

ISLAMIC EDUCATION IN THE POST-TRUTH ERA: STRENGTHENING MEDIA LITERACY AND CRITICAL THINKING

Pandu Rizky Prasistyo¹, Irsyad Zamli Pratama², Muhammad Jafar
Sidiq³, Herlini Puspika Sari⁴, Desi Gustiani⁵

^{1,2,3,4}Universitas Islam Negeri Sultan Syarif Kasim Riau, Indonesia
Jl. HR. Soebrantas No.15, Simpang Baru, Kec. Tambang, Kota Pekanbaru, Riau 28293

⁵Sakarya University, Türkiye
Esentepe Kampüsü, Esentepe, Üniversite Cd., 54050 Serdivan/Sakarya, Turki

e-mail: 12310112097@students.uin-suska.ac.id¹, 12310114096@students.uin-suska.ac.id²,
12310113645@students.uin-suska.ac.id³, herlini.puspika.sari@uin-suska.ac.id⁴,
22500909002@subu.edu.tr⁵

Abstract: The development of digital technology and social media has led to the emergence of the post-truth phenomenon, a condition in which opinions and emotions influence public perception more than objective facts. This phenomenon poses challenges for the education sector, including Islamic education, because students are increasingly exposed to unverified information that can potentially lead to misunderstandings of religious teachings. This study aims to analyze the impact of the post-truth era on Islamic education, examine the role of media literacy in the learning process, and identify strategies of Islamic education in developing a critical generation amid the flood of digital information. This research employs a qualitative approach using a literature review method by examining various scientific sources relevant to the research topic. Data collection was conducted through the exploration and review of scientific journal articles related to the post-truth phenomenon, media literacy, and Islamic education. The collected data were analyzed descriptively to understand the relationship between the post-truth phenomenon and the strengthening of Islamic education. The results show that the post-truth era requires Islamic education not only to focus on the transmission of religious knowledge but also to develop students' media literacy and critical thinking skills. Therefore, the integration of media literacy in Islamic education is a strategic effort to develop Muslim generations who are able to filter information wisely and responsibly.

Keywords: post-truth, Islamic education, media literacy, critical thinking, digital era.

Corresponding Author: Pandu Rizky Prasistyo				
Article History	Submitted: March 16, 2026	Revision: April 23, 2026	Accepted: June 30, 2026	Published: June 30, 2026
DOI: https://doi.org/10.56832/pema.v6i1.2775				

INTRODUCTION

The development of digital technology has fundamentally changed the way society obtains, produces, and distributes information. Advances in the internet, social media, and artificial intelligence allow information to spread within seconds without adequate verification. This situation has given rise to the post-truth phenomenon, a situation where emotions, personal beliefs, and public opinion have a greater influence on shaping public perceptions than verifiable, objective facts. According to Ralph Keyes (2004), the post-truth era is characterized by an increasingly blurred line between fact and opinion. Lee McIntyre (2018) emphasized that this phenomenon is not only related to the spread of misinformation but also to a weakening of public trust in scientific evidence and the authority of knowledge. Consequently, students face increasingly complex challenges in distinguishing valid information from manipulative information. Therefore, education must now face new pressures to strengthen students' media literacy and critical thinking skills to avoid being trapped by perceptual biases or misleading emotional narratives (Maulana & Syarif, 2025).

The post-truth phenomenon has more complex implications for Islamic education because religious learning is not solely oriented toward mastering knowledge, but also toward the formation of morals, ethics, and character based on the values of the Quran and Sunnah. The uncontrolled flow of digital information makes students increasingly vulnerable to hoaxes, disinformation, hate speech, and religious interpretations lacking scientific basis. This situation has the potential to distort Islamic understanding and weaken critical thinking in responding to religious information. Therefore, Islamic education is required not only to develop religious competence but also to develop media literacy and digital literacy skills as part of strengthening students' character (Ardina Rasiani et al., 2025).

Various studies have examined the relationship between the post-truth phenomenon, digital literacy, and Islamic education. Maulana and Syarif (2025) explain that the post-truth era poses new challenges for education through the dominance of subjective information, which displaces the role of objective facts in the process of knowledge formation. Ardina Rasiani et al. (2025) emphasize the importance of media literacy as an Islamic education strategy in addressing the spread of disinformation among young Muslims. Meanwhile, Febriana and Khasanah (2025) demonstrate that digital literacy plays a strategic role in building students' character, enabling them to use digital media responsibly. On the other hand, international research by Renee Hobbs (2017) confirms that media literacy is a 21st-century competency that

must be integrated into the learning process to develop students' analytical, reflective, and critical skills regarding various forms of digital information.

However, these studies still show several limitations. Most research focuses on discussing digital literacy or media literacy as a practical solution to address the spread of invalid information, without comprehensively integrating the core values of Islamic education, such as *tabayyun* (trust), *amanah* (trustworthiness), *hikmah* (wisdom), and moral responsibility, as an epistemological framework for addressing the post-truth phenomenon. Furthermore, previous research has generally been descriptive in nature, emphasizing the urgency of media literacy. However, it has not yet produced a conceptual synthesis of how Islamic education can develop critical thinking skills through the integration of media literacy and Islamic values. Thus, a research gap remains, resulting in the lack of a conceptual framework that explains the relationship between the post-truth phenomenon, media literacy, critical thinking, and the principles of Islamic education in an integrated manner. (Febriana & Khasanah, 2025)

Based on this gap, this study offers a novel conceptual synthesis of strategies for strengthening Islamic education in the face of the post-truth era through the integration of media literacy with Islamic values, particularly *tabayyun* (trust), *amanah* (trustworthiness), and *hikmah* (wisdom), as the foundation for developing students' critical thinking skills. This approach is expected to broaden the perspective of Islamic education, which has been largely understood as a process of transferring religious knowledge to one that fosters critical, ethical, and responsible thinking competencies in the face of the deluge of digital information.

METHOD

This research employed a qualitative approach with a literature review design. This approach was chosen because the research aims to deeply understand, interpret, and synthesize various concepts, theories, and research findings related to the post-truth phenomenon, media literacy, critical thinking, and Islamic education. Qualitative research enables researchers to gain a comprehensive understanding of a phenomenon through critical interpretation of various scientific sources, thereby producing a more comprehensive conceptual construct (Creswell & Poth, 2018). In this study, researchers analyzed various scientific literature, books, academic articles, and relevant documents as the primary data sources to comprehensively describe the phenomenon using an interpretative and narrative approach (Suganda et al., 2025).

The literature review was conducted by reviewing various relevant scientific sources, including reputable national and international journal articles, academic books, scientific proceedings, and policy documents related to Islamic education, media literacy, critical thinking, and the post-truth phenomenon. A systematic literature search was conducted through several scientific databases, including Google Scholar, Scopus, Crossref, and Dimensions, using the keywords post-truth, Islamic education, media literacy, critical thinking, digital literacy, and Islamic education. The selected literature prioritized publications from the last ten years to capture the latest developments in research, without neglecting the classic literature that serves as the theoretical foundation for the concepts of post-truth and media literacy (McIntyre, 2018).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The Impact of the Post-Truth Era on Islamic Education

The post-truth era is a social condition in which personal opinions, emotions, and beliefs often influence public perception more than objective facts. This phenomenon is rapidly developing along with advances in digital technology and social media, which allow information to spread rapidly without adequate verification. In the context of education, this situation poses a significant challenge because students can receive a variety of information that may not be based on scientific truth or credible sources. This situation demands that the education system, including Islamic education, equip students with critical thinking skills to avoid being easily influenced by misleading information (Alza Nabel Zamzami et al., 2024).

From an Islamic education perspective, the post-truth phenomenon impacts not only students' cognitive abilities but also their understanding of religious values. Religious information circulating in digital media often lacks clear references, which can lead to misunderstandings of Islamic teachings. When students receive such information without verification, the potential for distortion in religious understanding increases. Therefore, Islamic religious education plays a crucial role in guiding the younger generation to understand Islamic teachings comprehensively and resist the influence of baseless narratives (Febriana & Khasanah, 2025).

Other research also shows that young people who actively use digital media are more likely to be exposed to manipulative information. This type of information is often packaged in an attractive and emotional manner, making it easy to believe without thorough verification. This situation suggests that the primary challenge for education in the post-truth era is developing

critical awareness of the information received. Islamic education needs to provide an understanding that truth in Islam is not solely determined by the popularity of the information, but by the validity of the source and its compliance with sharia values (Ardina Rasiani et al., 2025).

Furthermore, the post-truth phenomenon also has the potential to influence students' social and moral attitudes. Inaccurate information can trigger conflict, polarization, and intolerance if not handled wisely. Therefore, Islamic education needs to instill values such as honesty, responsibility, and a positive attitude of *tabayyun* (reflection) in receiving information. The Islamic principle of *tabayyun* (intelligible text) teaches the importance of verifying information before believing it, thus preventing students from spreading misinformation (Abu Amar Bustomi et al., 2023).

Overall, the post-truth era presents new challenges for Islamic education in developing a generation capable of critical thinking and responsibility regarding the information they receive. Islamic education serves not only as a means of transferring religious knowledge but also as a process for developing students' character and analytical skills. Therefore, integrating information literacy into Islamic education learning is a strategic step in facing the increasingly complex challenges of the digital era (Ningrum et al., 2025).

The Role of Media Literacy in Islamic Education

Media literacy is the ability to access, understand, analyze, and evaluate information obtained through various digital media. In the post-truth era, media literacy has become a crucial competency because society is faced with a vast and diverse flow of information. Without adequate media literacy skills, students will struggle to distinguish between valid information and manipulative information. Therefore, media literacy needs to be an integral part of the learning process in Islamic education (Maysurah et al., 2025).

In the context of religious education, media literacy relates not only to technical skills in using technology but also to the ability to think critically about the content received. Students need to be taught to evaluate information sources, understand the context of messages, and identify potential biases within information. Thus, media literacy can help students understand Islamic teachings more objectively and avoid being easily influenced by inaccurate information (Rusadi et al., 2019).

Furthermore, media literacy is also related to character development in students who use digital media responsibly. Islamic values such as honesty, trustworthiness, and responsibility need to be integrated into social

media use so that students become not just consumers of information but also wise media users. This is crucial because digital media serves not only as a means of obtaining information but also as a space for social interaction that influences individual thought patterns and behavior. (Husain & Kaharu, 2021)

Research shows that integrating media literacy into learning can improve students' critical thinking skills. Through this approach, students are trained to analyze various information sources, compare different perspectives, and draw conclusions based on available evidence. This process helps students develop the analytical skills necessary to face the various information challenges of the digital age (Widodo et al., 2019).

Therefore, media literacy plays a strategic role in strengthening the quality of Islamic education in the digital age. Integrating media literacy into the religious education curriculum can help shape a generation of Muslims who not only deeply understand Islamic teachings but are also able to face various information challenges with a critical and wise attitude.

Islamic Education Strategy in Building a Critical Generation

To face the challenges of the post-truth era, Islamic education needs to develop learning strategies that can develop students' critical thinking skills. One strategy is to integrate digital literacy into the Islamic Religious Education curriculum. This integration aims to ensure that students not only understand religious teachings normatively but also are able to analyze various information related to religious issues in digital media (Alza Nabel Zamzami et al., 2024).

In addition to curriculum integration, improving teacher competency is also a crucial factor in developing a critical generation. Islamic Education teachers need adequate digital literacy skills to guide students in evaluating information obtained from the internet and social media. Thus, teachers serve not only as transmitters of material but also as facilitators, helping students understand the realities of information in the digital age (Febriana & Khasanah, 2025).

Another strategy that can be implemented is the use of discussion-based learning methods and case analysis. In this method, students are invited to analyze various examples of information circulating in digital media, then discuss its truth and impact on people's lives. This approach can help students develop critical thinking skills and raise awareness of the importance of verifying information (Ardina Rasiani et al., 2025).

Furthermore, character education also needs to be an essential part of Islamic education strategies. Values such as honesty, responsibility, and *tabayyun* (reflection) must be instilled from an early age so that students have a strong moral foundation in dealing with the various information circulating in society. Character education based on Islamic values can help students understand that the use of information must be accompanied by moral responsibility (Ningrum et al., 2025).

Ultimately, the Islamic education strategy for developing a critical generation must be implemented holistically, combining cognitive, moral, and spiritual aspects. This approach aims not only to improve students' critical thinking skills but also to develop strong character to face the various challenges of information in the digital age. With the right strategy, Islamic education can play a vital role in creating a generation that is intelligent, critical, and responsible in using information (Maysurah et al., 2025).

CONCLUSION

The post-truth era presents new challenges for education, particularly Islamic education, as the rapid flow of digital information is often not accompanied by adequate verification processes. This situation has the potential to influence how students understand information, including religious information, thereby increasing the risk of misunderstandings of Islamic teachings. Therefore, Islamic education plays a crucial role in equipping the younger generation with critical thinking skills by strengthening media literacy and digital literacy. Integrating media literacy into learning, improving teacher competency, and implementing learning strategies that encourage critical analysis and discussion are crucial steps in developing a generation capable of selecting information wisely. With a holistic approach that integrates cognitive, moral, and spiritual aspects, Islamic education is expected to shape a generation of Muslims who not only understand religious teachings correctly but also possess a critical and responsible attitude in dealing with various information in the digital era.

REFERENCES

- Abu Amar Bustomi, Sholahuddin, A., Hariyanto, T., Suadi, & Abdur, R. (2023). Anti hoax and media literacy in pesantren in the post-truth era. *International Journal of Humanities Technology and Civilization*, 8(2), 99–108. <https://doi.org/10.15282/ijhtc.v8i2.9859>
- Alza Nabel Zamzami, Putri, D. T., & Junaedi, M. (2024). The Islamic religious education in the post-truth era. *TOFEDU: The Future of Education Journal*, 3(5), 1324–1334. <https://journal.tofedu.or.id/index.php/journal/index>
- Ardina Rasiani, Sari, H. P., Wilis, E., & Setiawarni, U. (2025). Pendidikan Islam di era *post-truth*: Tantangan dan strategi literasi media bagi generasi muda. *IHSAN: Jurnal Pendidikan Islam*, 3(2), 381–390. <https://doi.org/10.61104/ihsan.v3i2.947>
- Creswell, J. W., & Poth, C. N. (2018). *Qualitative inquiry and research design: Choosing among five approaches* (4th ed.). Sage Publications.
- Febriana, F. N., & Khasanah, N. (2025). Pendidikan Islam di era *post-truth*: Peran dan tantangan literasi digital bagi Generasi Z. *EL-DARISA: Jurnal Pendidikan Islam*, 4(2), 122–140. <http://ejournal.staihwduri.ac.id/index.php/eldarisa/>
- Hobbs, R. (2017). *Create to learn: Introduction to digital literacy*. Wiley.
- Husain, R., & Kaharu, A. (2021). Menghadapi era abad ke-21: Tantangan guru pendidikan anak usia dini di Kabupaten Bone Bolango. *Jurnal Obsesi: Jurnal Pendidikan Anak Usia Dini*, 5(1), 85–97. <https://doi.org/10.31004/obsesi.v5i1.527>
- Keyes, R. (2004). *The post-truth era: Dishonesty and deception in contemporary life*. St. Martin's Press.
- Krippendorff, K. (2019). *Content analysis: An introduction to its methodology* (4th ed.). Sage Publications.
- Maulana, A. R. I., & Syarif, A. A. (2025). *Post-truth* dan tantangannya dalam dunia pendidikan. *Paradigma: Jurnal Kalam dan Filsafat*, 7(1), 56–82. <https://doi.org/10.15408/paradigma.v7i1.46905>
- Maysurah, M., Maimun, M., Suyyirah, S., & Ain, N. (2025). Pendidikan agama Islam di era *post-truth*: Upaya penguatan karakter siswa melalui literasi digital. *Jurnal Pendidikan dan Ilmu-Ilmu Keislaman*, 11(2). <https://doi.org/10.46963/aulia.v11i2.3448>
- McIntyre, L. (2018). *Post-truth*. MIT Press.
- Ningrum, U. D., Syahdan, M. T., Ritonga, I. W., & Sari, H. P. (2025). Penguatan pendidikan Islam di era *post-truth*: Peran literasi media dalam menangkal distorsi informasi. *Robbayana: Jurnal Pendidikan Agama Islam*, 3(1), 1–16. <https://doi.org/10.71029/robbayana.v3i1.69>

- Rusadi, B. E., Widiyanto, R., & Lubis, R. R. (2019). Analisis *learning and innovation skills* mahasiswa PAI melalui pendekatan saintifik dalam implementasi keterampilan abad ke-21. *Conciencia*, 19(2), 112–131. <https://doi.org/10.19109/conciencia.v19i2.4323>
- Schreier, M. (2012). *Qualitative content analysis in practice*. Sage Publications.
- Suganda, D. A., Haura, R., Widodo, S., & Datu, Y. A. (2025). *Metode penelitian kualitatif, kuantitatif dan campuran: Teori dan implementasi*. Media Penerbit Indonesia.
- Sugiyono. (2023). *Metode penelitian kualitatif* (3rd ed.). Alfabeta.
- Widodo, A., Indraswati, D., & Sobri, M. (2019). Analisis nilai-nilai kecakapan abad ke-21 dalam buku siswa SD/MI kelas V subtema 1 *Manusia dan Lingkungan*. *Jurnal Tarbiyah: Jurnal Ilmiah Kependidikan*, 8(2), 125–133. <https://doi.org/10.20961/ddi.v10i2.64544>