

Dialectics of Curriculum and Digital Content: An Innovative Strategy for Strengthening Wasathiyah Islamic Literacy in the Face of the Post-Truth Era

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Abstract

The post-truth era has presented serious challenges for Islamic education, characterized by the dominance of emotions and subjective opinions over objective facts, as well as the rapid flow of unverified digital information. The younger generation is the group most vulnerable to hoaxes, disinformation, and religious propaganda, which have the potential to foster ideological polarization and intolerance. This context demands the strengthening of Wasathiyah Islamic literacy as a moderating value system based on *tawazun* (religious tolerance), *tasamuh* (compassion), and *i'tidāl* (balanced moderation). However, these efforts face a fundamental dilemma: the dialectic between a static Islamic education curriculum and aggressive digital content, creating a "shadow curriculum" beyond the control of educational institutions. This study aims to analyze curriculum inconsistencies in responding to the challenges of the post-truth era, identify problems with teachers' pedagogical competencies in internalizing Wasathiyah values, and formulate innovative strategies based on curriculum integration and digital content. The study results indicate that the Islamic Religious Education curriculum remains oriented toward knowledge transfer and memorization, thus under-optimizing critical thinking skills, digital literacy, and contextual learning. Furthermore, teachers face obstacles in implementing transformative pedagogy and utilizing technology as a means of internalizing religious moderation. Innovative solutions are offered through three main pillars:

HOTS-based curriculum reform and the 4Cs, transforming teacher pedagogy toward collaborative and digital learning, and developing competitive Wasathiyah digital content as a counter-narrative to extreme ideologies. Thus, the integration of the curriculum and a moderate digital ecosystem serves as an adaptive and anticipatory strategy for building students' ideological resilience and maintaining the relevance of Islamic education amidst post-truth disruption.

Keywords: *post-truth era, curriculum, digital content, Wasathiyah Islam, critical literacy, Islamic education.*

Introduction

In the post-truth era, public opinion is more influenced by emotions and subjective opinions than objective facts. Advances in digital technology and social media have accelerated the spread of information without adequate verification, making the younger generation the most vulnerable to the spread of hoaxes, misinformation, and propaganda. (None Ardina Rasiani, Sari, None Erna Wilis, & None Urai Setiawarni, 2025). This phenomenon poses a challenge for Islamic education, which is tasked with shaping the character and morals of students. A lack of critical thinking skills makes them susceptible to false and radical narratives. Therefore, Islamic education needs to strengthen digital literacy, not just focus on mastering teaching materials. (Ulil Devia Ningrum, et al., 2025).

Islamic education in Indonesia currently faces a crucial ideological crossroads, marked by the massive penetration of religious information through digital media. This context is complicated by the emergence of the "Post-Truth Era," a social condition in which objective facts have less influence in shaping public opinion than emotional appeals and personal beliefs. Amidst these dynamics, exclusive, extremist, or intolerant religious narratives are often packaged in a viral and misleading manner, spreading rapidly, potentially undermining the nation's multicultural values and social cohesion. Therefore, the concept of Islam Wasathiyah (Islamic moderation), which is based on balance (*tawazun*), tolerance (*tasamuh*), and justice (*i'tidal*), must be mainstreamed. Islam Wasathiyah, as studied by Azyumardi Azra, is an essential path of religious moderation in the context of Indonesia's diversity and is also a solution to the increasingly sharp ideological polarization. (Andika Putra, et al., 2021).

Efforts to formally strengthen Wasathiyah through the education system are hampered by a fundamental dilemma we call the Dialectic of Curriculum and Digital Content. On the one hand,

the Islamic Education curriculum, ideally static and structured, often fails to develop adequate Wasathiyah Islamic Literacy due to its textual and contextually deficient approach. On the other hand, Digital Content creates a "shadow curriculum" that is emotional and adaptive, effectively shaping students' religious views outside of institutional control. The curriculum's failure to equip students with Critical Literacy to confront religious hoaxes and biased narratives online creates a loophole for the Post-Truth Era to thrive. Another journal even asserts that Wasathiyah must be introduced as a strategy to counter radicalism, which is a form of extreme ideological polarization ('Azmi Uwafiq Muhammad, et al., 2023).

Based on this urgency, this paper focuses on an in-depth analysis of the dialectic of Curriculum and Digital Content, and formulates innovative solutions. Specifically, this study aims to: 1) Analyze the inconsistencies of the Islamic Education Curriculum in responding to the challenges of Post-Truth, 2) Identify the problems of educators' pedagogical competence in teaching Wasathiyah Literacy in a transformative manner, and 3) Formulate Innovative Strategies, which include curriculum integration and Wasathiyah digital content development, to build ideological resilience in students. It is hoped that this study will provide a significant contribution to the development of an adaptive Islamic Education Curriculum and become a practical guideline in building a moderate understanding of Islam amidst the rapid flow of information that demands Critical Literacy skills.

Discussion 1. Inconsistencies in the Islamic Education Curriculum in Responding to Post-Truth Challenges

The main inconsistency in the Islamic Religious Education (PAI) curriculum in facing the challenges of the Post-Truth Era lies in the misalignment between its static, textual, and verbal orientation and the rapid spread of information in the digital realm. The post-truth era, dominated by disinformation and the prevalence of emotion over fact, demands critical thinking skills and Ethical Digital Literacy as the primary bulwarks for students. (Unang Sodikin, et al., 2025). However, the PAI curriculum, which traditionally focuses more on the transfer of religious knowledge and memorization, often neglects the training of higher-order thinking skills (HOTS) needed to analyze and verify viral and biased religious content. (Nasikhin, 2022).

The stagnation of the Islamic Religious Education (PAI) curriculum has created several concrete problems, clearly visible in the following areas: First, the limited content of teaching

materials, which rarely explicitly integrates the theme of "Islamic Value-Based Media Literacy," such as the principle of tabayyun (source verification) and digital morals as core components. This leaves students vulnerable to exposure to invalid information that can obscure Islamic values and Wasathiyah (modesty). (M., Yusri, A. Akbar, and A. Basri, 2024). Second, pedagogical weaknesses, where the teaching methods used by Islamic Religious Education (PAI) teachers often do not fully adopt innovative learning models (such as Problem-Based

Learning or Inquiry Learning) that effectively instill critical thinking and the 4Cs (Creativity, Critical Thinking, Communication, Collaboration) as essential components for countering post-truth narratives. (Unang Sodikin, 2025). Third, the gap in teacher competency, an inconsistency exacerbated by Islamic Religious Education (PAI) teachers' limited technological expertise. Many educators struggle to be effective facilitators in critically selecting information and ethically integrating digital technology into learning, widening the gap between formal classrooms and the digital "shadow curriculum." (Zaelani, Junaidi, Muhammad, and Muhsinin, 2023).

Problems with educators' pedagogical competence in teaching Wasathiyah Literacy in a transformative manner.

The implementation of Wasathiyah Islamic values (religious moderation), which prioritize tawazun (balance), tasamuh (tolerance), and non-violence in Islamic Religious Education (PAI) learning faces significant obstacles at the level of teacher pedagogical competence. Although conceptually, PAI teachers are expected to be role models and pioneers in integrating religious moderation (R., D. Kusumawati, 2024), the reality on the ground shows serious obstacles hindering efforts to transform these values.

The main problem lies in the inability of most PAI teachers to translate Wasathiyah values from the theoretical domain into transformative, dialogical, and responsive learning practices for the digital era (Fitria Nova Rita & Iswantir Iswantir, 2022). Some specific obstacles related to pedagogical competence include: First, Limitations of Innovative Learning Methods: Many Islamic Religious Education teachers still tend to use traditional methods, such as lectures or memorization, which are one-way (monologue) and do not encourage open and critical discussion. (M. I. J. Addakhil, 2019). Methods that should be effective in instilling Wasathiyah (Islamic Religious Approach), such as case study discussions, project-based learning (social projects), or cooperative learning, which emphasize

collaborative interaction to reduce prejudice, have not been fully implemented optimally. (D., Harahap, et al., 2024).

Second, Lack of Pedagogical Digital Literacy: Islamic Religious Education teachers are required to possess the competence to utilize technology optimally for student self-development and the instillation of religious values. (I.A. Pratama, 2025). However, many educators experience difficulties in mastering computer technology and integrating relevant digital learning media. (Novi Qorimatul Azizah, 2025). As a result, they fail to utilize innovative digital content as a tool to teach Wasathiyah Literacy, the critical ability to verify and analyze extreme religious information or hoaxes on social media.

Third, Weaknesses in Character Assessment Design: Pedagogical competence also encompasses the evaluation of learning outcomes. The problem is that teachers often struggle to design comprehensive assessments, focusing not only on cognitive aspects (knowledge) but also on changes in attitudes, behavior, and the actualization of Wasathiyah values (affective and psychomotor) in students' social lives.

Therefore, strengthening Wasathiyah requires not only curriculum changes, but more urgently, improving teachers' pedagogical competence through ongoing training (Continuing Professional Development Program) that focuses on the integration of technology and transformative methodologies to build students' ideological resilience amidst the challenging flow of digital information. (I. Warsah, et al., 2021).

Innovative Strategies, Including Curriculum Integration and the Development of Wasathiyah Digital Content, to Build Ideological Resilience in Students

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Innovative strategies for building ideological resilience in students through curriculum integration and the development of Wasathiyah digital content focus on the transition from passive

to active, critical, and digital learning. This strategy encompasses three main pillars: curriculum reform, teacher pedagogical transformation, and the development of competitive digital content.

Curriculum Integration (What is Taught)

Innovative strategies must target curricula that are responsive and adaptive to ideological threats in the digital space, as follows: First, Explicit Integration of Wasathiyah Digital Literacy: The values of moderation (tawazun, tasamuh, anti-extremism) must be mainstreamed not only as material, but as skills for living in the digital age. Students are taught the principle of Tabayyun (verification) methodically to filter viral religious information. Second, Implementation of HOTS and the 4Cs: The curriculum must emphasize the development of Higher Order Thinking Skills (HOTS) to analyze extreme narratives. The methods used must hone the 4Cs (Critical Thinking, Creativity, Communication, and Collaboration) so that students are able to construct logical and persuasive moderate arguments. Third, Contemporary Case Studies: Curriculum content should be enriched with real-life case studies on religious hoaxes, social media polarization, and issues of intolerance. This will shift the focus from textual learning to contextual learning and problem-solving.

Transforming Teacher Pedagogy (How It's Taught)

Strategies must ensure Islamic Religious Education teachers act as digital facilitators and ideological motivators, not just preachers: First, Transformative Learning Methods: Teachers must abandon monologues and shift to methods such as Problem-Based Learning (PBL), which presents contemporary ideological issues (e.g., "Attitudes towards differences in Islamic schools of thought") to be solved collaboratively; Project-Based Learning (PjBL): Assigning students to create creative products (e.g., vlogs or infographics) that promote Wasathiyah values to be posted ethically on social media; and Cooperative Learning: Encouraging open and indepth discussions to reduce prejudice and increase tolerance among students.

Second, Improving Pedagogical Digital Literacy: Teachers must be trained not only to use technology but also to integrate it to measure, analyze, and monitor students' ideological development online.

Developing Competitive Wasathiyah Digital Content

This strategy focuses on creating an external environment that supports ideological resilience. This strategy can be implemented by producing Counter-Narrative content, through the involvement of students and teachers in producing professional, interesting, and relevant Wasathiyah content (such as short web series, modern Islamic podcasts, or educational memes) that can compete with extremist content in terms of aesthetics and spread (virality). Then, through a sustainable critical digital moral campaign (in collaboration with community organizations and moderate influencers) that actively teaches students how to interact on social media ethically, responsibly, and non-extremist based on Islamic principles. Then, building a safe digital ecosystem where schools must provide access to curated digital resources containing verified Wasathiyah material, while encouraging students to become Critical Netizens who report and reject the spread of religious disinformation.

Examples of Teaching Modules Integrating Curriculum with Digital Content in the PostTruth Era

From a curriculum perspective, Valladares's (2022) article offers a framework that argues that education must shift from traditional epistemological learning (i.e., teaching only the scientific method and facts) to socio-epistemic learning that integrates the study of how science and technology are produced in society, precisely as a response to post-truth (Liliana Valladares, 2022). In practice, this means the curriculum must include an understanding of how news is created and disseminated, how social media algorithms function, how cognitive biases (such as confirmation bias) operate, and how digital ethics and responsibility are implemented. In terms of digital content, teachers and schools should provide hands-on experiences: for example, students checking online news claims, analyzing manipulated images, or creating vlogs or blogs showcasing their own fact-checking.

Formal curricula are powerful in establishing core competencies, such as reading, writing, arithmetic, and scientific understanding, but they often fail to address the rapid changes in the digital realm: how students access information, how they interact through media, and how digital narratives influence their perceptions of truth. Meanwhile, digital content offers enormous potential: access to a multitude of sources, multimodality (text, audio, images, video), interactivity, and more contextual and engaging learning opportunities for young people. However, digital content also carries

significant risks: fake news, image/video manipulation, filter bubbles, algorithms that prioritize clicks over truth—all of these are part of the mechanisms that reinforce the post-truth condition. (David Buckingham, 2019).

Table 1. Example of Teaching Module

TEACHING MODULE	
Islamic Moderation and Digital Literacy: Countering Extremism & Disinformation in the Post-Truth Era	
A. GENERAL INFORMATION Educational Unit: Senior High School / Islamic Senior High School Subject: Islamic Religious Education & Character Education Grade / Semester: XI / Even Time Allocation: ± 6 meetings (6 x 90 minutes)	
B. LEARNING OUTCOMES (CP) Students are able to understand and internalize the values of Islamic Moderation (tawassuth, tawazun, tasamuh, i'tidal) and apply them in social life and the digital space as a form of noble character and responsible digital citizenship.	
C. LEARNING OBJECTIVES After completing this lesson, students are expected to be able to: 1. Explain the concept of Islamic Moderation along with the underlying evidence from the Quran and Hadith. 2. Identify the characteristics of extremist and intolerant ideologies, including their spread through digital media/fake news. 3. Criticize provocative, intolerant, or misleading digital content using source verification and the principles of wasathiyah. 4. Produce digital content (posters/videos/slides) that promote Wasathiyah Islamic values in schools and communities.	
D. LEARNING MATERIALS 1. The Concept of Wasathiyah in Islam a. The meaning of tawassuth (moderation), tasamuh (tolerance), i'tidal (justice), tawazun (balance). b. Evidence: QS. Al-Baqarah: 143; QS. Al-Hujurat: 13; QS. Al-Kafirun: 6; QS. An-Nahl: 125. 2. The Post-Truth Era and Its Challenges a. The dominance of opinion/emotion over fact; mis/disinformation. b. Extremist and intolerant ideologies spread through digital platforms. 3. Digital Content Verification Source analysis, cross-checking, content creator motivations, framing techniques,	

clickbait, and manipulative editing. 4. Moderate Islamic Propagation in the Digital Era a. Ethics of Propagation: politeness, wisdom, and calm. b. The role of students as agents of peace and unity.
E. LEARNING MODEL Project-Based Learning (PjBL), based on strengthening Moderate Islam in the digital space.

Table 2. Learning Scenario

Meeting	Learning Activities
1	Ice breaking + short video on the phenomenon of conflict/persecution due to digital provocation → discussion → introduction to Wasathiyah material
2	Study of verses and hadith + case study of Islamic history regarding the moderate attitude of the Prophet SAW
3	Digital content analysis: students are divided into groups and then search for examples of provocative posts/intolerant hoaxes (selected by the teacher, not searched for by themselves)
4	Fact-checking workshop + applying Wasathiyah principles to create a cool response to da'wah
5	Project: Production of digital Islamic preaching content with the theme "Islam Rahmatan lil 'Alamin: Peace in Diversity"
6	Presentation of digital works + personal reflection + commitment to "Digital Peace Agent"
PROJECT ASSIGNMENT ACTIVITIES Title: "My Content for Peace: Moderate Preaching for the Digital Generation" Students will create digital content in the form of: Short videos/infographics/digital posters/Instagram carousels/school blog articles with the following elements: a. Quotes from relevant verses/hadith b. Messages of moderation and peace c. Education about the dangers of digital provocation and intolerance d. Class/school campaign taglines (e.g., #FilterBeforeSharing, #StudentsLovePeace) Projects will be uploaded to the school's digital board (not to personal social media for student safety).	

Table 3. Assessment (Rubric)

Assessment Aspects	Indicator	Weight
Wasathiyah Understanding	Accuracy of concepts, verses/hadith, real examples	25%
Digital Literacy	Source analysis, verification process, critical attitude	25%
Content Quality	Neatness, message flow, creativity, educational power	20%
Digital Ethics and Morals	Polite language, soothing messages, anti-provocative	20%
Collaboration	Cooperation and participation between members	10%

Notes for Teachers:

1. Do not ask students to find provocative content on their own to avoid excessive negative exposure. Teachers should provide safe and reviewed examples.
2. Student work should not be published on public social media to avoid the risk of bullying.
3. Emphasize that the digital space is a place for preaching—not an arena for debate or insults.

Project Output Attachment (Example Video Structure):

1. Opening – greeting & introduction to the theme
2. Verses/Hadith about moderation
3. Brief analysis of provocative issues → what the dangers are & how to respond to them
4. Inspirational, calming message → peaceful solution
5. Call to action for a good cause

Integrating curriculum and digital content in the post-truth era is not just a pedagogical innovation—it's a fundamental necessity. Without adequate digital and media literacy skills, young people risk becoming victims or spreaders of disinformation. With teaching modules like those

mentioned above, schools can develop digital citizens who are not only skilled in using technology but also able to think critically, question, and act ethically. Teacher preparation, infrastructure support, and revision of curriculum standards are crucial to ensuring this effort is not just a small pilot, but widely distributed. If successful, the dialectic between curriculum and digital content will shift from conflict to synergy—and education will be able to address the challenges of post-truth in a way that is relevant to the advanced, digital age.

Conclusion

Strengthening Wasathiyah Islamic Literacy (religious moderation) among students in the Post-Truth era is hampered by the imbalanced dialectic between the formal education system and the digital environment. The Islamic Religious Education curriculum generally exhibits inconsistencies due to its static, textual orientation and focus on knowledge transfer. Consequently, it fails to equip students with critical thinking skills (HOTS) and Ethical Digital Literacy, essential for verifying and analyzing biased or hoaxed digital content.

This curriculum gap is exacerbated by the problematic pedagogical competence of Islamic Religious Education teachers. Most educators are unable to translate Wasathiyah values transformatively because they remain fixated on traditional methods (lectures/memorization) and have limited Pedagogical Digital Literacy. As a result, they struggle to integrate innovative, dialogical learning methods (Problem-Based Learning, case studies, or cooperative learning), and fail to utilize digital content as a tool for building ideological resilience.

Therefore, to protect the younger generation from the negative impacts of the Post-Truth Era, an urgent innovative strategy is curriculum reformulation, namely the PAI curriculum must be transformed from merely a tool for transferring knowledge to a tool for strengthening character and Ideological Resilience, by explicitly integrating Islamic Value-Based Media Literacy (the principles of *tabayyun* and digital morals). As well as improving teacher pedagogical competence where continuous training is needed that focuses on technology integration and mastery of transformative methodologies so that teachers are able to manage dialogic and participatory learning, and can design comprehensive evaluations (cognitive, affective, and psychomotor) of the actualization of Wasathiyah values. The synergy between an adaptive curriculum and innovative teacher competence is the main

key to ensuring that Wasathiyah Islam can be optimally internalized amidst the rapid flow of digital information.

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