



## Digital Integration in Islamic Education: Efforts to Foster Religious Character in the Muslim Generation at Madrasah Tsanawiyah

Salsabila Anita Firdaus,<sup>1</sup> Shafira Putri Ziyah Abidin,<sup>2</sup> Nita Putri Rahmawati<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1,2,3</sup> Graduate School of UIN Syarif Hidayatullah Jakarta, Indonesia

email: [salsabila\\_anitafirdaus23@mhs.uinjkt.ac.id](mailto:salsabila_anitafirdaus23@mhs.uinjkt.ac.id),<sup>1</sup> [shafira\\_putriziyah23@mhs.uinjkt.ac.id](mailto:shafira_putriziyah23@mhs.uinjkt.ac.id),<sup>2</sup>

[nita\\_putrirahmawati23@mhs.uinjkt.ac.id](mailto:nita_putrirahmawati23@mhs.uinjkt.ac.id)<sup>3</sup>

### Abstract

*The rise of the digital age, marked by an internet penetration rate of 79.5 percent in Indonesia, poses significant challenges to the teaching of Islamic Religious Education (IRE) in junior high madrasahs (Madrasah Tsanawiyah/MTs). These challenges are particularly evident in efforts to instill religious character in students, given their exposure to various forms of digital content that may not align with Islamic teachings. Therefore, this study aims to conduct an in-depth examination of IRE learning strategies proven effective in shaping religious character among MTS students in the digital age. Additionally, this study aims to develop a learning model capable of adequately responding to the dynamics of digital life faced by the Muslim youth. The methodological approach applied in this study is a literature review (library research) that relies on content analysis and narrative synthesis of relevant scientific sources obtained through searches on Google Scholar, SINTA, and ERIC platforms. This study identifies four effective approaches to digital proliferation, which are subsequently synthesized into the Islamic Digital Character Education (IDCE) framework. This framework integrates the three pillars of Islam, namely, knowledge (ilm), faith (iman), and action (amal), with the three dimensions of digital competence: digital literacy, digital ethics, and digital creativity. Based on the established framework, a Digital Integrated Islamic Religious Education (DIRI-IRE) model was developed. This model encompasses Digital IRE Curriculum Design, Digital Active Learning Strategies, a Digital Religious Character Assessment System, and a Learning Support Ecosystem. The DIRI-IRE model is designed to address three substantial gaps identified in the existing literature from theoretical, empirical, and practical perspectives, in an effort to nurture a generation of Muslims with strong character, broad knowledge, and digital proficiency.*

**Keywords:** Digital Integration; Learning, Religious Character; Islamic Religious Education; Madrasah

### INTRODUCTION

The development of information and communication technology in the digital age has brought about fundamental changes across various aspects of life, including education. This rapidly unfolding digital transformation is creating a new paradigm in the learning process, where access to information has become unlimited and digital media has become an integral part of daily life, especially among the younger generation. This situation presents both challenges and opportunities for the national education system, particularly for Islamic Educational institutions, which bear a special responsibility for shaping students' religious character.<sup>1</sup> The rapid penetration of the internet and social media among teenagers has created a new phenomenon in the educational process, enabling students to access a wide range of information from all corners of the world in a



matter of seconds.<sup>2</sup> This situation brings a new dimension to learning, where teachers are no longer the sole source of knowledge, and the classroom is no longer the only place for learning. Students can easily access a wide range of learning materials, tutorials, and resources through digital platforms such as YouTube, online learning apps, and educational portals.

In this context, Islamic religious education faces the challenge of not only teaching religious knowledge but also equipping students with digital literacy and critical thinking skills to discern and select accurate and useful information.<sup>3</sup> This situation has complex implications for Islamic Educational institutions such as Madrasah Tsanawiyah, which bear a dual responsibility: providing quality academic education while simultaneously fostering a strong religious character in students.<sup>4</sup> The digital age presents a unique challenge for Islamic religious education, which must adapt to the times while still upholding fundamental Islamic values in shaping students' personalities.<sup>5</sup>

Madrasah Tsanawiyah, as one of the pillars of Islamic Education in Indonesia, plays a strategic role in shaping the religious character of the young Muslim generation. In the context of national education, madrasahs serve not only as institutions for the transfer of knowledge but also as institutions responsible for instilling Islamic values and fostering noble character in students.<sup>6</sup> IRE instruction in Madrasah Tsanawiyah is designed to provide a comprehensive understanding of Islamic teachings and to implement them in daily life. However, the effectiveness of IRE instruction in achieving these goals faces various challenges in this digital age.<sup>7</sup> The current phenomenon reveals a gap between the ideal of Islamic Religious Education and the reality on the ground, where many students possess strong religious knowledge but are unable to put it into practice in their daily lives, particularly amid an increasingly dominant digital life.<sup>8</sup>

The issue currently under scrutiny reveals that internet penetration among Indonesian adolescents has reached very high levels, with the majority of junior high madrasah students now having access to smartphones and social media. This situation has significant implications for students' character development, as they are exposed to content that may not always align with the religious values taught in madrasahs.<sup>9</sup> Exposure to negative content poses a real threat to the formation of students' religious character. IRE instruction in Madrasah Tsanawiyah should serve as the primary bulwark in protecting and shaping students' religious character amidst the tide of digitalization. However, reality shows that IRE instruction still faces various fundamental challenges that hinder its effectiveness.<sup>10</sup> Teaching methods that remain largely conventional and teacher-centered lead students to be less interested and less active. Many Islamic Religious Education teachers have not yet optimally integrated digital technology as an engaging and relevant learning medium. Learning materials often appear rigid and lack contextual relevance to students' real-life experiences in the digital age, making it difficult for students to apply religious values when facing challenges in the virtual world.<sup>11</sup>

In the Indonesian context, where the majority of parents are still considered digital immigrants, the digital literacy gap between parents and children is widening. This situation leads students to learn more about life and values from the virtual world, which is not always more positive than what they learn from formal education at madrasahs or parental guidance at home.<sup>12</sup> Religious character, which is the primary objective of IRE education, encompasses a very broad scope, including the dimensions of faith (*akidah*), worship (*ibadah*), ethics (*akhlak*), and social conduct (*muamalah*). From an Islamic Educational perspective, religious character is not merely knowledge of religious teachings but rather the internalization of Islamic values, manifested in daily attitudes

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and behaviors.<sup>13</sup> Research conducted by Nur Hasbi and Ali indicates that the development of religious character requires a systematic, continuous process that involves various educational components synergistically. However, the reality on the ground shows that many MTs students possess good cognitive understanding of Islamic teachings but have not yet been able to internalize them in the affective and psychomotor dimensions. This gap between knowledge and practice indicates that IRE instruction has not been fully effective in shaping students' religious character.<sup>14</sup>

The theoretical foundation for the development of religious character in Islamic Education is the comprehensive concept of *tarbiyah*, which encompasses the physical, spiritual, intellectual, and social aspects. According to Lickona's character education theory, character development requires three main components: moral knowing, moral feeling, and moral action, which must be developed in a balanced, integrated manner.<sup>15</sup> In the context of Islamic Education, these three components align with the concepts of knowledge (*ilmu*), faith (*iman*), and action (*amal*), which serve as the main pillars in the formation of a Muslim's personality. Research by Muh Idris indicates that effective IRE instruction must integrate these three aspects into a learning process that is contextual and relevant to students' lives. As stated in the research, "transformative IRE learning must be able to address the challenges of the times while remaining grounded in fundamental Islamic values."<sup>16</sup> This indicates the need for innovative IRE learning strategies that focus not only on knowledge transfer but also on fostering religious awareness and the habit of Islamic behavior within the context of digital life.

Advances in digital technology can actually present a significant opportunity to enhance the effectiveness of IRE instruction if utilized optimally. Various digital platforms, learning apps, and social media can be integrated to make IRE instruction more engaging, interactive, and contextual. The use of technology has been proven to boost students' motivation to learn and facilitate the understanding of complex material.<sup>17</sup> However, technology integration requires thorough preparation, particularly in terms of IRE teachers' digital pedagogical competencies, which are a key determinant of success. Another challenge relates to the characteristics of Generation Z students, who tend to be visually oriented, interactive, and prefer dynamic learning. This demands a paradigm shift from a teacher-centered to a student-centered approach, using technology as an interactive medium. Another crucial aspect is the development of digital literacy grounded in Islamic values. Students must not only be technically proficient but also possess critical awareness and digital ethics in accordance with Islamic teachings to avoid negative behavior in the digital world and be able to discern information wisely.<sup>18</sup>

The importance of research on the effectiveness of IRE in shaping the religious character of MTs students in the digital age cannot be underestimated, given that the future of the nation depends heavily on the quality of the younger generation being shaped today. As an Islamic Educational institution, the Madrasah Tsanawiyah bears a historical responsibility to produce a generation of Muslims who are not only intellectually intelligent but also possess strong religious character and noble moral values.<sup>19</sup> Failure to shape the religious character of the younger generation will result in the weakening of the nation's moral foundation and the emergence of various social problems in the future. Conversely, success in shaping students' religious character will produce a generation capable of becoming agents of positive change in society, a generation that can integrate technological advances with spiritual values and apply them in their daily lives.

Based on a literature review, three main gaps underpinning this study were

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identified: a theoretical gap in the form of a lack of a conceptual framework for IDCE that integrates digital ethics with Islamic values; an empirical gap in the form of the absence of comprehensive studies on the responsiveness of the IRE curriculum and methods to the characteristics of digital natives in madrasahs; and a practical gap in the form of the absence of operational guidelines and valid assessment instruments for digital religious character for IRE teachers. These three gaps underscore the urgency of more comprehensive and contextual research, given that the number of MTs students in Indonesia reaches millions, making the quality of IRE learning have a far-reaching impact on the nation's character formation. Therefore, this study aims to analyze effective IRE learning strategies in shaping the religious character of MTs students in the digital era, while formulating a conceptual framework and learning model responsive to the digital lives of the young Muslim generation, as a theoretical and practical contribution for IRE teachers, madrasah principals, and Islamic Education policymakers in Indonesia.

## **METHOD**

This study employs a literature review (library research) method, which involves collecting, reading, recording, and critically analyzing various sources relevant to the topic of study.<sup>20</sup> This approach was chosen because the research objective is to construct a comprehensive conceptual framework for digital integration in IRE learning and the formation of religious character among Madrasah Tsanawiyah students, based on a synthesis of theories and findings from previous studies, without collecting primary field data. A literature review allows researchers to systematically examine scientific perspectives from both primary and secondary sources in depth, resulting in a holistic understanding grounded in strong evidence.

This study employed the argument study method (*library research*), which involves the collection, reading, documentation, and critical analysis of various relevant literature sources. This approach was chosen because the research objective is to construct a comprehensive conceptual framework regarding digital integration in IRE learning and the formation of religious character among MTs students, based on a synthesis of theory and previous research findings, without collecting primary field data.<sup>21</sup> Data sources include primary sources, such as books on character education theory (Thomas Lickona) and the concept of tarbiyah in Islam, and scientific journal articles on IRE learning in the digital era; and secondary sources, such as conference proceedings, theses, dissertations, and relevant supporting publications. The literature search was conducted systematically via Google Scholar, SINTA, and ERIC, with inclusion criteria covering topic relevance, source quality (indexed in SINTA, Scopus, or Web of Science), and publication recency within the last ten years. Data analysis employed *content analysis* and narrative synthesis through four sequential stages: organization and classification of the literature; critical analysis of arguments and key findings; comparison of various perspectives to identify gaps; and synthesis and conclusion that integrates all findings into a coherent narrative grounded in the literature.<sup>22</sup>

## **RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

### **The Reality and Challenges of Islamic Education in MTs in the Digital Age**

The rapid pace of digital technology development demands that all components of education adapt, including IRE instruction in MTs. A review of various scholarly literature reveals that IRE instruction currently still faces fundamental structural challenges in

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responding to changes in the learning ecosystem, which is increasingly dominated by digital technology. The dominant teaching methods remain conventional and *teacher-centered*, such as one-way lectures, rote memorization, and complete reliance on textbooks as the sole learning resource. This gap creates a significant divide between classroom content and students' daily digital lives, leading IRE to be often perceived as irrelevant to the real-world experiences they encounter.<sup>23</sup>

The shift in the learning paradigm requires Islamic Education teachers to no longer serve merely as the primary source of information, but rather as facilitators who can integrate Islamic values into students' digital lives. Transforming character education through IRE in the digital age is not enough to address only methodological aspects; it must also shift teachers' fundamental paradigm by viewing technology as an integral part of the learning process. IRE teachers who cling to a monological approach tend to fail to engage students' affective dimensions amid the overwhelming flow of digital information they receive outside class hours.<sup>24</sup> Given the current reality, a teacher's role as a role model is no longer limited to physical behavior alone; it also encompasses a responsible, Islamically grounded use of technology, given that Generation Z students are highly influenced by the digital figures they follow on social media.

The reality of digital usage among Indonesian teenagers further underscores the urgency of this transformation. Data from We Are Social and Kepios (2024) indicates that internet penetration in Indonesia has reached 79.5 percent of the total population, with teenagers being the most active user group. This situation carries serious implications for the religious character development of MTs students, who are at an age most vulnerable to external influences.<sup>25</sup> Maysurah et al. found that the *post-truth* era makes it increasingly difficult for students to distinguish accurate religious information from misleading content in the digital space, leading them to recommend that IRE teachers develop critical digital literacy skills grounded in Islamic values as an integral part of instruction.<sup>26</sup> An interesting paradox also emerges: many MTs students are actually drawn to Islamic content on YouTube and TikTok, yet without structured guidance, the religious understanding they develop tends to be partial and prone to distortion. This finding reinforces the argument that formal IRE instruction in MTs must serve as a space for contextual and relevant guidance to help students navigate the digital ecosystem.

Weaknesses in the support ecosystem outside the classroom further exacerbate existing challenges. The majority of parents in Indonesia, particularly those from lower-middle-income backgrounds, are still classified as "digital immigrants" and face limitations in providing effective guidance on their children's digital activities.<sup>27</sup> Consequently, madrasahs have become the sole institution expected to establish a digital moral shield for students. This underscores the need for madrasahs to adopt holistic, comprehensive policies that encompass teacher competency development, regulations on technology use within the school environment, and parent engagement programs grounded in digital literacy.<sup>28</sup> These findings also confirm that IRE teachers who effectively shape students' religious and social character are those who integrate the digital reality into the learning context, rather than viewing it solely as a threat to be avoided.

In facing the complexity of these challenges, students are required to possess 21st-century skills known as the 4Cs: *Critical Thinking, Communication, Collaboration, and Creativity*.<sup>29</sup> These four skills complement one another and form a solid foundation for students to adapt, contribute, and thrive in an ever-evolving digital ecosystem. In the context of IRE, critical thinking equips students to distinguish accurate religious

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information from misleading content; ethical digital communication encourages the use of technology in accordance with Islamic etiquette; online collaboration fosters social solidarity aligned with the values of community in Islamic teachings, while digital creativity opens opportunities for students to produce innovative works and solutions grounded in Islamic values.<sup>30</sup> Therefore, integrating 4C skills into IRE learning at MTs is not merely an academic requirement but an urgent necessity for shaping a generation of Muslims who are intelligent, of good character, and capable of navigating the digital age with a solid Islamic foundation.

### **Digital Integration Strategies and the IDCE Framework in Islamic Education**

The rise of the digital age has brought significant changes to various aspects of life, including education. Information and communication technology (ICT) has not only transformed the way learning takes place but has also shaped the interaction patterns and behavior of the younger generation as a whole. In this context, IRE plays a strategic role in ensuring that students' morals and character remain grounded in Islamic values amid the rapid pace of digital change. IRE does not merely emphasize cognitive aspects; it also shapes attitudes and behaviors in accordance with Islamic teachings, with honesty, responsibility, discipline, and tolerance as its foundation. Therefore, the integration of IRE and digital technology is no longer an option but a necessity to foster students' strong, adaptive character that remains aligned with Islamic values.<sup>31</sup>

A synthesis of various studies identifies four effective approaches to digital integration in IRE pedagogy. The first approach involves using digital platforms and *Learning Management Systems* (LMS) within a *blended learning* framework. Implementations such as Google Classroom, WhatsApp Groups, and the *flipped classroom* model have been shown to increase student engagement, improve timely assignment submission, and expand learning beyond formal academic hours. Critical factors supporting this success include educators' digital capabilities, institutional policy support from schools, and adequate infrastructure resources.<sup>32</sup> These findings confirm that the strategic adoption of an LMS has a positive impact on the development of Islamic character among students in the madrasah environment, provided that the LMS is designed with a substantive values focus, rather than a mere procedural-administrative orientation.

The second strategy is the development of interactive multimedia-based IRE content. This strategy involves multimedia content that integrates animations, visual narratives, interactive quizzes, and worship simulations, significantly enhancing students' understanding of abstract religious concepts by making them more concrete and easier to internalize.<sup>33</sup> Muflihah and Makhsun specifically demonstrated that using Canva-based media in IRE instruction can improve students' digital literacy while fostering their creativity in expressing Islamic values through original digital works.<sup>34</sup> The third strategy is digital da'wah project-based learning, which has the strongest impact on the affective and psychomotor dimensions of character development through a process of value internalization that is far more profound than information-consumption-based learning, because producing quality content requires students to understand and internalize Islamic values.<sup>35</sup> The fourth strategy is to form an online learning community grounded in Islamic values. This strategy emphasizes that a digital community guided by competent mentors committed to Islamic values can extend the effectiveness of IRE learning far beyond the boundaries of the formal classroom.<sup>36</sup>

Based on a synthesis of these four strategies, a conceptual framework, IDCE, has

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been formulated. This framework integrates the three main pillars of Islamic Education, knowledge, faith, and action—with three relevant dimensions of digital competence: digital literacy, digital ethics, and digital creativity. The integration of knowledge with digital literacy is realized through guidance that helps students evaluate and filter digital information through the lens of Islamic values. The integration of faith with digital ethics positions faith as the foundation for every student's digital activity, where the awareness that Allah is always watching (*muraqabah*) serves as an effective internal check against negative digital behavior. Meanwhile, integrating action with digital creativity guides students to become producers of Islamic-value-based digital content rather than merely passive consumers, thereby realizing the principle of digital da'wah as a form of contemporary action in harmony with the spirit of *khalifah fil ardh*.<sup>37</sup>

This IDCE framework also reinforces Lickona's character theory, which encompasses *moral knowing*, *moral feeling*, and *moral action* in the context of digital Islamic Education. *Moral knowing* includes an understanding of the ethics of online communication in accordance with Islamic etiquette, the prohibition against backbiting and slander on social media, and the obligation to *verify* information before accepting it. *Moral feeling* encompasses emotional sensitivity to the impact of shared content and a sense of moral responsibility for every digital activity. Meanwhile, *moral action* manifests in the consistent, sustained practice of Islamic behavior in the digital realm.<sup>38</sup> Thus, the IDCE framework offers a comprehensive and contextual approach to addressing challenges while formulating concrete solutions for the formation of Islamic character among the younger generation in the digital age, positioning technology not as a threat to Islamic values but as a new vehicle for practicing and spreading them.

### **The DIRI-IRE Learning Model: Components, Implementation, and Implications for Islamic Education Practice**

Based on a comprehensive synthesis of the various findings from the literature review outlined in the previous subsection, covering both the challenges of IRE in the digital age and the IDCE framework as its conceptual foundation, this study formulates a digitally integrated IRE learning model called DIRI-IRE (*Digital-Integrated Religious Islamic Education*). This model was developed as a measured response to three shortcomings detected in the implementation of Islamic Education in MTs, namely a theoretical gap in the form of a lack of a conceptual framework that integrates Islamic character education with the digital environment, an empirical gap encompassing the absence of comprehensive research on the responsiveness of the IRE curriculum and methods to the of digital natives in madrasahs, and a practical gap in the form of a lack of operational guidelines for IRE teachers in integrating religious character development into digital-based learning.<sup>39</sup> While the IDCE framework provides a conceptual foundation articulating the rationale for digital integration in IRE and its underlying principles, the DIRI-IRE model serves as its implementation, addressing the need for concrete, structured strategies to realize this integration in teaching practice.

The DIRI-IRE model consists of four main components designed to work synergistically and cyclically. The first component is the Digital Curriculum Design (DCD), which focuses on restructuring the IRE curriculum to explicitly integrate Islamic ethics and digital literacy into the core competencies framework. This component includes remapping core IRE competencies to include digital akhlaq indicators, developing multimedia teaching materials contextualized to the digital realities of MTs students' lives, and formulating measurable indicators of religious character success within the

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context of digital behavior.<sup>40</sup> Other findings indicate that strategically designed IRE curriculum management focused on religious character formation has proven effective in enhancing the quality of MTs students' character. The urgency of a comprehensive IRE curriculum evaluation that responds to the new paradigm of Islamic Education in Indonesia, including the integration of digital content into the curriculum, is also emphasized.<sup>41</sup> Therefore, curriculum transformation in the DCD component is not merely the addition of technology-related material, but rather a comprehensive reorientation toward the goal of religious character development that is relevant and contextual to the digital lives of MTs students.

The second component is the Digital Active Learning Strategy (SPAD), which provides a repertoire of technology-based learning methods to encourage students' active participation in the process of internalizing Islamic values. The methods included in this component encompass an Islamic-values-based *flipped classroom*, *collaborative online learning*, *Islamic digital storytelling*, and *digital project-based learning*.<sup>42</sup> Research conducted by Amin and Hidayat shows that the use of audiovisual media, gamification, and online learning platforms significantly increases student enthusiasm and engagement in IRE learning. These findings confirm that digital-based IRE learning can strengthen the internalization of Islamic values while encouraging students to become wise and creative technology users, with IRE teachers playing a central role as guides, ensuring the consistency of Islamic values in every student's digital activity.<sup>43</sup> In the context of madrasahs, the implementation of SPAD serves as a bridge connecting religious material – which has long been considered abstract – with students' real-life experiences as *digital natives*, ensuring that IRE learning no longer exists as an entity separate from their daily lives.

The third component is the Digital Religious Character Assessment System, which provides a comprehensive, valid, and reliable framework for measuring students' religious character dimensions in a digital context.<sup>44</sup> This system encompasses three complementary assessment dimensions: cognitive assessment, which measures understanding of Islamic digital ethics; affective assessment, which measures digital moral awareness and sensitivity; and psychomotor assessment, which measures the habituation of Islamic behavior in the virtual world.<sup>45</sup> These three dimensions directly reflect the structure of *moral knowing*, *moral feeling*, and *moral action*, which form the core of Lickona's character theory as outlined within the IDCE framework, and are now translated into an operational, measurable assessment instrument. Ritonga et al. found that developing assessment instruments that integrate technological dimensions into religious competencies remains a major challenge that has not yet been systematically addressed in IRE teaching practices at madrasahs. It is this gap that the SPKRD specifically addresses, making it the DIRI-IRE model's most significant practical contribution to the formal Islamic Education ecosystem in Indonesia.<sup>46</sup>

The fourth component is the Learning Support Ecosystem (LSE), which recognizes that the success of digital integration in IRE cannot rely solely on teachers' classroom capabilities but requires a comprehensive, structured ecosystem. This component comprises three mutually supportive subsystems. The first subsystem is Technological Pedagogical and Content Knowledge (TPACK)-based professional development for IRE teachers, given that pedagogical competencies integrating technology and Islamic values are a key prerequisite for the success of this model. Teachers tend to have high confidence in their basic technical competencies but face significant barriers in the *Technological Pedagogical Knowledge* (TPK) dimension, which is actually the most crucial for the quality

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of digital-based IRE learning.<sup>47</sup> The second subsystem is madrasah policies regarding the wise and Islamically grounded use of technology, ensuring that the digital ecosystem within the madrasah environment institutionally supports the formation of students' religious character, not the opposite.<sup>48</sup> The third subsystem is a program for parental involvement in students' digital guidance, given that, as outlined in the first subsection, the majority of MTs students' parents are still classified as *digital immigrants* who require guidance to effectively support their children's digital activities outside the school environment.<sup>49</sup> These three subsystems underscore that the religious character development of the Muslim generation in the digital age is a collective responsibility that cannot be shouldered by IRE teachers alone.

The effectiveness of the four components of the DIRI-IRE model can be analyzed through the three dimensions of character development that are the focus of this study. In the cognitive dimension, integrating interactive multimedia and rich digital content into the DCD and SPAD components enables students to access and understand abstract IRE material more easily and deeply, bridging the gap between religious concepts and the realities of the digital lives they lead every day. In the affective dimension, students' active engagement in digital da'wah projects and Islamic online learning communities facilitated by the SPAD and EPP components creates meaningful learning experiences and fosters a sense of ownership of the Islamic values they internalize.<sup>50</sup>

Overall, the DIRI-IRE model offers a twofold contribution to the development of Islamic Education in Indonesia. Theoretically, this model translates the IDCE framework into a concrete, replicable learning structure, filling a gap in the literature on Islamic Education, particularly in the systematic integration of religious character development and digital competencies. Practically, this model provides operational guidelines that can be directly implemented by IRE teachers, madrasah principals, and Islamic Education policymakers. Through the comprehensive and collaborative implementation of the DIRI-IRE model among all stakeholders—from IRE teachers, madrasah principals, parents, to policymakers at the national level at the MTs level, it can realize its vision as an Islamic Educational institution that not only produces intellectually intelligent graduates but also possesses strong religious character, mature digital literacy, and readiness to become agents of positive change in the digital era, as this constitutes the core of the digital integration efforts in IRE learning advocated in this research.

## CONCLUSION

Religious education in Islamic vocational schools has not yet achieved optimal effectiveness in instilling religious character in the digital era. This is due to three fundamental disparities: the absence of a conceptual framework that unifies Islamic character education with digital ethics and literacy, a curriculum approach that has not fully accommodated the characteristics of students as a digital generation, and a lack of operational guidance for educators in integrating the development of religious character into digital-based learning.

In addressing this deficiency, the present study offers two principal contributions: firstly, the establishment of the IDCE framework, which synergizes the tenets of knowledge (*'ilm*), faith (*iman*), and practice (*amal*) with the dimensions of digital literacy, ethics, and creativity. This framework achieves this by adapting Lickona's character theory to an Islamic context. Secondly, the development of the DIRI-IRE learning model, comprising four synergistic components: Digital Islamic Religious Education Curriculum Design, Digital Active Learning Strategies, Digital Religious Character Evaluation System,

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and a Supporting Learning Ecosystem. This research firmly posits that digital technology is not a detriment to Islamic Education; rather, it serves as a strategic medium for instilling Islamic values in contemporary Muslim generations, provided it is integrated systematically and grounded in robust Islamic principles.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

The findings of this study lead to several recommendations for stakeholders in Islamic Education. It is emphasized that IRE educators should progressively implement four digital integration strategies, taking into account the specific capabilities and environments of madrasahs. For madrasah leaders and policymakers, the DIRI-IRE model can serve as a guide in developing an IRE curriculum that is adaptive to the digital landscape. This includes initiatives to enhance teachers' Technological Pedagogical Content Knowledge competencies and improve students' parents' digital literacy. For future research, there is an urgent need to empirically test the DIRI-IRE model across diverse madrasah contexts, to validate the Digital Religious Character Assessment System instrument, and to conduct comparative studies with traditional methods. Additionally, longitudinal research is recommended to examine the long-term impact of digital religious character development on student behavior at MTs in an era increasingly integrated with the digital ecosystem.

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