Indonesian educational context, while selected international literature is used as conceptual support. Islamic Religious Education refers to religious learning in formal educational settings, including general schools and madrasah, as well as digital learning spaces connected to these institutions. Since this article is a conceptual study based on library research, it does not limit the analysis to one specific school, madrasah, or educational level. The reviewed literature covers different educational contexts, including elementary, junior secondary, senior secondary, and higher education. Therefore, the discussion emphasizes conceptual and thematic patterns rather than the empirical characteristics of a single institution or grade level.

Digital literacy as a critical religious competence in Islamic Religious Education (PAI)

Digital literacy in Islamic Religious Education extends beyond the basic ability to operate technological devices, access the internet, or use online learning platforms. In the context of PAI, digital

literacy encompasses the capacity of both students and educators to access, evaluate, comprehend, and disseminate Islamic knowledge in a critical and responsible manner (Rizkiyah et al., 2025; Sulistyo & Ismarti, 2022). This competence involves the ability to locate and assess religious information within digital environments. The digital environment, defined as an interactive internet-based setting that includes social media, video lectures, online classes, Islamic articles, discussion forums, and popular da'wah content, has emerged as a primary source of religious learning (Romadlany & Effendi, 2025). This shift demonstrates that religious education now takes place not only in classrooms or formal institutions but also within an open and diverse digital ecosystem.

The openness of digital spaces introduces both opportunities and challenges for Islamic Religious Education. Students benefit from expanded access to materials such as tafsir, hadith, fiqh, aqidah, ethics, Islamic history, and contemporary religious issues (Farahdiba, 2024; Wahid, 2024). However, not all religious information available online meets standards of scholarly authority, methodological rigor, or social sensitivity. Some religious content may be presented in a partial, emotional, provocative, or ideologically biased manner (Abdilah, 2025). Consequently, digital literacy in PAI should be regarded as a critical religious competence, encompassing the ability to use technology while also evaluating the validity, authority, ethics, and relevance of religious messages. Digital literacy, therefore, includes not only technical proficiency but also critical reasoning concerning religious content.

This competence is essential because students encounter challenges that are both technical and epistemological. Beyond searching for religious information through

search engines or social media, students must understand the origins of information, assess the credibility of sources (Usman et al., 2023), evaluate the basis of arguments, and ensure alignment with the values of Islam as *rahmatan lil 'alamin*. Accordingly, research underscores the significance of digital religious literacy, critical thinking (Maisyanah et al., 2024), and a PAI curriculum rooted in the *rahmatan lil 'alamin* paradigm to equip students to critically assess sources, arguments, and values in religious information.

For PAI educators, digital literacy represents both a pedagogical and ethical responsibility. Educators are required not only to be proficient in digital learning media but also to act as curators of Islamic knowledge (Setyowati et al., 2025). This responsibility involves selecting credible sources, adapting materials to students' developmental stages, avoiding biased content, and ensuring that technology use supports the objectives of Islamic education, which include strengthening understanding and character rather than supplanting the values and exemplary conduct of teachers (Pramatya et al., 2025; Wiyono, 2025). Thus, PAI educators serve not only as technology users but also as guardians of the quality of religious knowledge in digital spaces.

Digital literacy in PAI can offer more interactive and collaborative learning environments, supporting a transition from one-way transmission models to dialogic and reflective approaches (Muharrani et al., 2025). By utilizing technology, online discussions, reflective forums, digital projects, content creation, and student collaboration, these digital spaces become platforms for constructing understanding, presenting arguments, and connecting Islamic values with social experiences (Lisyawati et al., 2023). However, effective integration of technology necessitates a

paradigm shift among educators; technology use alone does not guarantee critical learning, as digitalization may merely transfer conventional material to digital media without pedagogical innovations (Azhar et al., 2024). Therefore, adopting a critical pedagogy approach is essential to move from indoctrinative-conventional models toward a digital ecosystem that is both emancipatory and critical (Abdullah et al., 2026)

The ethical dimension is a crucial element of digital literacy in PAI. Students must recognize that digital activities are also part of moral conduct. Values such as *tabayyun*, trustworthiness, respectful communication, appreciation of diversity, and the prohibition of spreading harm can serve as foundations for developing digital ethics (Safruddin et al., 2025). Thus, digital literacy in PAI is not solely cognitive; it also encompasses affective and moral aspects, shaping how students learn, interact, and practice their faith in digital spaces. Regarding gender issues, this competence is fundamental for understanding that access to digital Islamic knowledge is not neutral but is influenced by social structures, including gender constructs (Syamsiah & Aisyah, 2025). Patriarchal norms, institutional control, and geographic barriers can create digital access gaps for women in Islamic education (Hefner, 2022). Therefore, women require digital literacy to access knowledge sources, build intellectual courage, and participate in the production of Islamic knowledge (Norlaila et al., 2025). Mastery of this competence provides opportunities for women to establish new religious authority and voice egalitarian arguments through digital media (Rustandi & Kusnawan, 2023). Digital literacy thus serves as a critical foundation for developing PAI that is critical, ethical, and gender-just (Hidayatulloh & Afiah, 2025), as well as for integrating values of justice and humanity

into curricula and learning practices (Masitoh et al., 2025).

Gender disparities in access and participation in digital Islamic Religious Education (PAI)

Gender disparities in digital literacy within Islamic Religious Education extend beyond device availability, internet access, and technical skills. These disparities are shaped by intersecting social norms, religious culture, and power relations that influence women's mobility and agency in accessing and utilizing digital technologies (Syamsiah & Aisyah, 2025). In Islamic educational contexts, such inequalities are evident in the ways women are present and monitored in cyberspace, governed by patriarchal structures that regulate their bodies and voices (Zuhri et al., 2025). Consequently, in certain settings, women's access to digital spaces is subject to stricter boundaries, heightened surveillance, and more rigorous moral scrutiny compared to men, based on perceptions of increased vulnerability to moral risks online. Although these restrictions and expectations of digital propriety may suppress women's academic participation, some women have developed distinct digital competencies that enable them to negotiate new forms of religious authority and advance more egalitarian interpretations through social media.

Restrictions on digital access are frequently justified by appeals to moral protection, the safeguarding of decorum, or concerns regarding content considered inconsistent with religious values (Astuti & Attaymini, 2026). While these considerations are significant within Islamic Religious Education, they become problematic when applied disproportionately, resulting in greater limitations on women and failing to enhance their critical capacities. Excessive

restrictions on women's access to digital spaces limit opportunities to expand Islamic knowledge, compare diverse perspectives, and develop critical reasoning skills. These disparities manifest in both material and symbolic forms. Materially, women may encounter limited access to devices, unstable internet connections, high costs, or unequal distribution of digital learning facilities (van Deursen & van Dijk, 2019). Symbolically, women may face social attitudes that treat their digital activities as suspect, subject to surveillance, or in need of restriction (Shishkina & Issaev, 2018). As a result, women encounter not only technological barriers but also social obstacles that shape their perceived legitimacy in digital spaces (Mariscal et al., 2019).

Within Islamic Religious Education, these barriers directly affect women's access to Islamic knowledge. Digital platforms function as both learning environments and arenas for constructing knowledge authority (Nasri & Rahmatullah, 2025). Women with restricted access risk relying on limited learning sources and have fewer opportunities to inquire, evaluate, and independently construct their religious understanding (Putri & Poerwandari, 2024). Consequently, digital inequality may develop into epistemic inequality, resulting in disparities in acquiring, comprehending, and processing knowledge.

Women serving as Islamic Religious Education instructors also experience gender disparities. Female educators require digital literacy not only to operate instructional media but also to establish pedagogical and scholarly authority in digital spaces (Akbar & Saidah, 2025). However, their authority is not always recognized equally. Female instructors frequently face additional scrutiny regarding their competencies, appearance, communication style, or

expressiveness (Syamsiah & Aisyah, 2025). This situation demonstrates that women's digital participation is influenced not only by technical competence but also by prevailing social constructs concerning legitimate religious authority.

The central issue in digital gender inequality is not solely whether women have access to technology, but whether they possess equal opportunities to use it meaningfully. Meaningful access enables women to learn, engage in discussion, ask questions, teach, create content, build networks, and express religious perspectives without undue social pressure (Bahagijo et al., 2022). Accordingly, digital literacy in Islamic Religious Education should be conceptualized as an integral component of educational justice, rather than merely an individual skill.

In summary, gender inequality in digital literacy within Islamic Religious Education comprises three primary layers. The first is the layer of access, which refers to women's limitations in obtaining devices, internet connectivity, and digital learning resources. The second is the layer of participation, characterized by restricted opportunities for women to engage actively, participate in discussions, teach, and produce Islamic knowledge. The third is the layer of authority, which highlights the persistent lack of equal recognition for women as knowledgeable subjects and legitimate pedagogical actors in digital Islamic education. Collectively, these three layers indicate that digital literacy in this context is simultaneously an educational, social, and gender issue.

Women's roles as learners and educators in the digital Islamic education ecosystem

The discourse on digital literacy and gender within Islamic Religious Education

should position women not only as a group encountering barriers to access, but also as active agents in both learning and producing Islamic knowledge. Within the digital ecosystem of Islamic Religious Education, women serve in two primary capacities: as learners and as educators (Fitriyah & Muhid, 2025). These dual roles indicate that gender issues extend beyond technological access to encompass women's capacities for learning, critical thinking, teaching, establishing authority, and participating in digital religious spaces.

As learners, women require digital literacy to expand their access to a diverse array of Islamic learning resources, including exegesis, hadith, jurisprudence, ethics, Islamic history, and contemporary religious discussions (Hasanah & Sukri, 2023). This access enhances learning experiences, particularly when formal education does not fully address the religious issues encountered in daily life. Women's roles as learners should be recognized as active, involving the ability to question, evaluate, compare sources, and construct religious understanding critically (Maulidah et al., 2025). This recognition is essential because religious information in digital spaces often emerges rapidly, gains popularity quickly, is presented concisely, and may lack adequate methodological grounding. Consequently, digital literacy in Islamic Religious Education (PAI) should foster reflective, contextual, and responsible religious reasoning.

Digital spaces can offer a more flexible environment for female learners to ask questions, write reflections, participate in online discussions, and express religious concerns. However, such safe spaces require intentional design, ethical moderation, and protection from verbal abuse, digital harassment, and social stigma (Nyanasuryanadi et al., 2023). Concurrently, women hold significant positions as

educators within the digital Islamic Religious Education ecosystem. Female educators develop learning modules, create educational videos, manage online classes, author Islamic content, and build learning communities. These activities demonstrate that women are not only technology users but also producers of knowledge, curators of Islamic resources, and guides who assist students in discerning religious information credibly and ethically (Ridwan et al., 2025).

Despite these contributions, the authority of female educators in digital spaces remains contested, as authoritative figures in Islamic discourse are frequently associated with men (Nugraha et al., 2026). As a result, women who serve as educators, speakers, or creators of religious content often face moral scrutiny concerning their speech, attire, communication styles, and presence in digital public spheres. Digital literacy should therefore be understood as integral to women's negotiation of authority in Islamic Religious Education. The presence of credible and pedagogically skilled female educators broadens women's representation within Islamic knowledge spaces, demonstrating their intellectual, spiritual, and pedagogical capacities to serve as references in religious learning (Aryasatya et al., 2025). Islamic Religious Education should thus cultivate digital literacy that emphasizes not only technical skills but also critical awareness of power relations, enabling women to engage with digital spaces ethically, critically, productively, and equitably as both learners and educators.

The digital sphere as an ambivalent arena for empowerment and moral control

Within Islamic Religious Education (PAI), the digital sphere constitutes an arena marked by significant ambivalence.

Technological advancements have expanded opportunities for women to access Islamic knowledge, broaden their networks, and establish religious authority. Conversely, digital spaces can function as mechanisms for surveillance and moral judgment, potentially perpetuating gender biases in novel ways (Asis, 2023). Therefore, digital literacy in the Islamic Religious Education curriculum should extend beyond technical skills to encompass a comprehensive understanding of social, pedagogical, and religious values. Internet technologies empower female students to engage actively in online Islamic studies and discussion forums that were previously inaccessible (Kumar, 2025). For female educators, digital platforms facilitate the widespread dissemination of educational content, thereby increasing women's participation in the Islamic educational ecosystem.

Despite these opportunities, the digital sphere does not constitute a neutral social environment. Women's activities are frequently subject to more stringent moral and propriety standards than those applied to men. Public evaluations of women engaged in religious outreach or learning often shift focus from the substance of their ideas to their appearance, speech, and dress in virtual spaces. Moral control is exercised through restricted access justified as protection, or through the delegitimization of women's authority, even when they demonstrate strong pedagogical expertise. This dynamic indicates that digitalization does not inherently democratize knowledge; ethical tensions persist due to technological structures shaped by performative judgments and social recognition (Jaizul & Andrian, 2026).

Islamic educational institutions respond to technological changes in varied ways. Some view digital platforms as opportunities to expand religious outreach, while others

adopt a defensive approach due to concerns about content that may undermine religious values. Although prudence is necessary as a form of moral responsibility, excessive restrictions can limit the intellectual potential of women. A more effective strategy is to implement 'educative protection' rather than simply imposing restrictive measures. This approach emphasizes strengthening students' critical capacity to engage with digital spaces ethically and responsibly, guided by principles such as *tabayyun* (verification), respectful communication, and respect for privacy and differing opinions (Kumar, 2025). Digital literacy should aim to cultivate communicators' awareness, enabling them to recognize and address manipulation within digital systems (Irsasri et al., 2024).

The digital era has produced tensions between traditional religious authorities, rooted in established lineages and formal institutions, and newer, more fluid forms of authority that have gained prominence. Female educators now have platforms to emerge as educational leaders, yet they face the dual challenge of demonstrating scholarly competence while navigating increased social scrutiny. This ambivalence should not justify the rejection of technology; instead, it should motivate stakeholders in Islamic Religious Education to manage digital spaces with discernment. Strengthening digital literacy among women should encompass the ability to identify misinformation, ensure cybersecurity, and cultivate intellectual courage grounded in the ethics of Islamic communication (Irsasri et al., 2024). Islamic Religious Education should avoid both uncritical optimism and excessive suspicion regarding technology. The most effective approach is to position digital literacy as an educational domain governed by principles of justice and public good, while upholding women's rights to learn and participate fully.

Conceptual implications for inclusive and gender-equitable approaches in Islamic Religious Education (PAI)

The digitalization of Islamic Religious Education constitutes a comprehensive transformation of the knowledge ecosystem, pedagogical relationships, and the distribution of religious authority, rather than a mere shift in instructional media. The expansion of Islamic learning into digital environments necessitates a robust understanding of digital literacy. In this context, digital literacy encompasses the ability to access, comprehend, critically evaluate, and utilize information within digital platforms, extending beyond technical proficiency. This competency involves assessing the credibility of sources, validating religious information, and aligning Islamic values with evolving societal dynamics (Syamsiah & Aisyah, 2025). Furthermore, this transformation signals a shift in gender discourse within Islamic education, moving from normative approaches toward more critical and contextual themes, including inclusive education and Islamic feminism (Amal et al., 2025).

The implementation of digital Islamic Religious Education should incorporate a gender perspective to ensure equitable participation. Technological access alone is insufficient, as female students and educators, despite having access to digital platforms, continue to face structural barriers and social norms that restrict their active engagement and recognition of academic authority (Fauziah & Dewi, 2025). Addressing these challenges requires the design of gender-responsive digital Islamic Religious Education that avoids both uncritical technological optimism and excessive defensiveness, thereby serving as an authentic means of empowerment (Diasworo & Nurfuadi, 2024). Religious

education should function as a strategic instrument for transforming deeply rooted gender prejudices and stereotypes within society (Hairiyah et al., 2024).

Inclusive digital Islamic Religious Education requires a learning environment that is safe, ethical, and dialogical. Such an environment enables students to think critically and participate in discussions without fear of bullying or moral stigma. Within this framework, the role of Islamic Religious Education instructors shifts to that of ethical curators and facilitators. Educators are responsible for guiding students in understanding how religious authority and knowledge are produced and communicated in a civil manner (Zubaidah & Amaliyah, 2026). This approach supports the integration of justice and equality values within critical pedagogy, with the ultimate goal of creating a more transformative educational system (Hadi & Nazila, 2025).

Female educators should be recognized as intellectual actors and authoritative producers of knowledge within digital spaces, rather than being viewed solely as technical implementers of instruction. Legitimizing women's voices is essential, as they often experience epistemic exclusion in academic discourse and leadership (Syamsiah & Aisyah, 2025). The digital ethics of Islamic Religious Education are grounded in the principles of trustworthiness, accountability, and respect for human dignity. These principles aim to cultivate Muslim individuals who are critical thinkers and committed to justice. Without gender awareness, the modernization of Islamic Religious Education will address only the medium and perpetuate longstanding social inequalities. In contrast, gender consciousness can transform Islamic Religious Education into a reflective and just educational environment for all (Amal et al., 2025).

Conclusion

In the Indonesian context, digital literacy in Islamic Religious Education should not be understood solely as technical proficiency in using digital media. Rather, it must be positioned as a critical religious competence. This competence enables students and educators to evaluate Islamic information, recognize the authority of sources, practice digital ethics, and develop a critical, contextual, and responsible understanding of religion. In terms of gender, digital spaces are not neutral, as women experience varying degrees of access, participation, and recognition of authority depending on social, cultural, and moral norms. Therefore, female students require equitable and safe digital learning environments, while female educators need recognition for teaching, producing Islamic knowledge, and establishing pedagogical authority in digital spaces.

Digital spaces in Islamic Religious Education possess an ambivalent character. On one hand, these spaces provide opportunities for women to expand access to knowledge, build scholarly networks, enhance learning processes, and strengthen participation in religious discourse. On the other hand, the same spaces can reproduce moral control, social surveillance, and gender-based restrictions. Consequently, Islamic Religious Education in the digital era must develop digital literacy that is critical, ethical, inclusive, and gender-sensitive. This approach is essential to ensure that digitalization not only modernizes learning media but also promotes justice, meaningful participation, and the empowerment of women within Islamic educational settings.

This study has several limitations. As a conceptual article based on library research, it does not present field-based

data from students, teachers, schools, or madrasah. Its analysis also focuses primarily on the Indonesian context, while selected international literature is used only as conceptual support. In addition, the discussion covers different types and levels of educational institutions, so the findings should be read as a thematic and conceptual synthesis rather than as a representation of one specific institution or grade level. Future research should examine how gender-sensitive digital literacy is practiced in specific Islamic Religious Education settings, such as general schools, madrasah, *pesantren*, or Islamic higher education. Empirical studies involving students and educators would provide stronger evidence on how women negotiate access, participation, and authority in digital Islamic learning environments.

Declaration of Ownership

This article is our original work.

Conflict of Interest

There is no conflict of interest to declare in this article.

Ethical Clearance

This study was approved by the institution.

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