

# IMPROVING STUDENTS' DIGITAL LITERACY THROUGH THE RELIGIOUS CHARACTER IN MADRASAH TSANAWIYAH NEGERI 1 SIDRAP: TEACHERS' PERSPECTIVES

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Article received August 25<sup>th</sup>, 2022; Article revised October 11<sup>th</sup>, 2022; Article approved October 17<sup>th</sup>, 2022

## **Abstract**

*Students' digital literacy has become crucial in society 5.0, but it also brings negative effects on students' development. Character education comes to reduce the drawbacks of using technology, particularly religious character. Madrasah Tsanawiyah Negeri (MTsN) 1 Sidrap was selected as it develops students' digital literacy through the integration of e-learning Madrasah and Google Meet. It also supports students' religious character since it is a Madrasah, offering more religious subjects than junior high schools. This study used qualitative research with a semi-structured interview to obtain in-depth data. The participants in this research were three teachers. They were one female Mathematics teacher who is also an ICT (Information and Communication Technology) teacher and two male Islamic teachers. This study found that students' digital literacy has met the standards required by the curriculum. However, students' digital culture and ethics need more attention since students have an opportunity to access inappropriate content and plagiarism. The religious character could overcome such issues by implementing religious dimensions, particularly religious belief, ritual, devotion, experience, and knowledge. Moreover, the dimension of religious ritual reveals that although students practice the pillars of Islam, it does not practically make students stop doing things that are forbidden by the Islamic religion. Hence, the indicators of students' religious character in the curriculum that focuses on students' religious rituals or practices are inadequate. The dimensions of religious devotion and experience are crucial in describing students' attachment to Allah, which can increase students' awareness to avoid behaviors that violate Islamic teachings.*

**Keywords:** *digital literacy, religiosity, religious character, Madrasah Tsanawiyah*

## **INTRODUCTION**

Indonesia faces society 5.0, which aims to create a smart community by integrating the virtual world using the latest technology (Shiroishi et al., 2019). In the education aspect, it is indicated by the use of online learning during the Covid-19 pandemic. All education levels integrate technology into teaching and learning processes to create online learning as students must study from home. Although face-to-face learning is allowed now, technology integration into teaching and learning processes is continued and developed.

The use of technology is related to digital literacy, which has accommodated the learning process during Covid-19. Digital literacy consists of digital skills, digital culture, digital ethics, and digital safety. The role of technology becomes critical in education, particularly in supporting students' digital literacy, which is significant in facing society 5.0. As the future generation, students must have sufficient digital literacy to be competitive in this digital era. Thus, schools have to provide learning environments that could help students develop their digital literacy.

According to previous studies, some schools have supported students' digital literacy through technology in the learning process. It includes the integration of several learning media, such as digital flipbooks (A et al., 2020), smart learning media based on android technology (Novaliendry et al., 2020), and value-based digital storytelling learning media (Saripudin et al., 2021). Such articles proved that students' digital literacy is developed through the integration of advanced technology.

Nevertheless, some schools find challenges in terms of students' digital literacy. It includes the limited capacity of teachers to use technology and inadequate learning equipment. Some teachers only use Whatsapp as an online learning medium, which is ineffective for online learning. Also, computers are not proportional to the number of students. The Indonesian government is working on a solution to this problem by conducting technology training for teachers and providing school computers.

Another important task of schools is overcoming the detrimental effects of using technology in learning. As users, it is unavoidable that students must deal with technology's drawbacks. Students have lower social contact, a lack of digital equipment, limited access to the internet, and the possibility of cheating are the drawbacks of technology use (Dewi, 2021; Kryeziu, 2021). Concerning such effects, the lower social contact and the possibility of cheating harm students' development. Therefore, schools must focus on such drawbacks.

The concept of character education is crucial in maintaining students' behavior, particularly in society 5.0. It becomes a boundary for students when receiving unclear information through the internet. Character education consists of religiosity, nationalism, integrity, independence, and cooperation. Among the five characters, the religious character is crucial in constructing students' behavior (Nurgiansah, 2022). Religious character is the most basic and main character that needs to be instilled in students because religion is the basis of the lives of individuals, society, and the state (Nurbaiti et al., 2020).

Furthermore, religious characters are related to students' digital literacy. Many previous studies focus on using digital literacy to improve students' religious

characters. Students can build their religious characters through digital literacy, mainly using online religious content that can be widely accessed (Susilawati et al., 2021). In addition, Islamic education teachers are encouraged to increase their digital literacy to provide creative and interactive teaching so that students can build their religious characters effectively (Eraku et al., 2021). Hence, digital literacy could increase students' religious characters.

On the other hand, religious characters also contribute to students' digital literacy. Religious characters embrace five dimensions: religious belief, worship, practice, experience, and knowledge (El-Menouar, 2014). Such dimensions align with Indonesia's four pillars of digital literacy (Indonesian Ministry of Communication and Informatics, 2021). Therefore, this study is different from the previous articles since it aims to explore the role of students' religious characters in increasing digital literacy. The results are significant for education since it provides an alternative way to improve students' digital literacy, which is the primary concern in society 5.0. Moreover, this research reveals the crucial role of religious characters in overcoming the detrimental effects of using technology, so students could maximize the benefits of digital literacy and minimize the drawbacks of era society 5.0 through religious characters.

## **Literature Review**

### **Digital Literacy**

Since 1997, digital literacy has been discussed as the result of internet use (Gilster, 1997). Today, digital literacy has become crucial with the emergence of society 5.0, where technology is used to ensure society's conformity in all aspects of life (Deguchi et al., 2020). In recent years, the impact of the Society 5.0 era has been evident in the changes in the education system. The increasing use of technology brings critical structural changes. Face-to-face teaching in the classroom is no longer an essential requirement in the teaching and learning process. Society 5.0's modern technology has driven digital teaching with video conferencing and virtual reality tools, reaching more students simultaneously without the constraints of the classroom (Narvaez Rojas et al., 2021).

In Indonesia, digital literacy started to stand out during the Covid-19 pandemic. All schools must integrate technology into teaching and learning to provide online learning for students. Various learning media are now developed to support students' learning processes. The such situation shows that some parties in education have sufficient digital literacy. It is crucial since students are the future generation, so their learning environment must support students' digital literacy, which is a survival skill in this digital era.

Digital literacy consists of digital consumption, competencies, and security (Yashalova et al., 2019). Digital consumption is the use of online services. Digital competencies are the ability to increase the effectiveness of technology, such as the ability to use technology and think critically about much unclear information on the internet. Digital safety is vigilance in providing personal data when using digital services.

Such aspects align with the four pillars of digital literacy constructed by the Indonesian Ministry of Information and Communication: digital skills, digital culture, digital ethics, and digital safety (Indonesian Ministry of Communication and Informatics, 2021). Digital skills are the ability to know, understand, and use the ICT (Information and Communication Technology) software and hardware and digital operation systems in daily life. Digital culture is the ability to read, decipher, familiarize, examine, and construct national insights, *Pancasila*, and *Bhinneka Tunggal Ika* values daily. Digital ethics are the availability to realize, exemplify, adapt, rationalize, consider, and develop netiquette in daily life. Digital safety is the ability to recognize, pattern, apply, analyze, consider, and increase the awareness of personal data protection and digital security in daily life. Such pillars are used to determine a person's digital literacy level.

Concerning the four pillars, education has developed such pillars in teaching and learning processes. Digital skills are applied when students use several technology-based learning media, such as Google meet or zoom meeting. However, students' digital culture, ethics, and digital safety must be increased. Thus, this research offers an alternative way to develop it through the religious characters of students.

## Religious Characters

Character education is something that absolutely must be implemented because basically all teachers as educators have the same goal of shaping the nation's character. In society 5.0, character education is crucial to maintain students' good behavior in the midst of the rampant bad influence of the internet. Character is the axis of education in Indonesia (Indonesian Ministry of Education and Culture, 2017). Hence, character education is improved continually to ensure students' quality.

In 2010, the Indonesian Ministry of National Education introduced 18 characters in character education, which are religious, honesty, tolerance, discipline, hard work, the creative, independent, democratic, curious, spirit of nationality, loving country, appreciating achievement, communicative, loving peace, like to read, environmental care, social care, and responsibility (Indonesian Ministry of National Education, 2010). Then, a program to strengthen character education was launched to support the implementation of character education (Indonesian Ministry of Education and Culture, 2017). It is an educational movement in schools to strengthen the character of students through the harmonization of the heart (ethics), taste (aesthetics), thought (literacy), and sports (kinesthetic) with the support of public involvement and cooperation between schools, families, and society. It focuses on five characteristics, which are religious, nationalist, integrity, independence, and mutual cooperation.

Religious character is the first principal value that reflects the belief in the almighty God. It becomes a crucial character in society 5.0 since a religious person has a guideline that forbids doing things that are not in accordance with the teachings of their religion. Such a principle is helpful for students in fortifying themselves from moral damage, which is increased during internet use. In educational institutions, various academic problems occur, such as students violating school rules, not doing assignments, arriving late, cheating, playing truancy, and disobeying teachers because of the loss of religious character (Ahsanulhaq, 2019). Therefore, religious character is crucial for students' development.

The religious characteristics are the obedient attitude and behavior in carrying out the teachings of the religion he adheres to, being tolerant of other worshipers, and living in harmony with followers of other religions (Indonesian Ministry of Education and Culture, 2017). The functions of religious character are developing students' potential to become well-behaved individuals, strengthening the role of national education to be responsible for developing the possibility of more dignified students, and filtering the culture of one's nation and the culture of other nations that are not in accordance with the cultural values and dignified character of the nation (Indonesian Ministry of Education and Culture, 2017)

The indicators of religious character implementation in schools are praying before and after doing work, celebrating religious holidays, having facilities for worship, and living in harmony with followers of other religions (Indonesian Ministry of Education and Culture, 2017). Such indicators are inadequate to measure the religious character of students. Thus, five dimensions of religiosity emerged in this study which are religious belief, religious practice, religious feeling, religious knowledge, and religious effect. Religious belief is believing in God and everything related to the unseen world and accepting dogmatic things in the teachings of his religion. This faith is the most fundamental dimension for religious adherents. Religious practice is related to the level of attachment which includes the frequency and intensity of behaviors where such behavior has been determined by religion, such as procedures for carrying out worship and religious rules.

Religious feeling is a description of feeling felt in religion or how far a person can live the experience in religious rituals, such as solemnity when praying. Religious knowledge is related to a person's understanding and knowledge of the teachings of his religion to add knowledge about the religion he adheres to. The religious effect is the application of what he already knows from the religious teachings he adheres to which is then applied through attitudes and behavior in everyday life. Such five dimensions could be the indicators in determining the religious characters of students.

On the other hand, measuring the level of religiosity is a complex topic, particularly in schools where students' religiosity is only assessed during school. Thus, to avoid normative answers, students' religiosity in this study will be assessed through teachers' perspectives based on their assessment during school.

## RESEARCH METHOD

This study was qualitative research that aimed to explore the contribution of students' religious character to students' digital literacy. A semi-structured interview method was used to obtain in-depth data related to the research topic. The participants in this research were three teachers in *Madrasah Tsanawiyah*. They are one female Mathematics teacher who is also an ICT (Information and Communication Technology) teacher and two male Islamic teachers. The research location was MTsN 1 Sidrap. This school was selected because it integrates technology into teaching and learning processes, which indicates the learning environment supports students' digital literacy. The technology includes the use of smart televisions, e-learning Madrasah, and Google Meet, which are sufficient in supporting students' digital literacy. Also, in students' assessment, this school implements CBT (Computer Based Test) for semester examinations, so all students use smartphones to take the tests. This situation is quite challenging for MTsN 1 Sidrap since this school is located in a suburban area. Although most of the population's occupations are farmers, the use of technology is developed adequately in this Madrasah. Another crucial point is this Madrasah selected ICT as the *Muatan Lokal* among other local contents, which asserts that MTsN 1 Sidrap is concerned more with digital literacy. In addition, this school is Madrasah, which provides more Islamic subjects than junior high schools. It is significant in this research as it indicates that the religious character in this school is more developed. This education level is also crucial in students' character development since they are in a period of searching for identity, so they tend to be unstable and need direction. Teachers were selected because one of the teachers' tasks is assessing the religious characters of students.

## DISCUSSION

### Students' Digital Literacy

This study focused on exploring students' digital literacy by using the indicators formulated by the Indonesian Ministry of Information and Communication. It includes digital skills, digital culture, digital ethics, and digital safety. Each indicator is described individually to gain more information about students' digital literacy, which is the concern of this research.

### Digital Skills

Digital skills are the ability to know, understand, and use the ICT (Information and Communication Technology) software and hardware and digital operation systems in daily life. In Indonesian junior high schools, students' digital skills are still limited. Whatsapp is the most used media for students' digital literacy due to its practicality and easiness (Sahidillah & Miftahurrisqi, 2019). However, the results found that students' digital literacy is still low since the use of Whatsapp is limited to basic digital skills, such as typing, replying, and forwarding messages.

Based on the interviews, teachers also used Whatsapp as social media to keep in touch with students since most students use it, and it is easy to check any information through Whatsapp. However, they do not use it as the main learning media since it has limited facilities related to teaching and learning activities. Teachers use PowerPoint when explaining the learning materials in classrooms. Moreover, they use smart televisions as the learning media, which is quite rare at *Madrasah Tsanawiyah* or junior high schools. Thus, this school provides a learning environment that develops students' digital literacy.

A Mathematics teacher explained:

*"Although this is a junior high school, technology integration into teaching and learning processes has been implemented well. During the Covid-19 Pandemic, I used Google Meet to teach my students virtually."*

This statement asserts that the use of technology in this school is not merely through the use of Whatsapp and PowerPoint in teaching. Teachers use more advanced technology, such as Google Meet, to provide more interactive learning. Teachers and

students can meet virtually, so the teaching and learning activities are more communicative, which is crucial to help students understand the learning materials. Google Meet allows users to make video calls with 25 other meeting users. The advantages of Google Meet are a White Board feature, available for free, HD video display and additional resolution support, easy to use, Video Encryption Service, and many attractive display options (Aisyah et al., 2021).

In addition, another teacher argued that this school has an e-learning Madrasah which was used as the online teaching and learning media. E-learning Madrasah is online learning media provided by the Ministry of Religion of the Republic of Indonesia as one of the infrastructures in terms of education to divert online learning due to the COVID-19 outbreak. E-learning Madrasah is a free application that was initiated to support the learning process in madrasahs so that it continues during the pandemic. Madrasah e-learning is used by all levels of education under the Ministry of Religion, starting from *Madrasah Ibtidaiyah* (MI), *Madrasah Tsanawiyah* (MTs), to *Madrasah Aliyah* (MA). By using e-learning Madrasah, learning will become more structured, interesting, and interactive. E-learning Madrasah has 6 access roles, including madrasah operator (administrator), subject teacher, counseling guidance teacher, homeroom teacher, students, and supervisor (head of madrasah and staff) (Indonesian Ministry of Religion, 2020a).

Although this facility is provided for every madrasah, some schools do not use e-learning Madrasah. In Sidenreng Rappang (Sidrap) regency, particularly at the level of Madrasah Tsanawiyah Negeri (MTsN), only MTsN 1 Sidrap used this media (Indonesian Ministry of Religion, 2020b). It proves that this school performs better in developing students' digital skills.

Another crucial point is students are taught ICT (Information and Communication Technology) as *Muatan Lokal* (local content) in schools. It is not the main subject but an optional so that schools can choose some contents of *Muatan Lokal*, including ICT. MTsN 1 Sidrap provided ICT for students. Therefore, students learn ICT for 45 minutes

once a week. As explained by the ICT teacher:

*"Students in this school learn ICT once weekly, only 45 minutes since it is not the main subject. The studying time is short, and students' understanding of ICT is not assessed in students' report books. However, developing students' digital skills is significant, which is a survival skill in this digital era. Thus, school keeps teaching ICT to students although with various limitations."*

The ICT teacher also added that according to the *Kurikulum Merdeka*, ICT is taught as the main subject for students in grades VII and VIII starting this semester. It is not a serious problem for students in this school since they have learned ICT as *Muatan Lokal* in the previous semesters, so they have prepared to learn ICT as the main subject. The ICT teacher acknowledged that some students could not even turn on the computer when they first learned ICT in school. It is because this school is located on the outskirts. Most of their parents work as farmers and planters, so they do not afford computers or laptops for their children. This semester, even though some students still face problems related to their digital skills, most students know, understand, and use the ICT that meets the digital skills required in the *Kurikulum Merdeka*.

### **Digital Culture**

Society 5.0 creates some changes in people's culture. The use of technology has a lot of influence on children's attitudes and behavior. Many children are negatively affected by the impact of globalization, with many phenomena in society that are closely related to moral degradation (Afrizal et al., 2020). Hence, students' digital literacy, specifically digital culture, significantly reduces such moral degradation.

Digital culture produces digital technology (Gere, 2009). Digital culture is not new, but it has become crucial today in Indonesia since technology integration during the Covid-19 pandemic. According to *Kurikulum Merdeka*, the return of ICT as the main subject in schools highlight its significance. Digital culture is the ability to read, decipher, familiarize, examine, and construct national insights, which *Pancasila*,

and *Bhinneka Tunggal Ika* value daily (Indonesian Ministry of Communication and Informatics, 2021).

MTsN 1 Sidrap develops digital culture among students by integrating ICT into teaching and learning processes. The ICT teacher argued:

*"This school created digital culture through e-learning Madrasah and several digital-based learning media during online learning. Students were directed to benefit from technology, particularly in education, as they are Indonesia's future generation."*

This argument points out that the use of technology in education prioritizes students' development as the future generation who will continue the development of Indonesia. It is in line with the definition of digital culture. The use of ICT is related to the Pancasila values, particularly the third *sila*, the unity of Indonesia.

On the other hand, students use technology in online learning as a requirement to pass the assessment standards. A Mathematics teacher explained that students must continue to follow the learning through e-learning Madrasah and Google Meet. They will be given low marks and not pass the school subjects if they do not meet the requirements. Such reason reveals that students' digital culture is simply about their responsibility to pass the school subjects. They are not yet at a higher level of understanding that their online learning activities are crucial for the development of Indonesia.

In addition, some students spend most of their time using the internet for doing activities that are not related to national insights. Teachers admitted that some students are not maximal in their school assignments because they focus more on using social media and online games. Students at MTsN 1 Sidrap are mainstream teenagers who sometimes make mistakes at their age. Hence, students' religiosity is significant in helping students overcome this issue.

### **Digital Ethics**

Digital ethics are the ability to realize, exemplify, adapt, rationalize, consider, and develop netiquette in daily life. Digital ethics is an effort to guide human behavior in the

design and use of digital technology in general (Hanna & Kazim, 2021). Plagiarism is the violation of digital ethics that students often do. Plagiarism among students is related to their school assignments. The internet provides much information that can be accessed by everyone quickly. It creates an opportunity for students to copy someone's ideas provided on the internet and claim them as their ideas.

Also, students often copy their friends' work and use it as theirs. The data from JawaPos.com revealed that plagiarism among elementary to high school students reached 94% (Zaking, 2021). A teacher confirmed:

*"Plagiarism is an issue among students' assignments, particularly in this digital era. When I checked students' assignments, particularly printed tasks, some students at MTsN 1 Sidrap had similar papers. I asked them, and they confirmed that they copied the task of one of them."*

This statement describes that plagiarism is also an issue in this school. Another teacher found that the reason for students' plagiarism is their chance. Thus, sometimes she gave students tasks that should be handwritten so students could not copy their friends' works.

Concerning the education level of *Madrasah Tsanawiyah* or junior high schools, students' awareness regarding copyright is still lacking. Teachers as educators should be more active in solving this problem by giving more understanding to students related to violations committed by plagiarism. Such effort could be realized by strengthening students' religiosity.

### **Digital Safety**

Digital safety is the ability to recognize, pattern, apply, analyze, consider, and increase the awareness of private data protection and digital security in daily life. Students' data safety is increased in schools by carrying out workshops for students. It includes the implementation of cryptography (Maulana & Simanjorang, 2021), a workshop on secure computer users (Ulfah et al., 2021), and a workshop on cybersecurity (Prabowo et al., 2021). Hence, schools provide sufficient

capacity for students to protect their private data while using technology.

However, such workshops are limited in the *Madrasah Tsanawiyah* or junior high schools. As explained by the ICT teacher:

*"Workshops for increasing students' awareness and capability in protecting their private data are still limited, not only in this school but also in most junior high schools. As a teacher, I always remind students to be careful when providing private information through electronic devices as such data could be misused."*

She added that students in this school are underage, so they are often assisted by their parents when filling out personal data. In addition, electronic technology at this level is limited since students' learning materials are more straightforward than at the higher levels. In this school, the e-learning *Madrasah* has a high level of security since it is provided by the Indonesian Ministry of Religion which is fully responsible for students' data security. Similarly, Google meet is chosen as the online teaching and learning media since it provides a high-security system to protect users' data privacy.

The risk of data leakage is unavoidable in this digital era since technology has filled strategic roles in the education aspect. Thus, the Indonesian government implements rules that protect private information in the electronic system. According to the Regulation of the Indonesian Ministry of Information and Communication No. 20 of 2016, the protection of personal data in electronic systems includes protection against the acquisition, collection, processing, analysis, storage, display, announcement, transmission, dissemination, and destruction of personal data (Indonesian Ministry of Communication and Informatics, 2016). Such rules strictly protect the user's data, particularly students. Therefore, the government guarantees digital safety in schools, particularly in junior high schools.

### **Students' Religiosity**

The religious character, one of the five characters in character education, is based on the dimensions of religiosity. Indicators of religious character formulated by the Indonesian curriculum are limited, which could result in a narrow discussion

about it. The five dimensions of religiosity are in line with the fundamental concept of religious characters. Hence, this paper used the dimensions of religiosity, which are religious belief, ritual, devotion, experience, and knowledge. Each dimension is described individually to gain more information about students' religiosity.

### **Religious Belief**

The religiosity of students is assessed by five dimensions. The first dimension is Islamic belief, which is the extent to which a Muslim accepts dogmatic things in Islamic teachings (Mastiyah, 2018). It includes believing in heaven and hell and justice in every good and bad deed. Measuring students' Islamic belief is complex since it requires in-depth observation that takes a long time. Thus, this study focuses on Islamic teachers' perspectives on students' Islamic beliefs. It is significant since the tasks of Islamic teachers are developing and assessing students' religiosity, which is one of the main characteristics of character education.

Islamic teachers at MTsN 1 Sidrap stated that, in general, students believe in Islamic teachings. Students feel that there is supervision or the presence of Allah and angels in daily life, there are rewards for good and bad deeds, belief in the existence of heaven and hell, belief in all events of Allah's provisions, belief in the acceptance of prayers and belief in the Qur'an and Sunnah as guidelines. The Islamic teacher explained:

*"Measuring students' Islamic beliefs is complex since no one can know inside their hearts except students themselves and Allah SWT. All I can do as an Islamic teacher is ask them about their beliefs. Absolutely all students answer that they believe in all Islamic teachings, precisely the existence of heaven and hell. Hence, I can say that they fulfill the dimension of Islamic belief."*

This teacher's perspective confirms that in the Islamic belief dimension, students are categorized as Muslims that believe in Islamic teachings. The assessment of Islamic teachers is based on students' verbal statements, which tend to be subjective. However, the direct recognition of a Muslim's belief indicates Islamic belief. Therefore, students are assumed to have Islamic beliefs

by stating that they believe the Islamic teachings. The levels of this belief are various that other dimensions of religiosity could measure.

### **Religious Ritual**

Religious ritual is closely related to religious behavior, which means all actions or words carried out by someone (behavior) that are carried out because of religious knowledge, belief in God with teachings, devotions, and obligations related to belief (Mastiyah, 2018). This dimension is the religious practice or ritual listed in Islam's pillars, such as praying, fasting, zakat, and pilgrimage (El-Menouar, 2014). Participation in religious events and reading the Qur'an fall into this dimension.

According to Islamic teachers' assessments, most students have practiced obligatory ritual worships as contained in the pillars of Islam. Such pillars are saying two sentences of creed, praying, fasting, and zakat. The last pillar, pilgrimage, is obligatory for those who can afford it. In Madrasah, students are required to perform obligatory prayers, mainly when students are at school. Hence, students are required to perform the *Dzuhur* prayer in the congregation at the school *Musallah*. Teachers will check any students who do not pray and give them punishment. Such a rule is to familiarize students with their obligations as Muslims.

Similarly, in Ramadhan, teachers always remind students that as Muslims, they are required to fasting for one month. Teachers also increase students' enthusiasm for fasting by explaining how many rewards they will receive from Allah SWT. As previously described in the dimension of Islamic belief, students believe in the existence of heaven and hell, so this is quite effective for such students. Moreover, students recite the Qur'an, which is another kind of Islamic ritual in schools. As this school is Madrasah, the practices of Islamic rituals in school include more religious activities than in junior high school, which are crucial for measuring students' religiosity.

On the other hand, the religiosity level of a Muslim fluctuates, which is related to students' Islamic rituals. Students at this age still often neglect their obligations as Muslims. They need a lot of guidance from their teachers at school. Although most



students have practiced such Islamic rituals, some students do not. Thus, teachers always supervise students who do not obey the rules to be given educational punishments to be aware of their obligations as Muslims.

### **Religious Devotion**

Islamic devotion is another dimension of religiosity which is reflected by the acts of worship outside the obligatory and social rituals (El-Menouar, 2014). It is shown by the frequency of reciting the *basmala* and praying to Allah SWT. Such religious activities are forms of faithfulness to God by always involving Allah SWT in Muslims' everyday life.

The Islamic teachers at MTsN 1 Sidrap pointed out that praying before studying is a rule in this school. Moreover, students are taught to memorize various prayers related to their daily activities, such as prayers before and after eating, prayers before and after sleeping, and others. Most students have memorized and recited such prayers in their daily life. It is also supported by parents as students spend most of their time outside of school, particularly at home. Some parents always remind their children to pray before and after doing any activities as a form of Islamic devotion. If students could not memorize such prayers yet, they could recite *basmalah* before doing activities and *hamdalah* after doing activities. As explained by the Islamic teacher:

*"At school, we can supervise students to recite prayers before and after studying and eating. Most students have practiced it. However, students are at school from 7.30 a.m. to 2.00 p.m. It means we cannot monitor students all the time. Students need their parents' support to make such activities as their habit. Most parents are supportive."*

This school's rule develops students' Islamic devotion since students are used to performing religious rituals that are not obligatory. It encourages students always to remember Allah SWT in their activities. Thus, they can build a religious attachment to Allah.

### **Religious Experience**

This religiosity dimension is quite complex to discuss as it relates to spiritual experience. Religious experience consists of

confirming and responsive (Glock, 1962). The former is about the feeling of God's presence. The latter focuses on feelings of having communication, being awarded, and being punished by God (El-Menouar, 2014). Since the data of this study was gained from teachers' perspectives and assessments of students' religiosity, exploration of students' religious experience is limited.

An Islamic teacher argued:

*"Identifying the religious experience dimension of students is complicated as not all students have experienced it. Also, it is rarely discussed in detail during class hours. We asked students about their experiences obeying and breaking Allah's rules in some learning topics."*

This statement clarified that this dimension could not be explored in depth since the conversation between Islamic teacher and students are only the outline of students' religious experience. The Islamic teacher also explained that only a few students have such experiences. The teacher remembered when a student admitted feeling guilty for being hostile to her school friend. This student regretted doing the thing that was displeasing to Allah. However, this student has not felt how Allah's punishment is. Thus, a student only has to confirm experience as she realized Allah's displeasure, but she has no responsive experience. Students' age could be the main reason for this situation. Students' capacity to communicate with Allah is still limited.

### **Religious Knowledge**

The dimension of religious knowledge is a dimension that explains how far a person knows about his religious teachings, especially those in the holy book (El-Menouar, 2014). The content of the Qur'an and the sunnah of the prophet is a source of knowledge of Islamic teachings, and it is hoped that every Muslim knows the basic teachings contained in it. Islamic knowledge is a broad topic since the knowledge related to Islam also continues to grow.

In determining the students' religious knowledge level, this study focused on students' scores on Islamic subjects. Although such scores are not the only indicator of students' Islamic knowledge, Islamic teachers

use certain instruments to decide scores for students. In the school context, such scores are valid for representing students' religious knowledge.

Two Islamic teachers revealed that students' scores are medium and high. It means that students' religious knowledge meets the curriculum standard. The person's knowledge will broaden his thinking so that religious behavior will be more focused.

For junior high school students, knowledge of Islamic education is only obtained in Islamic Religious Education (PAI) subjects with a frequency of 2 (two) hours a week. On the other hand, in *Madrasah Tsanawiyah*, knowledge of Islamic teachings is obtained more, and the subjects are more specific. Knowledge is the transmission of religious teachings. Knowledge has a correlational relationship to the formation of beliefs and appreciation. With students interacting more with Islamic values, it will increase their level of knowledge, belief, and appreciation of religious teachings (Mastiyah, 2018).

Islamic religious education taught in schools is a gateway for students to gain knowledge of Islamic values apart from their parents. The higher the knowledge of the Islamic religion, the more students will understand the basic concepts of Islam about the pillars of faith, the pillars of Islam, morals, and other Islamic values. These Islamic values will form a pattern of belief and appreciation of religious teachings so that they will be the controller of students' behavior and morals at school, at home, and in the community (Mastiyah, 2018).

### **Students' Religiosity and Digital Literacy**

Religiosity, as one of the five main characters in character education, has a significant role in students' digital literacy. The discussion about students' digital literacy reveals that students experienced some negative effects of the digital era. Thus, the five dimensions of religiosity appear to be the alternative solution to minimize the drawbacks.

In general, the digital literacy of students in MTsN 1 Sidrap has met the requirements of *Kurikulum Merdeka*. Students have studied ICT as a part of *Muatan Lokal*, although it was not a compulsory subject. Moreover, the school

provides sufficient electronic learning media, particularly e-learning Madrasah and Google Meet, that support students' digital literacy. Thus, when ICT is taught as the main subject this semester, students capacity is well-prepared.

Students' digital literacy is inseparable from the five dimensions of students' religiosity. The adequate digital skills of students are related to the dimension of religious knowledge. Students understand that in Islam, they have to respect their teachers by following teachers' directions, including finishing school assignments. Hence, increasing students' digital skills is not merely a form of responsibility to pass the curriculum standard. It is also the students' obligation as Muslims to respect their teachers.

Concerning students' digital culture, religiosity is crucial in minimizing the negative effect of using technology, particularly the internet. As explained previously, students' digital culture is in accordance with the practices of Pancasila values. However, most students spend their time outside school doing activities unrelated to school. It opens opportunities for students to access inappropriate content. Similarly, in digital ethics, students' religiosity could minimize students' plagiarism.

The dimension of religious knowledge help students identifies any activities which are not in accordance with Islamic teachings. Since students understand that Islam invites them to do good things, their Islamic knowledge will be the controller of their behavior and morals. The dimension of religious belief claims that students believe in the existence of heaven and hell as rewards and punishments from Allah. Such belief will make students think many times when they want to do activities that violate Islamic teachings, such as accessing inappropriate content and plagiarism. They realize that they will be punished and go to hell if they do it.

The dimension of devotion, always remembering Allah in daily activities, is beneficial to avoid students doing things Allah dislikes. Furthermore, the dimension of experience, particularly the confirming aspect, is related to the feeling of the presence of Allah. It means that students will be more careful when doing any activities, particularly things that have the potential to disobey

Islamic teachings, as they realize that Allah is watching their actions.

Such relations approve that the dimensions of religiosity can increase students' digital literacy. Although students' religiosity is not constant, it can go up and down. Realizing its critical role can encourage all parties involved, especially students, to try hard to maintain the level of religiosity. If they cannot increase it, at least they can maintain it, so it does not often go down.

Another interesting point is the dimension of ritual. This dimension is not much involved in students' digital literacy discussions. As described previously, students have practiced religious rituals, particularly the pillars of Islam. Students also always recite Qur'an in school. However, it does not necessarily make students stop watching inappropriate content and plagiarism. This situation is often encountered in society, where people do religious rituals, but at the same time, they also do things forbidden by their religious teachings. Hence, other religiosity dimensions take part in developing students' religiosity.

The presence of religiosity as one of the main characters in character education is significant in improving students' digital literacy, particularly in the era of society 5.0. Identifying students' religiosity is the task of teachers, although it requires complex assessment. Religiosity as a character is not merely about students' religious beliefs, knowledge, and rituals, which are highlighted in the curriculum. Moreover, it embraces students' feelings of attachment to Allah, which are categorized as the dimensions of religious devotion and experience. Such dimensions contribute to controlling students' behavior, which is not limited to religious rituals. Therefore, this study points out the five dimensions of religiosity instead of the religious characters' indicators provided by the curriculum.

All in all, digital literacy benefits students by increasing their religiosity by gaining much religious information on the internet that can be accessed anywhere and anytime. However, its relationship is not only one way. Students' religiosity also could enhance students' digital literacy, which is quite rare to discuss. This paper reveals that religiosity is selected as the main character in

character education since it greatly influences students' behavior and morals. It is crucial to protect students from experiencing any drawbacks of using technology, particularly the internet.

## CLOSING

Digital literacy has become significant for students since technology in human life has increased, particularly in society 5.0. Students must improve their digital literacy to be a competitive generation. Thus, schools must provide a learning environment that could support students' digital literacy. On the other hand, using technology negatively affects students, such as accessing inappropriate content and plagiarism. The character education which is contained in the curriculum aims to help students avoid such drawbacks. As one of the five, the religious character has a significant role since it could be the controller of students' behavior and morals. MTsN 1 Sidrap is a school that supports students' digital literacy and religiosity. This school use e-learning Madrasah and Google Meet. The religious subjects in this school are more than junior high school since it is a Madrasah. Hence, students' religious character will be more developed.

This study found that students' digital literacy in MTsN 1 Sidrap meets the standards required by the curriculum. Students' digital skills and safety are well-developed. However, students' digital culture and ethics need more attention because students tend to commit violations of such pillars. Thus, students' religiosity helps them reduce the negative effects. The dimensions of religiosity, particularly religious belief, practice, devotion, and knowledge of students at MTsN 1 Sidrap, are beneficial as a reminder to minimize the drawbacks of using technology. On the other hand, in the dimension of religious ritual, students have practiced religious rituals, particularly the pillars of Islam. Students also always recite Qur'an in school. However, it does not necessarily make students stop watching inappropriate content and plagiarism. It proves that students' religious character embraces complex aspects, not limited to the students' religious rituals, which are often the primary indicator in measuring students' religiosity.

## ACKNOWLEDGMENT

The author is grateful to Allah swt, who has made it easier for the author to complete this article. The author thanks the teachers of Madrasah Tsanawiyah Negeri 1 Sidrap, who have been willing to be respondents in this study. The author also thanks the Head of the Makassar Religious Research and Development Agency, Dr. H. Sapriallah, and the editorial team of the Al-Qalam Journal, who have published this article as part of this edition. The author hopes this article can contribute to the knowledge regarding religiosity and digital skills.

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