

Islamic Religious Education in Shaping the Culture of Religious Literacy in Schools

Muhammad Iqbal Maududi, Didit Darmawan

Universitas Sunan Giri Surabaya, Indonesia

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ABSTRACT

Islamic Religious Education can strengthen religious literacy culture by integrating reading, writing, critical thinking, and Islamic ethical values into everyday learning practices. This article examines how Islamic Religious Education encourages students to develop literacy habits and how these practices contribute to a broader literacy culture at school. An integrative literature review synthesizes scholarship on religious education, literacy practices, digital literacy, self-regulation, school culture, and learning environments. The findings indicate that religious literacy develops when students actively read diverse sources, compare information, write reflective and argumentative texts, and evaluate evidence before accepting or sharing claims. Islamic values such as intellectual honesty, responsibility, discipline, and verification provide an ethical foundation for these activities. A sustainable literacy culture also requires student participation, supportive school norms, accessible libraries, digital learning spaces, family involvement, publication opportunities, and consistent institutional routines. Islamic Religious Education can therefore connect religious learning with responsible knowledge practices, enabling students to become active readers, reflective writers, and critical users of information within a supportive educational community.

INTRODUCTION

Literacy in education is not limited to the technical skills of reading and writing, but relates to the ways students use texts to understand knowledge, evaluate information, convey ideas, and build relationships with social life. Street (2003) views literacy as a social practice that acquires meaning through the values, habits, and activities of the society where reading and writing activities take place. Such an understanding is relevant for schools because students' literacy skills are formed through interactions among classroom learning, school culture, family, technology, and available reading sources. In Islamic Religious Education, literacy possesses an additional dimension because students encounter religious texts, interpretations, history, moral issues, and Islamic information circulating through digital media (Supriadi et al., 2024). The ability to read carefully, write responsibly, and evaluate information critically becomes part of the process of understanding religion while shaping learning behavior (Kurniati & El-Yunusi 2023).

Islamic Religious Education (PAI) has ample room to develop a culture of literacy because religious

learning brings together knowledge, moral values, personal experience, and students' social lives (Putri et al., 2024). Halstead (2004) explains Islamic education through individual development, moral and social education, and the acquisition of knowledge. This framework allows literacy activities to be positioned as a means of personal formation, not merely academic ability. Literacy activities also grow through social interaction in class, and a respectful exchange between teachers and students makes students more willing to take part (Darmawan & Gani, 2024). Reading can be directed toward the responsible search for knowledge, writing can be used to formulate understanding and reflection, and critical thinking can be developed through examining reasons and sources. Religious literacy in this sense means the ability to engage actively with religious materials, understand their messages accurately, and connect them with real problems. Islamic education also nurtures simplicity and self-control, which keep literacy tied to everyday conduct (Wardah et al., 2025).

Forming religious literacy requires a way of reading that goes beyond looking for short answers. Students need to learn to identify main ideas,

* Corresponding author, email address: dr.diditdarmawan@gmail.com

relationships between arguments, terms, evidence, and the differences among primary texts, teachers' explanations, academic books, and opinions circulating on the internet (Gallagher, 2022). Religious education provides many materials for this practice through verses, hadith, historical narratives, works of thinkers, and discussions of social problems. Teachers can guide students to question the origin of information, the author's purpose, the relationship between evidence and conclusion, and the possibility of different interpretations. A teaching style that arouses students' interest makes this habit easier to maintain (Safitri & Darmawan, 2023). This habit turns reading into a process of building meaning. Students are not directed to doubt all religious knowledge, but are guided to know the reasons behind an understanding and to distinguish sources that can be justified from claims that rely only on popularity.

Writing holds an equally important position because students need to turn what they read into ideas that can be communicated. Summaries, reflective journals, book reviews, responses to moral issues, notes from discussions, and religious essays can be used to train the structure of thinking. When students write, they must determine the main idea, choose relevant information, arrange the relationships among ideas, and be accountable for the language they use. This process helps teachers see levels of understanding that are difficult to detect from memorization. Writing also gives room for reflection on the relationship between teachings and personal experience without turning learning into an assessment of students' private lives. Such tasks should follow the best interests of the student, so that feedback protects dignity and helps growth (Fajar et al., 2021). Guidance from teachers, similar to counseling, can help students connect their reflections with character development (Rojak et al., 2024). A religious literacy culture develops when writing is treated as a learning process, receives feedback, is revised, and is read by the learning community, rather than being merely a task that ends once it is submitted.

Critical thinking based on Islamic values needs to be positioned as the ability to evaluate information with good reasons while maintaining intellectual ethics. Critical thinking is not the same as the habit of arguing against teachers or questioning all teachings. It includes the ability to distinguish facts from opinions, assess the suitability of evidence, recognize generalizations, compare sources, and revise conclusions when stronger reasons are found (Alkubaisi, 2023). Recognizing generalizations also helps students resist stereotypes, which often appear as simple judgments about groups (Sajjapong et al.,

2022). Values such as honesty, *tabayyun*, trustworthiness, justice, and respect for knowledge can provide a moral basis for this skill. Students learn that spreading unchecked information has consequences, while quoting others' work without acknowledgment contradicts academic responsibility. Blended learning that combines classroom discussion with online sources can help develop critical thinking (Darmawan et al., 2024). This relationship between skills and values is what makes religious literacy different from mastery of reading and writing techniques alone.

Digital transformation increases this need because students increasingly obtain religious knowledge through search engines, social media, short videos, and chain messages. The speed of access offers great benefits, but the abundance of sources makes it easy to equate popularity with truth. Fast access also encourages impulsive reactions, in which a post is shared or accepted before it is checked (Darmawan & Gatheru, 2021). Religious texts can be cut off from their wider explanation, provocative headlines can steer readers before the content is examined, and the identity of a content creator does not always indicate competence. PAI needs to combine digital literacy with the ethics of seeking knowledge. Students can practice checking the author, publisher, date, and cited sources, and comparing one piece of information with other sources (Septianingsih et al., 2024). E-learning in PAI can provide a structured space for this practice (Djazilan & Hariani, 2022). These activities make technology an extension of the learning space. Digital religious literacy ultimately requires both technical skill and intellectual discipline so that wide access truly produces better knowledge.

An academic problem arises when school literacy programs and PAI learning often run as two separate agendas. Literacy programs may emphasize the number of books or reading duration without a strong link to the formation of critical judgment, while PAI may use texts intensively but remain centered on memorization and reproduction of answers. Memorization remains valuable, but it works better when joined with understanding (Samsiroh et al., 2024). The relationship among reading habits, writing ability, critical thinking, Islamic values, and school culture needs to be integrated so that literacy becomes a repeated practice. School culture shapes student character and discipline, so literacy habits need to be built through routines that the school practices consistently (Dena & Darmawan, 2024; Djazilan & Darmawan, 2021). Strengthening also requires support from media,

learning regularity, discipline, the school environment, and the family (Choirul, 2022). Teachers also need to adapt their methods so that students remain disciplined and active in class (Rozikin et al., 2023). A literature review is needed to explain the mechanisms that can connect PAI learning with a literacy culture more consistently, including how religious activities, technology, libraries, and student habits can be directed toward meaningful reading and writing experiences.

The purpose of this study is to explain how Islamic Religious Education encourages the habits of reading, writing, and critical thinking based on Islamic values so that students are able to build active, reflective, and responsible religious literacy practices. In addition, it also explains the contribution of IRE to strengthening the literacy culture in the school environment through habituation, institutional culture, student participation, family support, learning resources, as well as the utilization of physical and digital spaces that enable literacy activities to develop sustainably.

RESEARCH METHOD

This research applies a literature review approach with integrative synthesis to structure studies related to Islamic Religious Education, literacy practices, digital literacy, learning processes, self-regulation, student character formation, and school culture. Such an approach aligns with the view of Torraco (2005), who views integrative literature reviews as a framework to examine, evaluate, and synthesize literature systematically, so that relationships among concepts scattered across various sources can be formulated into a more integrated and directed framework of understanding. The determination of sources is conducted based on topic relevance; literature is included in the study if it contains discussions regarding reading practices, writing, critical thinking skills, school climates, educational environments, or the formation of learning habits. Meanwhile, literature discussing literacy concepts in other fields continues to be referenced in a limited manner, particularly when outlining the ability to utilize information to make decisions or conduct grounded evaluations.

The analysis process is conducted through stages of searching, relevance assessment, thematic grouping, argument comparison, up to synthesis compilation. In accordance with the opinion of Whittemore and Knafl (2005), this research positions orderly procedures as important, to enable comparisons across sources utilizing diverse approaches. Such steps are also aligned with the framework proposed by Grant and Booth (2009),

which divides the literature management process into searching, appraisal, synthesis, and analysis. Subsequently, sources are grouped into two main categories according to study focus: the first group encompasses digital literacy, learning media, reading and writing practices, self-regulation, teaching methods, character, and information processing skills; the second group encompasses literacy culture in the school environment, social literacy practices, school climates, learning environments, family support, and student participation. The compiled synthesis is argumentative and qualitative in reasoning, thus not positioned as a systematic review nor a quantitative analysis in the form of a meta-analysis.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

IRE in Shaping the Habits of Reading, Writing, and Critical Thinking Based on Islamic Values

Religious literacy needs to begin with reading habits possessing clear purposes. In IRE, students can read to understand concepts, find relationships between ideas, trace reasons for provisions, or compare the ways several sources explain issues. Teachers need to shift assignments from merely "read and answer" toward activities asking students to show how answers are obtained. Students can mark main ideas, write questions, create concept maps, or record information requiring re-examination. Such habits make reading an active activity (Putri et al., 2024). The value of trustworthiness toward knowledge can be used to affirm that readers possess responsibilities to understand sources before conveying their contents back. A religious literacy culture begins when students become accustomed to interacting with texts and do not view reading merely as an introduction toward tests.

Digital literacy expands the possibilities for forming these habits. Kholid and Darmawan (2023) found that digital literacy and the use of learning media had a significant effect on learning motivation among the students they studied. Digital literacy and the use of learning media also relate to academic achievement, which shows that the two need to be developed together (Rizal & Darmawan, 2024). This finding gives PAI a basis for using digital media in a directed way, for example electronic libraries, educational articles, verified explanatory videos, or databases of religious sources. Access to devices and internet connections is not equal among students, so digital reading tasks need to consider these differences (Rojak & Khayru, 2022). Teachers can assign students to compare two digital sources and explain why one is more trustworthy. This kind of experience brings learning motivation together with evaluative skills. Technology then functions as a

gateway to broader literacy activities, not as a replacement for careful reading.

Strong religious reading requires the ability to connect several sources. Students can start from a PAI textbook, then compare it with articles, translations of primary texts, encyclopedias, or materials selected by the teacher (Rusman, 2023). The way information is communicated and understood shapes the attitudes people form, so comparing sources matters (Khayru, 2023). The comparison need not focus on overly complicated issues. Topics such as communication ethics, the environment, trade, or social relations are enough to train students to recognize similarities, differences, and the basis of arguments. Teachers can ask students to write down what they know before reading and what changed after reading. This pattern helps students realize that knowledge can grow when new information is obtained. A humble attitude toward knowledge becomes part of the value of literacy because students understand that an initial opinion can be corrected. Islamic values also provide an ethical basis for how students treat different views while reading (Azizi & Darmawan, 2025). PAI then combines reading activities with the formation of intellectual manners.

Writing activities turn the results of reading into a more orderly structure of thought. Students can be given the opportunity to write summaries, reflections, responses, or short essays using sources they have read. The writing process needs to include organizing ideas, making drafts, receiving feedback, and revising. When teachers only grade the final product, students may see writing as an administrative task (Freedman & Daiute, 2001). When revision is valued, students learn that writing can be improved through rereading and evaluation. The value of honesty can also be applied to citing sources and to the rule against taking others' ideas without acknowledgment. This practice forms academic responsibility from school age. Every student has the right to education, so writing tasks and feedback should be open and fair to all students regardless of their background (Fajar et al., 2022). Writing in PAI ultimately becomes training in conveying religious thought in an orderly, careful, and accountable way.

Interactive learning media can help students who do not yet have a strong interest in texts (Masfufah & Chasanah 2023). Ghozali et al. (2022) discuss the use of puzzle media as an alternative for interactive learning to improve reading skills and create an engaging learning experience. These findings can be applied conceptually in PAI through arranging text fragments, ordering arguments, matching terms with meanings, or reconstructing

historical stories. Digital platforms often tailor content to users' behavior data, so teachers should select learning media deliberately rather than follow what is offered automatically (Fared & Darmawan, 2021). Activities of this kind are not a replacement for deep reading, but an early stage that makes students interact actively with the structure of a text. After the puzzle is completed, teachers can ask students to explain the reasons for the order or relationships they made. The element of play is then directed toward reasoning. Media gains literacy value when it encourages students to read, connect information, and explain their decisions, not when the enjoyment of the activity becomes the final goal.

The concept of literacy can also be understood as the ability to use knowledge to make decisions. Mardikaningsih and Darmawan (2023), in their discussion of financial literacy and risk tolerance, found a relationship between the two variables and the investment decisions of the university students they studied. That research belongs to the field of finance, so it cannot be used as direct evidence about PAI literacy. Its conceptual value lies in the relationship between literacy and the ability to use information in judgment. Decisions are more effective when several factors are considered together (Darmawan, 2024). Religious literacy should also produce the ability to process knowledge before acting. Social education widens students' awareness of broader social issues, which makes their judgments more rounded (Hariani & Mardikaningsih, 2022). Students who read materials on consumption, social interaction, or digital ethics need to be able to use the principles they understand to assess real choices. PAI activities can ask students to read a case, identify relevant information, choose the appropriate principle, and then write the reasons for their decision. Literacy then moves from mastery of texts toward the skill of taking a position responsibly.

Critical thinking based on Islamic values needs to be trained through questions that ask for reasons, not merely right or wrong answers. Teachers can ask about the evidence that supports an opinion, the sources used, the possible consequences of a decision, or why two people may give different answers to a social problem (Dahari et al., 2019). The principle of *tabayyun* can serve as a basis for checking information, while justice guides students not to choose evidence merely because it favors a group they like. Trustworthiness helps form the habit of quoting honestly. Such exercises are highly relevant when students read religious information through social media. Social media has become a major channel for spreading educational content,

which makes checking the source even more necessary (Darmawan & Fajar, 2024). Religious teaching in digital spaces brings opportunities as well as ethical risks, so students need clear rules for judging what they receive (Rifaid et al., 2024). Teachers can bring examples of information that are safe to analyze, then ask students to check the headline, the author, the cited sources, and whether the conclusion matches the content (Nugroho et al., 2023). Critical thinking then becomes part of religious responsibility in using information.

The quality of teaching methods affects students' experience during the literacy process. Bibliographic data show that the work given by the user as Darmawan (2024) was published under the names Masfufah and Darmawan (2024). The study found that emotional intelligence, academic pressure, and teaching methods were significantly related to learning satisfaction among university students, with teaching methods being the dominant factor in their sample. These findings do not measure school literacy culture directly, but they give an indication that the way teachers organize learning affects students' acceptance of the learning process. In PAI, reading and writing exercises should have variety, assistance, and gradual levels of difficulty. Barriers such as limited guidance or resources can also lower students' participation in literacy tasks (Ramle & Mardikaningsih, 2024). Students who are always faced with long tasks without guidance may develop a rejection of literacy. Responsive methods help literacy activities feel challenging without becoming an undirected burden.

Literacy habits require self-regulation because reading and writing demand continuity. Hamdiyah and Darmawan (2024) found that study habits and self-regulation had a significant effect on the learning achievement of the MTs students who were respondents in their study. Self-regulation includes the ability to plan, monitor, and evaluate one's own activities. This principle is relevant to building PAI literacy habits. Self-directed learning works better when school facilities, such as books and library space, are available (Imanuddin & Darmawan, 2024). Stress and peer influence also affect students' motivation, so reading targets need to be manageable (Issalillah & Khayru, 2021). Students can set weekly reading targets, record their progress, assess the parts they do not yet understand, and decide when they need help. Teachers can use short reading journals so that students learn to manage the process independently. This habit shifts literacy from an activity that only happens when the teacher gives an assignment toward a learning practice that students can control. PAI can add a dimension of values through discipline,

responsibility, and earnestness in seeking knowledge.

Learning character helps determine whether literacy develops into a habit. Masfufah and Darmawan (2023) found a positive relationship between character education and the discipline and learning outcomes of MTs students in their study. Discipline, responsibility, honesty, and care for the learning environment were among the characters discussed in that research. These values have a direct relationship with a religious literacy culture. Students need discipline to read regularly, honesty to cite sources, responsibility to complete revisions, and care so that discussions do not belittle a friend's opinion. Islamic values can also build students' awareness of their emotional well-being, which keeps literacy activities healthy (Jamilah et al., 2025). Cooperation between family and school helps keep this character formation consistent, including in the use of digital media (Anshorullah et al., 2025). PAI has an advantage because literacy skills can be combined with character formation in a single activity. Assessment of writing, for example, can attend to the quality of argumentation and the accuracy of source use while giving feedback on academic responsibility.

The assessment of PAI literacy needs to move from measuring memorization toward the process of using knowledge. Teachers can provide rubrics that assess reading comprehension, clarity of ideas, use of evidence, ability to compare sources, quality of reflection, and accuracy in citing references (Garipey et al., 2016). Oral assessment can be used to learn how students explain their reasons, while portfolios show the development of writing over time. Teachers also need to provide room for improvement so that students understand that literacy ability can grow through practice. Assessment should also respect children's rights to fair education, so that scores do not penalize students for conditions beyond their control (Hariani et al., 2021). Assessment of this kind helps students focus on the quality of thinking. Scores still have a function, but feedback on how to read and write becomes a stronger element in the process of forming habits.

IRE can encourage the habits of reading, writing, and critical thinking through activities that combine religious texts, digital sources, writing assignments, interactive media, self-regulation, and character education. Religious literacy becomes strong when students read with purpose, evaluate sources, write back their understanding, and use knowledge to make reasoned decisions. The values of *tabayyun*, trustworthiness, discipline, responsibility, and honesty provide a moral foundation for such skills. Teachers possess the function of experience

designers who make students interact regularly with texts and obtain feedback. IRE can shape literacy that transcends technical abilities because reading and writing activities are directed toward the formation of knowledge, information ethics, and the proficiency to evaluate issues critically.

IRE and the Strengthening of Literacy Culture in the Educational Environment

A literacy culture is formed when the activities of reading, writing, discussing, and utilizing information become social habits recognized by the school community. IRE can contribute through classroom routines, religious activities, libraries, student magazines, discussion groups, and the utilization of digital media. The primary target is not to multiply programs separately, but rather to make literacy present across various activities already run by schools (Saefrudin, 2021). Reading activities prior to lessons, for example, will become more meaningful if students possess opportunities to discuss or write down the results of their reading. Short religious lectures (*kultum*) can be developed with requirements for using clear sources. Wall magazines can feature religious book reviews, social reflections, or historical exploration results. Such integration makes literacy a part of school life and prevents it from stopping as an incidental program.

The active role of students is decisive for the continuity of this culture. Furbani (2024) emphasizes that students can become the main actors in building a literacy culture through active involvement in reading, writing, innovative activities, and cooperation with teachers and parents. This view gives PAI a basis for not placing students as mere program recipients. They can be involved as reading-corner managers, bulletin editors, book club facilitators, reading recommendation writers, or creators of religious literacy content supervised by teachers. Students' habits are formed through repeated social practice in learning, so the literacy roles they hold shape how they see themselves (Abiyyu et al., 2025). Involvement gives a sense of ownership because students see literacy activities as part of the community's identity. Assignments that invite interaction among students also raise their learning activeness (Rahmawati & Darmawan, 2024). Real responsibility also trains the ability to choose suitable materials, communicate with friends, and maintain the quality of information. The culture becomes stronger when students take part in producing and maintaining its practices (Rojak, 2023).

The school literacy movement shows that the success of habituation is influenced by how a program

connects with learning. Mayuni et al. (2020), through a comparative study of Jakarta and Taiwan, view literacy as a daily practice and a form of cultural transmission that goes beyond the traditional understanding of reading and writing. Their study also emphasizes the implications of the literacy movement for student learning. These findings are relevant to PAI because reading habits carry stronger value when the content of what is read enters discussion, writing, and the formation of knowledge. Reading programs that are separated from school subjects risk becoming administrative routines. PAI teachers can connect non-textbook readings with learning themes, then ask students to compare views or write reflections (Putra & Taufiq, 2024). Teaching methods and media that fit the lesson also affect students' interest in reading materials (Laili & Darmawan, 2024). A teacher's teaching style and students' motivation also relate to learning achievement (Mudzakkir & Darmawan, 2024). The link between the school movement and classroom activities gives literacy both an academic and a social function.

Wanti and Darmawan (2024) found that school culture was related to the character formation of junior high school students in their study. Values, norms, habits, and practices that develop in a school can influence attitudes and social interaction. This finding provides a foundation for a religious literacy culture because schools need to give reading and writing social recognition. Teachers can reward good questions, display student work, provide reading time, and show the habit of citing sources when explaining information (Kusnawan & Saepulah, 2024). The leadership style of school leaders shapes how well new habits become a shared culture, even when social and technological change brings new challenges (Al Laisty et al., 2024). Leaders and teachers who are seen reading also send the message that literacy is not a special demand placed only on students. Islamic teachings on order also give a clear basis for discipline in the school environment (Chonimah et al., 2025). When this behavior is carried out consistently, literacy activities change from a program into a community norm.

Purcell-Gates (2020) places literacy within the study of cultural practices, showing the relationships among language, reading and writing, social practices, and power. This perspective helps PAI see that the choice of reading materials and opportunities for writing is not neutral. Schools need to ensure that students with different reading abilities still have access to literacy practices. Materials can be made in levels, be available in print and digital formats, and include a variety of text types. Students who are not yet fluent readers should

not be continually placed as recipients of the simplest tasks, leaving them with no chance to grow. Each student also has different potential, so literacy tasks need to leave room for it to develop (Masfufah & Darmawan, 2023a). Inclusive design, including for students with special needs, makes literacy activities accessible to all (Adriani et al., 2025; Magfud et al., 2023). A religious literacy culture needs to provide support and equal room for participation. When all students can read, write, ask questions, and publish their ideas according to their level of development, literacy functions as a shared learning practice.

The family environment is a meaningful supporter because students' habits are not entirely formed during school hours. Umroh and Darmawan (2024) found that the school environment and parental attention were related to the academic achievement of the high school students they studied. This finding does not measure religious literacy directly, but it shows the meaning of the relationship between school and family support in the educational process. Teacher competence and parental attention also relate to the formation of students' character (Firmansyah & Darmawan, 2023). PAI can develop simple activities that involve families without adding excessive burden, such as reading one chosen material together, interviewing family members about religious traditions, or asking for reading recommendations. Parents also play a role in guiding how children use gadgets at home, which can influence the time left for reading (Masfufah & Darmawan, 2023b). The aim is not to supervise families, but to widen the space for conversation about knowledge. Schools also need to provide alternatives for students who have limited support at home so that literacy opportunities remain equal.

Libraries, classrooms, and religious facilities in schools can be designed as an interconnected literacy ecosystem. The PAI book collection should not be limited to textbooks. Biographies, histories of civilizations, ethics, science and Islam, literature, encyclopedias, and suitable teen reading can broaden students' experience. PAI teachers and librarians can compile tiered reading lists by theme. The school prayer room can also have a literacy corner that is used regularly without disturbing its main function (Andri et al., 2024). A well-arranged school environment relates to students' independence and learning motivation (Haqiqi & Darmawan, 2023; Latif & Darmawan, 2024). Care for shared spaces also appears in how willing students are to take part in maintaining them (Khayru et al., 2025). The availability of materials needs to be accompanied by opportunities to use them in learning. Books that are only stored do not

automatically form a culture. Short review activities, friends' recommendations, or thematic discussions can bring the collection to life and build social relationships around reading.

The school's digital space needs to become part of the religious literacy culture. School portals, virtual classes, or official accounts can provide reading recommendations, student work, guides for checking information, and selected religious sources. Teachers can ask students to make digital annotations or short reviews, then respond to their friends' work under clear ethical rules. Respectful interaction in these spaces also relates to students' psychological well-being (Oluwatosin & Darmawan, 2024). Digital literacy needs to teach awareness of digital footprints, copyright, privacy, and responsibility in sharing information. PAI can connect this with trustworthiness and communication ethics. Using digital spaces in this way allows the literacy culture to continue outside the classroom without depending on social media flows determined by algorithms (Sundari et al., 2024). The school provides an alternative space that places the quality of content and learning as the main measure.

A writing culture can be strengthened through student publications. School bulletins, anthologies of reflections, class blogs, digital magazines, or exhibitions of work give writing a real audience. The awareness that work will be read by others encourages students to pay attention to clarity, sources, and word choice. The publication process can also include peer editing so that students learn to receive and give feedback. Teachers need to make sure that the best work does not always come from the same group of students. A rotation system or several categories of work can widen participation (Rodesiler & Kelley, 2017). Publishing student work also raises readers' awareness of reading and writing habits, which can lead to lasting change in behavior (Gautama & Mardikaningsih, 2022). This activity builds a literacy community because students act as writers, readers, and editors. Religious literacy then becomes a practice of knowledge production at the school scale.

Strengthening the culture requires consistent policy, but it need not produce many administrative obligations. Schools can set realistic reading times, develop collections, provide publication support, train teachers, and coordinate across subject areas (Ahmadi et al., 2023). Policies last longer when they fit the values already held in the school and its surroundings (Mardikaningsih & Darmawan, 2023). Teacher professionalism, discipline, and the ability of new teachers to adapt also determine how well such policies run (Mubasysyir & Darmawan, 2024; Liwak et al., 2023). PAI can work together with Indonesian

Language, history, the library, and information technology to create activities that reinforce one another. Collaboration reduces repeated assignments and shows that literacy is used across various fields of knowledge. PAI teachers still maintain the distinctiveness of values through source ethics, moral reflection, and the use of religious texts. Shared ethical values help a school's culture stay consistent (Khayru et al., 2021), and planning the development of its people within a clear framework helps sustain it (Darmawan, 2021). A simple and consistent structure is more likely to make habits last than a large program that is active only in certain periods.

The evaluation of a literacy culture should look at changes in practice, not only the number of activities. Schools can monitor borrowing frequency, the diversity of materials read, the development of writing, the quality of source use, participation in discussions, and students' ability to check digital information. The data can be complemented by student reflections on the reading that most influenced their thinking or the obstacles that make them seldom read. This kind of evaluation helps schools determine actual needs, for example collections that are less engaging, reading times that do not fit, or writing tasks that are too uniform. Assessment of values needs clear indicators so that judgments stay objective (An Nafisah et al., 2025). Indicators of discipline and self-regulation can also be included, since both relate to learning achievement (Maharani & Darmawan, 2024). Measurement functions as a basis for improvement. A literacy culture develops when the school continues to adjust its facilities and practices based on the experience of the readers and writers who are part of its community (Laily et al., 2024).

The contribution of Islamic Religious Education to the literacy culture depends on its ability to connect classroom learning with the social habits of the school (Supriadi et al., 2024). Student participation, institutional culture, libraries, digital spaces, family support, work publication, and consistent policies make reading and writing present in everyday educational life (Fariansyah & El-Yunusi 2023). IRE provides a religious characteristic through the values of seeking knowledge, *tabayyun*, trustworthiness, honesty, discipline, and respect for differences of opinion. A literacy culture becomes stronger when students possess access to sources, opportunities to produce works, and experiences that reading and writing possess real benefits. Such reinforcement positions literacy as a community habit supporting learning, character, and students' abilities to face information responsibly.

CONCLUSION

Islamic Religious Education can shape a religious literacy culture by making reading, writing, and critical thinking repeated learning practices grounded in Islamic values. Reading is developed through abilities to understand, compare, and examine sources; writing is utilized to organize ideas, conduct reflections, and account for information; whereas critical thinking is guided by *tabayyun*, trustworthiness, honesty, and intellectual justice. Reinforcement at the school level requires student participation, an institutional culture that values knowledge, family support, libraries, digital spaces, the publication of works, and consistent habituation policies. IRE can serve as one of the primary drivers when classroom learning connects with school literacy life. The resulting culture helps students become active readers, responsible writers, and users of information capable of evaluating sources and reasons before accepting or disseminating knowledge.

Religious literacy needs to be understood as an intersection among literacy practices, religious learning, character, and school culture. Reading abilities are inadequate if students cannot evaluate sources, while writing skills lose educational value when unaccompanied by responsibility toward ideas and references. Pedagogically, IRE needs to provide more activities asking students to read multiple sources, write gradually, discuss reasons, and conduct revisions. Institutionally, school literacy programs need to connect with learning activities so habituation does not transform into administrative routines. Libraries, technology, family support, and student publication spaces can expand practice opportunities. Islamic values provide an ethical foundation directing literacy toward the honest, reflective, responsible pursuit of knowledge beneficial for communal life. IRE teachers are advised to develop graded reading- and writing-based tasks, while schools need to strengthen collections, digital access, as well as students' opportunities to publish works. Literacy programs should be assessed from the quality of practices and ability developments, rather than the number of activities. Cooperation with families can be conducted flexibly so as not to produce disparities for students possessing differing home supports. Culture reinforcement will be more effective when reading, writing, questioning, examining information, and respecting sources become normal behaviors of the entire educational community.

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