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Community Service: Integrating Quranic Literacy and Digital Literacy to Combat Religious Misinformation Among Youth

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Abstract

Objective: This study explores how integrating Quran literacy and digital literacy can empower youth (aged 15-25) to combat religious misinformation online. It aims to equip them with the skills to critically assess and navigate religious content in the digital age. **Theoretical framework:** Grounded in the service learning model, this research combines experiential learning with community service. It integrates Quranic teachings, Tafsir, and digital literacy, helping youth apply Islamic principles to verify and assess religious content encountered online. **Literature review:** Research highlights the growing issue of religious misinformation online and the need for critical digital literacy. Studies suggest that combining religious education, like Tafsir, with digital literacy can help individuals discern misinformation. The service learning model is shown to promote personal growth and social responsibility. **Methods:** The study employed a service-learning-based training program that included theoretical lessons, Tafsir analysis, and case studies. Youth participants (15-25 years old) learned to apply Quranic teachings in evaluating and countering religious misinformation online. Assessments before and after the program measured their improvement in critical thinking and digital engagement. **Results:** Participants showed significant improvement in their ability to evaluate and reject religious misinformation online, applying Quranic principles to make informed decisions in digital spaces. They also expressed greater confidence in navigating religious content responsibly. **Implications:** This study highlights the importance of combining religious education with digital literacy to address online misinformation. It suggests that equipping youth with these skills can foster responsible and informed digital engagement with religious content. **Novelty:** This research is unique in combining Quran literacy and digital literacy to tackle religious misinformation. By using the service learning model it offers a new approach to teaching youth how to apply Quranic values in critically engaging with digital content.

Keywords: digital literacy, religious, misinformation, youth empowerment, community service.

INTRODUCTION

In the digital age, the rapid spread of information through social media and online platforms has led to an alarming rise in disinformation, particularly concerning religious

content. Misinformation about religious practices, beliefs, and figures is increasingly circulated, causing confusion and misconceptions. This trend poses a significant challenge for the younger generation, who, despite being highly proficient in digital media, often lack the critical thinking skills needed to evaluate the religious content they encounter online. Without proper guidance, distinguishing between authentic religious teachings and distorted or misleading interpretations becomes difficult [1]–[3].

In this context, Quran literacy and Tafsir (interpretation) offer essential tools to empower youth in understanding, contextualizing, and challenging religious information they encounter digitally. Quran literacy not only involves the comprehension of the Quranic text but also the application of Tafsir to interpret its deeper meanings and relevance in today's world. This research addresses the vulnerability of youth to religious disinformation by enhancing their Quranic knowledge and Tafsir skills, enabling them to critically evaluate and respond to misleading content online [4], [5].

The primary objectives of this research are to:

1. Enhance the youth's understanding of Quranic teachings and Tafsir skills for interpreting religious texts.
2. Equip youth with the tools to identify and challenge religious disinformation on digital platforms.
3. Employ service learning as a practical method to connect theoretical knowledge with real-life applications.

This study hypothesizes that increasing Quran literacy and Tafsir understanding among youth will significantly improve their ability to identify and reject religious disinformation, fostering a more informed and critical approach to consuming online content. The growing prevalence of religious disinformation makes this research critical in today's digital landscape, as it not only enhances religious education but also nurtures essential critical thinking skills necessary for navigating the complexities of digital media. Previous studies emphasize the importance of religious literacy in combating disinformation, showing that a proper understanding of religious texts like the Quran fosters ethical decision-making and critical thinking. However, there is a notable gap in integrating digital literacy with religious education. Service learning, which combines experiential learning with community engagement, offers an effective solution by encouraging active participation and practical application of knowledge. This approach has been shown to enhance learning outcomes, making it an ideal framework for bridging the gap between religious and digital literacy [6], [7].

Community development plays a crucial role in strengthening the resilience, knowledge, and critical awareness of society, particularly among young people who live in a rapidly changing digital environment. In the context of religious education, the intersection between Quranic literacy and digital literacy is increasingly significant, as misinformation related to religious teachings has become more widespread and sophisticated. Youth, who are the most active users of digital platforms, often face religious content that is misleading, taken out of context, or intentionally manipulated to provoke confusion, conflict, or radical tendencies. Therefore, community service programs that integrate Quranic understanding with digital awareness become essential in shaping a generation capable of navigating these challenges [6], [7].

Quranic literacy serves as a foundational element for young Muslims, enabling them to understand the core values of the Qur'an, such as compassion, justice, critical reflection, and the pursuit of knowledge. When youth possess a strong grounding in authentic religious teachings, they are better equipped to differentiate truth from distortion. However, Quranic literacy alone may not be sufficient in the digital era, as misinformation spreads through

multimedia formats, appealing narratives, and algorithm-driven platforms. Thus, digital literacy becomes a complementary skill that empowers youth to evaluate sources, verify information, question emotional narratives, and avoid the trap of oversimplified or extremist interpretations circulating online. Community service initiatives that merge these two forms of literacy create a holistic educational approach. Through mentoring sessions, workshops, online campaigns, and interactive discussions, youth are guided not only to deepen their religious understanding but also to develop critical digital citizenship. This dual literacy framework encourages them to think analytically, consume information responsibly, and promote positive digital behavior aligned with Islamic ethical principles [8], [9].

Furthermore, such programs strengthen community bonds by bringing together educators, religious leaders, digital experts, parents, and young people in shared learning environments. This collaborative engagement fosters mutual trust, enhances intergenerational communication, and builds a supportive community ecosystem committed to preventing the harmful effects of misinformation. Empowering youth in this way ensures that they become proactive agents of positive change, capable of contributing to peaceful, informed, and digitally responsible communities. In essence, community development that integrates Quranic and digital literacy is not merely an educational effort but a strategic investment in the future of society. It equips young people with the intellectual, spiritual, and technological skills needed to safeguard religious authenticity, resist misinformation, and uphold the integrity of digital discourse [8], [9].

METHODOLOGY

This study employed the service learning methodology, integrating community service with academic learning to offer a practical, hands-on approach to education. The aim was to enhance Quran literacy and Tafsir understanding among youth aged 15-25, focusing on empowering them to identify and counter religious disinformation [10], [11].

The training program consisted of a series of structured sessions, blending theoretical and practical components. Initially, participants were introduced to the foundational principles of the Quran and Tafsir, with an emphasis on understanding the context and interpretation of key verses. Following this, participants engaged in practical exercises where they analyzed specific Quranic verses, discussing their meanings and applying the principles of Tafsir under guided instruction [12], [13].

In addition to theoretical learning, the program included interactive simulations and group discussions centered around real-life cases of religious disinformation. These discussions were designed to help participants critically evaluate religious content circulating on digital platforms, identify misleading or false interpretations, and recognize common tactics used in disinformation [14]–[18].

Furthermore, participants were encouraged to reflect on how they could apply their newly acquired knowledge to address and challenge religious disinformation within their communities and on digital platforms. To assess the effectiveness of the program, data were collected through pre- and post-surveys, as well as reflective group discussions. These methods allowed participants to share their experiences, evaluate their understanding of Quranic teachings and Tafsir, and assess their ability to identify and respond to religious disinformation. The study utilized both qualitative and quantitative data to evaluate the impact of the training on participants' knowledge of the Quran and Tafsir, as well as their digital literacy in relation to religious content [19]–[23].

Table 1. Summary of Methodology

Component	Description
Methodological Approach	Service learning, integrating community service with academic learning.
Target Participants	Youth aged 15–25.
Main Objective	Strengthening Quranic literacy, Tafsir understanding, and ability to counter religious disinformation.
Program Structure	Series of structured sessions combining theory, practice, and digital analysis.
Theoretical Component	Introduction to Quranic principles and Tafsir; contextual interpretation of key verses.
Practical Component	Verse analysis, guided Tafsir application, case-based exercises.
Interactive Activities	Simulations, group discussions, evaluation of real cases of religious disinformation.
Digital Literacy Focus	Identifying misleading content, evaluating online religious information, understanding disinformation tactics.
Reflection Activities	Participants reflect on applying knowledge in community and digital spaces.
Data Collection	Pre- and post-surveys; reflective discussions.
Data Type	Mixed methods: qualitative and quantitative.
Evaluation Focus	Growth in Quranic literacy, Tafsir comprehension, and ability to identify/respond to religious disinformation.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The training program is expected to have a significant impact on the younger generation, especially in how they respond to religious disinformation. Based on prior observations, youth often fall into the trap of spreading unverified information, particularly on religious topics. Through the integration of Quran literacy and Tafsir, the program aimed to enhance their ability to critically assess and respond to such disinformation. The results reflect improvements across several key areas:

Enhancing Religious Understanding

This training successfully deepened participants' knowledge of the Quran and Tafsir, enabling them to better understand the core messages within these texts. By providing a comprehensive introduction to the Quran's teachings and the interpretive framework of Tafsir, the program equipped participants with the tools to understand Quranic messages within their historical and cultural contexts. The participants were taught not only to memorize verses but also to comprehend their deeper meanings and how these teachings can be applied in contemporary life [24]–[28].

Through structured lessons that addressed the historical context, linguistic nuances, and various Tafsir methodologies, participants learned to navigate complex theological issues. This enriched understanding helped participants distinguish between authentic Islamic teachings and misconceptions perpetuated through digital disinformation. Furthermore, the training explored how Quranic messages on ethics, social justice, and personal conduct could guide decisions in the modern world, empowering participants to make informed choices when confronted with misleading information. The goal was not just to increase theoretical knowledge but also to foster a personal connection to the Quran, enabling participants to internalize its values and apply them in daily life [29]–[33].



Figure 1. Community Service: Enhancing Quranic and Digital Literacy to Counter Religious Misinformation

Identifying Disinformation

The training also effectively equipped participants to identify and challenge religious disinformation. By understanding the fundamental teachings of Islam, participants gained the tools to discern between accurate and misleading information. A deep comprehension of the Quran and Tafsir allowed them to build a solid foundation for distinguishing between authentic religious teachings and distorted interpretations commonly spread online [34]–[36].

Participants learned how to critically evaluate religious content by comparing it to established teachings in the Quran and authentic sources. For example, they were trained to recognize distortions of Islamic concepts, misquotations, or fabricated stories presented as religious truths. The training highlighted common tactics used in spreading disinformation, such as selective quoting, cherry-picking verses out of context, or manipulating Islamic teachings to serve particular agendas [37]–[39].

Furthermore, understanding the historical and contextual background of Quranic verses enabled participants to challenge misinterpretations. Applying the principles of Tafsir, they learned to verify the accuracy of religious claims and critically assess religious content on digital media, including social media posts, articles, and videos. This process fostered a more informed and responsible approach to consuming and sharing religious content online.

Applying Tafsir in Daily Life

A robust understanding of Tafsir empowered participants to apply Quranic teachings in their daily lives, particularly when navigating the complexities of the digital world. Tafsir provided them with deeper insights into the Quran's verses, helping them to understand not just the literal meaning but also the contextual, historical, and moral dimensions. This understanding allowed participants to approach modern challenges, such as disinformation, with ethical clarity and spiritual awareness [40]–[44].

When faced with conflicting or misleading information online, those with a solid foundation in Tafsir were able to use Quranic principles—such as honesty, integrity, and justice—to guide their decision-making. Tafsir also offered context for the teachings of the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) and the early Muslim community, enabling participants to draw parallels to current issues and develop responses grounded in Islamic values. Moreover, Tafsir acted as a moral compass, helping youth resist harmful online trends, manipulation, and deceptive narratives. By internalizing these teachings, participants

became more equipped to protect themselves from misinformation, foster respectful online communication, and contribute to creating a more ethical online environment [45]–[49].



Picture 2. Youth Development through Quranic and Digital Literacy to Counter Religious Misinformation

Encouraging Proactive Responses to Disinformation

A key objective of the training was to encourage participants to adopt a proactive approach in dealing with religious disinformation. Rather than passively consuming information, participants were trained to engage critically with content, especially within the digital media landscape. Through active learning techniques such as discussions, group activities, and case studies, participants were taught the importance of verifying information before accepting it as truth [50]–[53].

They learned to critically assess the credibility of sources, identify biases, and use Quranic principles and Tafsir to evaluate the authenticity of religious content. For instance, when encountering religious claims on social media, participants were trained to cross-reference these claims with the Quran and Tafsir. They were encouraged to ask critical questions: Does this statement align with the core teachings of Islam? Is the source trustworthy? What context is missing from this information?

This proactive approach not only strengthened participants' ability to navigate disinformation but also empowered them to become responsible consumers and sharers of information. By developing these skills, participants were better equipped to reduce the spread of false or misleading religious content in the digital world [54]–[56].

Community Service Analysis: Integrating Quranic Literacy and Digital Literacy to Combat Religious Misinformation Among Youth

This community service initiative represents a strategic and timely response to one of the most pressing challenges of the digital era: the rapid spread of religious misinformation among youth. The program's central aim—to integrate Quranic literacy with digital literacy—reflects an innovative approach that bridges traditional religious education with modern media realities. By focusing on youth aged 15–25, the program targets a demographic highly active in digital environments yet vulnerable to manipulation, misinterpretation, and misinformation regarding religious content. This analysis evaluates the conceptual foundations, implementation, outcomes, and broader societal implications of the initiative.

Conceptual Foundation and Relevance

The program is grounded in the service learning framework, which merges theoretical instruction with practical experience. This model is appropriate because combating misinformation requires not only knowledge but also real-life application of critical thinking and ethical awareness. The integration of Quranic literacy and Tafsir provides a strong intellectual foundation, ensuring that youth are not merely familiar with the Qur'an's text but also with its interpretive principles, contexts, and moral teachings.

In today's digital landscape, online religious content is often presented without context, selectively quoted, or reshaped to promote extremist viewpoints. Youth—who frequently consume information through short-form videos, social media posts, and algorithm-driven feeds—may lack the analytical tools needed to distinguish reputable sources from manipulative or misleading ones. Therefore, combining religious understanding with digital awareness is essential for preventing ideological distortion, conflict, radicalization, and confusion. This program addresses a clear gap: religious education often remains text-focused and traditional, while digital literacy training typically ignores moral, spiritual, or religious dimensions. The synergy created here demonstrates how dual literacy equips young people with balanced competencies—spiritual, intellectual, and technological.

Program Implementation

The methodology was structured around a sequence of theoretical instruction, practical Tafsir analysis, digital evaluations, and interactive learning. The program's design thoughtfully aligned content with participants' needs and contemporary challenges.

- a. **Theoretical Component:** Participants received instruction on Quranic foundations, including historical contexts, thematic messages, linguistic nuances, and methodological principles of Tafsir. This strengthened their grounding in Islamic scholarship beyond surface-level readings.
- b. **Practical Tafsir Exercises:** The applied Tafsir sessions allowed youth to interpret specific verses using guided analysis. This experiential learning enhanced comprehension and cultivated the ability to connect scripture with contemporary issues.
- c. **Digital Literacy Training:** Real-world cases of religious misinformation from social media, blogs, and messaging apps were examined. Through simulations and group discussions, participants learned to identify distortion techniques such as selective quoting, emotive manipulation, fabricated narratives, and decontextualization.
- d. **Reflection and Community Engagement:** The participants were encouraged to reflect on their roles as digital citizens and as agents of ethical online behavior. The pre- and post-assessment approach provided measurable indicators of improvement.

This structured and multi-layered approach demonstrates strong pedagogical coherence and strategic alignment with program objectives.

Impact and Outcomes

The results, as described, indicate significant improvement in participants' knowledge, confidence, and critical engagement. Several key outcomes stand out:

a. Strengthening Quranic Understanding

Participants reported greater comprehension of Quranic messages, not only at a surface level but also in their ethical and contextual dimensions. Exposure to various Tafsir methodologies helped them move beyond literal interpretations, enabling nuanced thinking—an essential skill when confronting online distortions.

b. Enhanced Disinformation Detection

The program effectively equipped youth to identify misleading religious narratives. By cross-referencing claims with authentic sources, examining context, and applying principles of verification, participants developed stronger digital skepticism and evaluative competence.

c. Ethical and Practical Application

With Tafsir functioning as a moral guide, youth became more capable of applying Quranic values such as justice, honesty, and critical thought to their digital interactions. This improved their ability not only to detect misinformation but also to respond in ways that promote constructive dialogue and community harmony.

d. Proactive Engagement

Perhaps the most transformative outcome is the shift from passive consumption to active critical engagement. Participants learned to question information, assess reliability, and engage responsibly with contentious online content. This mindset is vital for building long-term resilience against misinformation.

Broader Social and Educational Implications

This initiative has far-reaching implications for community development, religious education, and digital culture:

- a. **Community Strengthening:** By involving educators, religious leaders, youth mentors, and parents, the program fosters collaborative learning environments and intergenerational dialogue.
- b. **Counter-Radicalization:** Strengthening Quranic comprehension and digital critical thinking contributes to preventing radicalization and extremism.
- c. **Educational Reform:** The model demonstrates an effective framework for integrating digital literacy into Islamic education, suggesting potential for adoption in schools, pesantren, and community centers.
- d. **Sustainable Digital Ethics:** The approach supports the development of ethical digital citizens who uphold Islamic values while navigating modern media challenges.

Overall, this community service initiative successfully demonstrates how integrating Quranic literacy with digital literacy can shape informed, ethical, and critically engaged youth. It represents an innovative and actionable model for addressing the complex issue of online religious misinformation. The program's structured design, measurable outcomes, and transformative impact highlight the value of multidimensional learning approaches in strengthening religious understanding, digital competence, and community resilience.

CONCLUSION

This study underscores the critical importance of integrating Quran literacy and Tafsir with digital literacy to equip youth with the skills needed to navigate and counter religious disinformation in the digital age. By combining traditional religious education with modern digital engagement strategies, the research demonstrates how youth can be empowered to critically evaluate religious content online and respond proactively to misinformation. The training program effectively enhanced participants' understanding of the Quran and Tafsir, enabling them to better comprehend the teachings of Islam, identify distorted religious content, and apply Quranic principles in their daily lives. Moreover, it fostered a deeper connection to their faith, empowering youth to use their knowledge to combat misinformation in their communities and on digital platforms. The results highlight the importance of a holistic educational approach that combines religious literacy with critical thinking and digital media skills. This model not only helps youth become more informed consumers of religious content but also strengthens their capacity to make ethical decisions based on Quranic values. In an era where digital disinformation is increasingly prevalent,

this study offers a valuable framework for developing responsible and ethical digital citizens who can contribute to a more informed and respectful online environment. Further research is needed to explore the long-term impact of Quran literacy and Tafsir education on reducing religious disinformation, as well as the potential for scaling such programs across different regions and educational systems. This study also calls for greater integration of religious education and digital literacy in formal curricula to better prepare the younger generation for the challenges of the digital age.

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Author Contribution

Yusuf Rohmat Yanuri designed the program framework, supervised field activities, and contributed to data interpretation. Yogi Muhammad Saputro coordinated community sessions, collected field observations, and prepared the manuscript. Both authors collaborated equally in analyzing findings and finalizing the overall structure of the study.

Conflicts of Interest

The authors declare no conflicts of interest regarding the planning, implementation, or reporting of this community service project. All activities were conducted independently, without external pressure or financial influence. The results reflect genuine observations and interactions with participating youth and community stakeholders.

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