



## Media Literacy and Involvement of Students of SMK YPC Tasikmalaya in Religious Da'wah Movement in Digital Space

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### ABSTRACT

*The development of digital technology has transformed how students interact and participate in dakwah activities, particularly through social media. This study aims to analyze how media literacy supports the involvement of SMK YPC Tasikmalaya students in digital religious dakwah movements and how pesantren-based education enhances these capabilities. Using qualitative methods and a case study approach, this research collected data through interviews, observations, and documentation of students' digital dakwah activities. The findings indicate that the media literacy program at SMK YPC Tasikmalaya not only equips students with technical skills to access and disseminate information but also instills religious moderation values to counter radicalism and intolerance in digital dakwah. Media literacy developed through the pesantren approach encourages students to become creators of inclusive, peaceful, and relevant dakwah content tailored to digital audiences. The implications of this research highlight the importance of integrating media literacy into religious education curricula to prepare young generations as productive and moderate digital preachers. With these skills, students can actively disseminate tolerant dakwah messages and foster a harmonious digital community rooted in religious values.*

**Keywords:** *Da'wah movement; digital space; media literacy.*

### INTRODUCTION

The development of digital technology has changed the way humans interact, including in religious proselytization activities in the digital space. Digital media is now a strategic space for spreading religious values globally through platforms such as social media, websites and digital applications that allow da'wah to be carried out creatively and interactively. This opens up opportunities for preachers and the younger generation to engage in

religious discussions across geographical boundaries, making da'wah more inclusive and accessible to various groups (Pabbajah, 2020). This digital media space is not only a place to access religious teachings, but also the main means for da'wah practitioners to adapt to more creative and interactive delivery methods. This phenomenon is increasingly relevant considering that the younger generation is the largest user group of digital platforms, such as social media and internet-based applications. The challenges and opportunities presented by new media encourage preachers and or religious practitioners to utilize digital technology to strengthen the impact of religious messages in the global community (Oliver et al., 2020).

Digital literacy through various platforms, such as social media and online seminars, can be an effective tool to promote moderate attitudes among young people and the wider community in facing the challenges of extremism in the digital space (Nyanasuryanadi et al., 2023). In addition, digital literacy through religious education also helps shape students' characters to be more critical and responsible in using digital media (Nenosaban & Tari, 2023). Digitalization creates new conditions for religious experiences, where websites, apps and social media are used for more accessible religious practices (Evolvi, 2021). However, with this ease of access also comes challenges, such as the spread of invalid information, radicalism and religious-based intolerance. The importance of digital literacy in counteracting the spread of radicalism through digital media on campus, as well as how religious moderation can be developed through digital platforms to overcome distorted information (Usman et al., 2023).

Low media literacy competence among young people can lead to unhealthy political and religious participation, such as spreading fake news and provoking on social media (Allam et al., 2020). In line with the findings of Jabar Saber Hoaks regarding the high potential for spreading hoaxes on social media, where more than 1,085 complaints were received and more than half were clarified as hoaxes. The inability of the younger generation to sort out valid information often leads to unhealthy digital participation, such as spreading fake news or engaging in religious-based provocations (Rosyidi et al., 2021a). Therefore, media literacy skills are essential, especially for the younger generation, so that they can use digital media wisely, critically and responsibly in dealing with various religious information. Religious digital literacy through various media, such as digital libraries and online seminars, plays an important role in forming critical awareness of information that can be misleading (Nyanasuryanadi et al.,

2023). Students equipped with media literacy skills are better able to avoid fake news and propaganda, especially those related to religious issues that are often distorted on social media (Munawar et al., 2021).

In addition to the important role of digital media in modern life, media literacy has become a key skill for the younger generation, especially for students living in a pesantren-based environment such as SMK YPC Tasikmalaya. Media literacy not only helps students in understanding the information they receive, but also enables them to filter information more wisely. Media literacy acts as an antidote to the spread of radicalism that is often found on social media and other digital platforms. Media literacy serves to provide students with critical thinking skills and the ability to identify content that is incompatible with the values of religious moderation taught in pesantren.

Media literacy plays an important role in encouraging student participation in social and religious activities in the digital world. Students who have good media literacy are better able to participate in productive discussions and can avoid the pitfalls of misinformation (Supa et al., 2022). Furthermore, media literacy education at SMK YPC Tasikmalaya also helps students understand how to use digital media to strengthen their understanding of religion. Rahmah and Ilham (2022) emphasize the importance of media literacy in enhancing students' religious culture in schools, by utilizing digital platforms to spread positive messages that are in line with religious teachings and rejecting deviant content. This is in line with the mission of SMK YPC Tasikmalaya which not only prioritizes technical education, but also character building based on religious values.

The pesantren education system implemented at SMK YPC Tasikmalaya also plays a role in shaping students' media literacy. Research by Altunkaynak (2022) shows that a faith-based environment can strengthen students' digital literacy skills, particularly in filtering religious information that is invalid or against the values of moderation. This adds an important dimension to the study of media literacy, where religious and digital education come together to create students who are more skilled and aware in using digital media responsibly (Altunkaynak, 2022).

Media literacy also supports students' engagement in religious movements through digital platforms, where they can share and discuss religious values with fellow students around the world. Media literacy education programs integrated with religious values in schools can increase student participation in online religious discussions more critically and

responsibly (Lozanova, 2021). SMK YPC Tasikmalaya itself is under the auspices of the Cintawana Islamic Boarding School, so the importance of media literacy is further emphasized considering that the boarding school also serves as a center for moral and spiritual education, which can facilitate the development of wise and responsible media literacy skills (Supa et al., 2022).

Engagement in digital spaces also contributes to the strengthening of students' religious identity. Vlasova and Chikurova's (2020) research found that mass media, including digital media, has an important role in shaping students' religious identity. At SMK YPC Tasikmalaya, media literacy not only helps students in understanding information, but also enables them to build a strong religious identity amidst diverse digital influences (Vlasova & Chikurova, 2020).

SMK YPC Tasikmalaya was chosen as the research location because it has unique characteristics that distinguish it from other vocational schools, namely being under the auspices of the Cintawana Islamic Boarding School which integrates formal vocational education with the boarding school system. This holistic approach not only equips students with technical skills for the world of work, but also establishes good morals and a strong spiritual foundation. This combination makes SMK YPC Tasikmalaya an ideal case study to explore media literacy and student engagement in religious movements in the digital space. In facing the digital era, students are challenged to not only be critical in accessing, understanding, and using digital information wisely, but also to be active in religious discussions through digital media while maintaining the values of religious moderation. Through the integration of formal and religious education, SMK YPC Tasikmalaya offers an illustration of how media literacy can support students' involvement in religious proselytization movements in the digital era and how pesantren-based education shapes students' ability to utilize media responsibly.

This research offers a new perspective on media literacy and students' religious engagement in the digital space by taking a case study at SMK YPC Tasikmalaya, which operates in a pesantren-based educational environment. This research approach is unique because it integrates media literacy with pesantren education to prepare students to deal with increasingly complex digital information, especially related to religious issues. This research differs from previous studies, such as Wahyudi's (2022) study which discussed digital literacy among students in public

schools and found that students' media literacy skills were strongly influenced by their use of social media. However, [Wahyudi's study](#) did not focus on the context of pesantren education or the role of religion in developing digital literacy, so it is less relevant in seeing how faith-based education can play a role in shaping critical and moderate media literacy. This study also differs from the research of [Nyanasuryanadi et al. \(2023\)](#) who discussed the importance of digital literacy for religious moderation in education in the digital era in general.

This study aims to understand the extent to which students of SMK YPC Tasikmalaya have critical media literacy in dealing with religious-related digital information and analyze how pesantren education helps develop students' moderate and thoughtful media literacy skills to counteract radicalism and intolerance. This research also explores students' participation in da'wah through digital platforms such as social media and websites, focusing on the role of pesantren education in shaping media literacy skills that support da'wah according to the challenges of the times. The expected outcome is to provide insight into the importance of religious education in building moderate and critical digital da'wah engagement and creating a learning model that can be adopted by other educational institutions. This research combines media literacy, digital engagement, and pesantren education to support da'wah activities at SMK YPC Tasikmalaya, emphasizing how pesantren education shapes students to be critical in using digital media for da'wah. Media literacy becomes an important tool to support da'wah that is relevant, effective, and makes students active creators of da'wah content in the digital world.

This research uses a qualitative method with a case study approach to explore the Media Literacy and Involvement of Students of SMK YPC Tasikmalaya in Religious Movement in Digital Space. This method was chosen because case studies allow in-depth exploration of certain phenomena in a specific context, namely media literacy and students' religious engagement in a pesantren education environment. SMK YPC Tasikmalaya, which is under the auspices of Pesantren Cintawana, provides a unique context where formal vocational education is combined with religious education. This research will explore how media literacy affects students' involvement in religious movements in the digital space through in-depth interviews, observation, and documentation collection related to students' digital activities. The research subjects are students of SMK YPC Tasikmalaya who actively use digital media in religious activities, both to

access religious information and to participate in religious discussions in the digital space.

## **RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

### **Student Empowerment in Media Literacy to Increase Positive Participation in Da'wah in the Space**

SMK YPC Tasikmalaya actively encourages its students to engage in media literacy as a strategic step to strengthen da'wah activities in the digital era. The program not only improves basic literacy skills, but also emphasizes digital literacy that enables students to understand and critically manage information on digital platforms. This literacy equips students with the ability to filter valid religious information, avoid spreading misleading content, and deliver moderate and constructive da'wah messages, so that students can play an active role in spreading religious values creatively and responsibly, while maintaining the harmonization of religious values in the digital space (Rosyidi et al., 2021).

This digital literacy program emphasizes the importance of students' skills in accessing, evaluating and disseminating quality digital content. In this case, SMK YPC Tasikmalaya focuses on developing students' ability to understand various forms of religious content spread on the internet. This is in line with the findings of (Nyanasuryanadi et al., 2023) who emphasized the importance of digital literacy in counteracting content that is not in accordance with the values of religious moderation. Religious digital literacy is essential as it helps students to access and understand information from reliable sources on platforms such as Instagram, YouTube and Facebook. The program provides the necessary guidance so that students are not only consumers of information but can also produce useful content for their communities, especially in the form of religious articles, videos and infographics (Sahlan et al., 2022).

This media literacy program in schools aims to help students understand and use digital media wisely, especially for religious content. Empowering students through media literacy is a strategic step to support positive participation in digital da'wah. Media literacy not only equips students with the ability to filter valid information, but also teaches them to utilize digital platforms wisely and creatively to convey religious messages (Muhaemin et al., 2017; Rustandi, 2022). To achieve this goal, the school formed media literacy small groups, where each team has the responsibility of creating religious-themed content. In these groups,

students learn to work together, share ideas and manage their digital projects. Through this collaboration, they not only hone their technical skills, but also learn how to work in teams and build a sense of responsibility for the content they produce.

The media literacy program at SMK YPC Tasikmalaya begins with a basic introduction to digital literacy, including how to search for and recognize valid information, especially religious content. Students are also guided by teachers and mentors to understand media ethics, such as respecting differences and avoiding content that is not in line with religious moderation principles. After understanding these basics, students are taught how to assess the validity of digital content, select information relevant to religious values, and avoid fake news or misleading content. Furthermore, students are trained to create creative da'wah content, such as short videos, infographics and articles on religious moderation, which are then disseminated through social media platforms such as Instagram, YouTube and Blog. They also learn to integrate various digital platforms using hyperlinks to expand the reach of da'wah. Through this program, students not only become smart consumers of information but also creators of relevant and inspiring da'wah content.

At the end of the program, each group presented their work in an exhibition. These works are evaluated based on their creativity, depth of information, as well as their compatibility with the values and ethics of da'wah. The exhibition is not only a showcase for their work, but also an opportunity for students to receive feedback from their teachers, mentors and peers. This feedback is invaluable for improving their skills in media literacy. From here, students are expected to continue to grow and be more prepared to face challenges in an increasingly complex digital space. With this approach, students are not only skilled at creating inspiring da'wah content, but also understand how to utilize digital technology to support the mission of da'wah in a modern, peaceful, and inclusive manner.

The program also emphasizes on the ethical aspects of digital content dissemination. Students are taught to create content that is not only informative, but also in accordance with religious norms and values. The importance of innovation and creativity in using digital technology to teach religious concepts. SMK YPC Tasikmalaya students are trained to use platforms such as YouTube and online learning applications creatively and responsibly, so that the content they create can have a positive impact on many people. Creativity and innovation in using digital media are needed

to make religious concepts more easily understood and accepted by the younger generation who are familiar with technology (Kharismatunisa, 2023).



Source: Author's Observation, 2024

Picture 1.

Regular training of digital literacy program at SMK YPC Tasikmalaya

Source: Personal Documentation

As part of this training, SMK YPC Tasikmalaya students are trained to use platforms such as YouTube and other online learning applications innovatively and responsibly. As explained in Rohman et al. (2024) the use of the YouTube platform for da'wah is not only as an information medium, but also as a medium that is able to produce a positive impact in spreading religious values through creative and interesting content, especially for the younger generation who are more active on social media. They are given the freedom to express their ideas, but are still directed to always consider the impact and relevance of any content produced. Students learn how to utilize digital platforms for positive purposes, such as delivering religious messages that encourage moderation and tolerance. Through the utilization of this technology, students can create content that is not only interesting and informative, but also has a positive impact on many people in the wider digital environment. Religious media literacy can encourage young people to use digital platforms wisely and responsibly, and avoid spreading content that is incompatible with moderate religious values (Usman et al., 2023). This media literacy program aims to equip students with more technical skills, such as how to use social media to spread moderate religious messages. Students are taught to create content that is not only interesting but also educational, such as da'wah videos and religious articles. Digital media is a powerful tool in spreading moderate and inclusive religious messages, provided it is used with the right understanding (Oliver et al.,



2020; Rustandi & Kusnawan, 2023). With their growing digital literacy, students of SMK YPC Tasikmalaya have experienced a role shift from being mere consumers of information to active producers of digital content. They not only receive information, but also play a role in creating and disseminating digital content that is relevant and beneficial to the wider community, especially in terms of religion. The production of this content varies, ranging from infographics on Islamic values, short da'wah videos, to articles discussing moderation in religion. This shows that students are able to utilize the digital skills they learn to educate the public by disseminating positive information (Hasan, 2017).

With the proliferation of information on social media, radical content and misinformation are often found easily. Therefore, it is important for students to have digital literacy skills so that they are able to filter information critically and not easily caught up in the flow of misleading information. Digital literacy plays an important role in helping individuals identify valid information, especially in religious spaces. The importance of active involvement of young people in producing responsible content and promoting positive Islamic values also needs to be emphasized (Zainuddin & Amiruddin, 2019).

SMK YPC Tasikmalaya students utilize their digital literacy skills not only to disseminate religious information but also to contribute to the wider community. They produce content that is accessible to the community, such as articles on religious moderation published on blogs or social media. Thus, students not only learn to understand Islamic values, but also become agents of change who can help spread the values of moderation to a wider audience. This dissemination of moderate Islamic values is an important effort to create a more inclusive and peaceful society (Madjid, 2008).

The literacy program implemented at SMK YPC Tasikmalaya not only provides technical skills in using digital platforms but also forms students' critical awareness in selecting and sharing content. Students are taught to consider the impact of any information they disseminate, so that they are able to act more wisely in utilizing digital media. Digital literacy combined with character education is very important to form a young generation that is responsible in using technology. Media literacy-based character education at SMK YPC Tasikmalaya instills Islamic values that respect peace and avoid provocation (Mulyadi, 2018).

Students' digital literacy skills also strengthen their religious identity. In producing religious content, they not only convey religious information

but also strengthen their own understanding of Islamic teachings. This content production process deepens their religious beliefs and practices in their daily lives. The understanding and application of Islamic values in the context of modern social life can help the younger generation be better prepared to face the challenges of globalization while maintaining their religious identity (Azra, 2000).

This digital literacy program equips students with technical skills while educating them to use digital media wisely and responsibly. Through this program, students are taught to understand the impact of every content they produce and disseminate, making social media a means to convey messages of peace, moderation and tolerance in a religious context. This media literacy reflects the vision to create a generation that is not only proficient in using technology, but also has a deep social and religious sensitivity, as affirmed by (Tabroni, 2016) that the media is a powerful da'wah tool to convey moderate and educative Islamic values in the modern era. As a result, students become more skilled in analyzing and filtering religious content, and are able to produce and disseminate positive messages that support inclusive values to a wider audience.

### **Religious Literacy and the Role of Social Media as a Da'wah Platform**

Social media has become an important tool in the dissemination of Islamic teachings, allowing wide access without geographical or time restrictions. Platforms such as YouTube, Twitter and Facebook provide opportunities for people to access religious teachings in various easy-to-understand formats, such as videos, articles or images. Social media is not only a communication tool but also an interaction space that allows users to engage in broad and inclusive religious discussions. This becomes very relevant in bringing Islamic values closer to the younger generation who are familiar with digital technology, making social media an effective da'wah tool in the modern era (Hamzah, 2017).

Social media serves as a key source of information for many people. Users can access lectures, articles and studies from various Muslim scholars and scholars in diverse forms, allowing them to understand Islamic teachings more easily and deeply. Religious content spread on social media also helps to strengthen people's religious knowledge in a flexible and engaging way, making religious literacy more accessible to all, including those who may have limited access to formal religious education (Muzakki,

2018).

Moreover, social media allows religious learning and discussion to take place in an active and interactive manner. Through digital media, Muslims can engage in wider discussions on various religious issues, deepen their understanding, and share their views with other users from different backgrounds. By providing easy access and diverse content, social media not only supports the dissemination of information but also strengthens religious awareness, providing a means for Muslims to expand their understanding of Islam and apply it in their daily lives (Hamzah, 2017; Muzakki, 2018).

One of the great benefits of social media is its ability to facilitate the formation of online learning communities where users can join in in-depth discussions about religious teachings, share views and enrich understanding in an open atmosphere. This becomes an important foundation for religious literacy, allowing individuals to not only receive information, but also understand religious teachings through dialog and reflection. The platform provides a space for inclusive discussions, even with different views, to strengthen understanding across religions and cultures. Religious learning through social media also enhances interfaith tolerance. Online community-based learning allows students to not only receive information but also interact, share views, and strengthen interfaith social relations, helping to shape a more peaceful and harmonious understanding of diversity (Nurhayati, 2018).

Social media, makes it easier for users to access religious knowledge that might otherwise be out of reach and to join online communities with similar interests. This makes it easier to form online discussion groups that enrich religious understanding, allowing them to share their views and deepen their insights in an atmosphere that supports learning. However, these platforms also present major challenges, especially regarding the rapid spread of disinformation due to the lack of filtering or editing processes. In this regard, a "strategic amplification" approach is highly recommended to ensure that the content amplified on social media is content that supports religious literacy and not content that is misleading or extreme, as revealed in research (Henry, 2021).

Social media provides a great opportunity to maintain interfaith harmony in the post-truth era, a time when false or biased information is easily spread and often given more credence than facts. On digital platforms, people can share positive and peaceful religious values very

quickly and to many people. This helps prevent misunderstandings between religious communities and reduce conflicts that may arise due to misinformation. By having good digital literacy, users can filter information before sharing it, ensuring that what is shared are correct messages that promote harmony, so that all parties can coexist more peacefully. Strong digital literacy is essential to prevent the spread of hoaxes and ensure social media users promote interfaith harmony through correct and educative content (Ruslan & Harahap, 2020).

Social media also provides a space for students and young people to actively participate in religious discussions. Instagram is used by young preachers to deliver da'wah with a relaxed, relevant and tolerant approach, which addresses the needs of young audiences who prefer an inclusive and accessible understanding of religion (A'yuni & Nasrullah, 2012). The development of social media also enables the formation of religious identities among users, as shown by Rumahuru et al. (2020). They found that young people in Ambon utilize social media to strengthen their religiosity, often by following online religious lectures that are able to answer concerns related to contemporary social and religious issues. This platform is not only a source of information but also a place to develop a deeper understanding of religion (Rumahuru et al., 2020).

Based on in-depth interviews, many students revealed that social media such as Instagram, YouTube and WhatsApp have made it easier for them to access religious information and participate in religious discussions. They felt that the media literacy skills they learned at school helped them filter the information found on social media, thus being able to distinguish between valid content and misleading or extreme content. Research by Deviv et al. (2024) supports these findings by showing that social media use has a significant influence on students' behavior and their understanding of digital ethics, making it important for them to understand the ethics of managing content responsibly (Deviv & Rurung Lawa, 2024).

As expressed by Andok (2023) media literacy allows users to understand phenomena such as "*filter bubbles*" and "*echo chambers*" in digital media, which often lead to exposure to homogenized and biased content, making a critical understanding of information crucial, especially in the context of religious content (Andok, 2023). "*Filter bubbles*" are situations where social media algorithms display content that matches the user's preferences, ultimately creating a limited information environment. Users are only exposed to the type of information that aligns with their views or

interests, which limits insights and leads to a lack of understanding of different views. In the context of religion, this can hinder a broader understanding of the diversity of religious teachings and perspectives, which is actually important in creating social harmony (Andok, 2023).

Another phenomenon, "*echo chambers*," occurs when users only interact with groups or communities that share similar views, repeating the same perspectives without any challenges or alternative views. This reinforces certain beliefs or assumptions as all the information received seems to support their opinions. Echo chambers can make religious views more rigid and closed, decreasing the ability to understand and accept different views within religious beliefs. As a result, this homogenized and biased information reinforces prejudice and reduces the space for healthy and inclusive interfaith dialogue (Andok, 2023).

Media literacy helps users to recognize these patterns and develop a critical understanding of the content they consume. With media literacy, users can distinguish valid information from biased ones, as well as realize the limitations created by *filter bubbles* and *echo chambers*. This critical thinking ability is important so that users can go beyond the limited scope of information and start looking for alternative views, enriching their understanding of religion and religiousness in a more holistic and inclusive way. This is crucial for building tolerance and understanding between religious communities amidst the diversity of information available digitally.

Literacy strengthens students' critical thinking skills in assessing the media content they encounter, especially in a digital environment where confusing or misleading content can easily spread. This literacy helps students not only in assessing but also in understanding the type of content that is most relevant and meaningful to them (Zou'bi, 2021). The application of critical thinking skills in media literacy (*Higher-Order Thinking Skills*) can improve students' ability to access and evaluate information on social media, so that students are better equipped to manage information with high social awareness (Setyarini et al., 2023).

Apart from being consumers of information, students of SMK YPC Tasikmalaya have been active in producing creative da'wah materials that are relevant to the digital era, such as short videos, religious articles, and infographics that emphasize the values of moderation. They understand that the da'wah content they present on social media must be designed to convey messages that are peaceful, inclusive, and do not trigger division. Social media becomes a strategic platform to convey religious teachings in

a way that is attractive, effective and easily accessible to a wider audience. The religious moderation campaign through social media is considered an effective approach to building harmony between religious communities. [Anwar \(2023\)](#) asserts that students can spread da'wah messages through various creative formats such as images, short videos, and online discussions that are not provocative, supporting the mission of da'wah to create a peaceful and inclusive society. At SMK YPC Tasikmalaya, students utilize various digital platforms to educate the public about the importance of moderation in religion, while counteracting extreme content that often appears on social media. Through technology-based religious literacy, students are not only consumers of information, but also agents of da'wah who actively create and disseminate relevant and constructive religious messages. They are also able to utilize social media as a modern da'wah tool to reach the younger generation and the wider community with inspiring and kind messages.

## **CONCLUSION**

Media literacy plays an important role in supporting students of SMK YPC Tasikmalaya to engage positively in da'wah activities in the digital space. By combining religious education and technology, media literacy equips students with the ability to sort religious information wisely, avoid extreme content, and produce da'wah materials that are peaceful, inclusive, and relevant to the needs of digital audiences. This literacy program not only trains students to understand information critically, but also encourages them to actively contribute to online religious discussions, by spreading da'wah messages that emphasize the values of tolerance and interfaith harmony. This research confirms the importance of media literacy as a foundation for engaging the younger generation in critical, creative and responsible digital da'wah.

This research has several important implications, especially in the integration of media literacy into the education curriculum as a strategic step to form students who are able to act as creative and moderate digital preachers. With these skills, students can deliver constructive da'wah messages while counteracting the spread of false or extreme religious information on social media. Through this approach, the younger generation can be prepared to carry out da'wah that is relevant to the needs of the digital era, while spreading peaceful, inclusive and tolerant Islamic values to the wider community.

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