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DIFFERENTIATED DIGITAL MEDIA IN RELIGIOUS MODERATION LEARNING: A CONVERGENCE THEORY PERSPECTIVE

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Abstract

This study examines how differentiated digital media maximize students' absorption of dynamic values in religious moderation learning at SMAN 3 Sidoarjo through the analytical lens of Convergence Theory. The research addresses a critical pedagogical challenge: conventional, text-heavy instruction in Islamic Education often triggers cognitive resistance and fails to accommodate students' diverse learning modalities when introducing complex affective values. This study aims to analyze how the structural integration of multisensory digital devices and William Stern's Convergence Theory maximizes the formation of students' moderate religious paradigms based on their visual, auditory, and kinesthetic (VAK) learning styles. Employing a qualitative approach with a single-site descriptive case study design, data were gathered through instructional document analysis, participatory classroom observations, and semi-structured interviews with three Islamic Education teachers and fifteen selected students. The empirical findings demonstrate that the systemic integration of differentiated digital media, including infographics, short documentary videos, and hands-on multimedia projects, strengthens students' emotional resonance and forms an inclusive religious worldview. From the perspective of Convergence Theory, this study reveals a novel paradigm: differentiated digital media function as structured environmental stimuli (empiricism) that dynamically interact with students' innate digital-native traits (nativism) to maximize critical consciousness and theological tolerance. By bridging developmental psychology and digital instruction, these findings contribute to a framework for understanding how adaptive, personalized, and inclusive differentiated pedagogy shapes tolerant and moderate perspectives among Generation Z learners.

INTRODUCTION

The development of digital technology has significantly transformed the contemporary educational landscape, requiring a critical reconstruction of instructional methodologies in Islamic Education. In global educational discourse, the integration of digital tools into instructional processes does more than change how educators distribute learning materials; it also reshapes the cognitive patterns and epistemic expectations of students who have interacted with technological ecosystems since early childhood. Recent scholarship on digital pedagogy emphasizes that Generation Z and Alpha, as digital natives, tend to prefer multimodal, visual, and highly interactive learning designs over conventional, passive lecture methods (Muvid & Agustin, 2025). Consequently, contemporary educational institutions must formulate adaptive and personalized instructional strategies that respond to both technological acceleration and the sociological characteristics of modern learners.

At the same time, the massive and decentralized expansion of digital platforms has generated new global pedagogical challenges, particularly the fragmentation and contamination of religious understanding in the public sphere. Cyberspace has become a largely unregulated arena of discourse in which conflicting theological narratives are exchanged aggressively, many of which do not align with the core values of tolerance, inclusiveness, and moderation. In Indonesia's pluralistic context, strengthening religious moderation through the restructuring of Islamic Education has become essential for cultivating balanced, inclusive, and contextual religious attitudes among high school students (Ritonga et al., 2024). The internalization of religious moderation values in the digital era can no longer rely solely on text-heavy, monolithic, or doctrinaire methodologies. Instead, it requires a sophisticated technological articulation that aligns with students' digital-native characteristics so that peaceful religious principles can be internalized authentically (Arifin & Aulia, 2023).

Psychologically, students are inherently heterogeneous in their sensory modalities and cognitive processing preferences. According to the foundational visual, auditory, and kinesthetic (VAK) learning-style framework, some learners accelerate conceptual understanding through structured graphic representations, whereas others respond more effectively to nuanced auditory stimulation, dialogic oral spaces, or hands-on kinesthetic engagement. In religious education, the monotonous use of limited media variation can trigger cognitive resistance and hinder long-term material absorption

(Masyitah, 2025). This pedagogical barrier underscores the importance of orienting instructional design toward students' learning styles. Educators must move beyond one-size-fits-all digital assignments and provide differentiated learning media that intentionally accommodate students' diverse cognitive and sensory needs, particularly when addressing the abstract, reflective, and socio-ethical values embedded in religious moderation.

To bridge these heterogeneous learning styles, digital media differentiation offers a strategic methodological pathway. Conceptually, digital media differentiation refers to a systematic effort to integrate diverse technology-based multimedia adaptations that correspond to individual learning needs, profiles, and cognitive capacities (Jamaludin et al., 2024). Through structured digital posters, short documentary videos, infographics, and collaborative multimedia projects, students are empowered to experience varied and participatory forms of learning. International discussions on differentiated instruction confirm that such multimedia approaches not only increase intrinsic learning motivation but also foster a more inclusive academic atmosphere capable of addressing the learning challenges faced by students in the digital era (Rini et al., 2025).

In analyzing the complex intersection between technology integration and student psychology, William Stern's Convergence Theory offers a robust yet underutilized conceptual foundation. This classic theory in developmental psychology posits that individual ability, character development, and learning outcomes are shaped by a dynamic and dialectical interaction between internal potential (nativism) and external environmental conditioning (empiricism) (Wakhidyah et al., 2024). In 21st-century digital pedagogy, students' proficiency in using technology is not merely an innate generational trait; it is also shaped by the intentional design of their educational environment (Thomas et al., 2022). Through this theoretical lens, differentiated digital media function as a crucial external stimulus (empiricism) that strategically activates and directs students' innate digital-native traits (nativism) toward productive, prosocial, and moderate character formation.

A review of the current literature indicates that several studies have examined the relationship between digital media use and the dissemination of religious moderation. Hefni (2020) argues that digital spaces play a strategic role in mainstreaming tolerance by disseminating counter-narratives against radicalism. Similarly, information technology innovations have been identified as viable channels for optimizing creative

Islamic learning content for contemporary adolescents (Rini et al., 2025). Although these studies confirm the potential of digital instruments to support affective education, most existing international and local scholarship remains limited to general digital media use or macro-level discussions of moderation (Prihatin et al., 2025). A significant research gap therefore remains: empirical studies that investigate how digital media differentiation can be systematically structured around students' VAK learning modalities in secondary religious education are still scarce. Moreover, the use of William Stern's Convergence Theory as an analytical lens for interpreting instructional design and digital pedagogy remains largely underdeveloped in contemporary Islamic education research.

This analytical gap is particularly evident in urban secondary educational institutions where students are highly connected yet vulnerable to polarized digital algorithms (Sanusi et al., 2024). Preliminary field observations and pre-research documentary evaluation at SMAN 3 Sidoarjo revealed an important empirical reality: despite the availability of robust digital infrastructure, students initially experienced cognitive disengagement when religious moderation was delivered through monolithic, text-heavy slides. However, the school's subsequent transition toward a customized Islamic Education curriculum that uses localized visual infographics, short documentaries, and independent creative media projects indicated a strategic effort to accommodate students' diverse psychological modalities. Investigating this specific site provides an authentic qualitative opportunity to explore how multisensory digital environment engineering can actively shape moderate religious paradigms from the ground up.

To address these empirical and theoretical gaps, this study examines the implementation of digital media differentiation in religious moderation learning through the analytical lens of Convergence Theory. The primary focus of this research is to analyze how the structural integration of multisensory digital devices and Convergence Theory maximizes the formation of students' moderate religious paradigms according to their visual, auditory, and kinesthetic (VAK) learning styles. To achieve this aim, the study addresses three main lines of inquiry: (1) how various differentiated digital media are structured and implemented in religious moderation learning at SMAN 3 Sidoarjo; (2) how the use of these digital devices accommodates students' diverse VAK learning preferences; and (3) how the dynamic interaction between students' innate digital traits

and the designed digital media environment is manifested from the perspective of Convergence Theory. By anchoring the study in these specific parameters, this qualitative research seeks to provide a comprehensive and coherent framework for optimizing digital learning environments that align with students' internal developmental capacities and contemporary pedagogical demands.

METHODS

This study employed a qualitative approach with a single-site descriptive case study design to analyze how the structural integration of multisensory digital devices and Convergence Theory maximizes the formation of students' moderate religious paradigms. The research was conducted at SMAN 3 Sidoarjo, East Java, a digitally driven school that integrates technology-assisted media personalization, during the even semester of the 2025/2026 academic year. Using purposive sampling with explicit inclusion criteria, the study required teachers to have at least three years of experience with the digital curriculum and students to be actively enrolled in the Chapter 6 module. The final sample consisted of three twelfth-grade Islamic Education (PAI) teachers (coded as Informants T1-T3) and fifteen students (coded as Informants S1-S15). The classification of these fifteen students into visual, auditory, and kinesthetic (VAK) profiles was determined by cross-referencing the school's official non-cognitive psychological diagnostic records with behavioral tracking data from the counseling department.

Field data were collected systematically over a six-week period using three complementary instruments to ensure empirical depth. First, participatory classroom observations were conducted to record students' behavioral engagement and psychological responses to multisensory technological stimuli. Second, semi-structured interviews guided by a peer-reviewed protocol were administered to all eighteen participants to explore their subjective perceptions of digital adaptation. Third, comprehensive documentary analysis was applied to the Chapter 6 teaching module, entitled "Love for the Homeland and Religious Moderation," including infographics, video links, and final multimedia artifacts independently produced by students. Data collection continued until empirical saturation was reached.

The empirical data were analyzed qualitatively using the interactive model of Miles, Huberman, and Saldana (2014), which comprises data reduction (open and axial coding), data display (matrices mapping instruments to VAK preferences), and

conclusion drawing. To establish empirical trustworthiness, rigorous validation procedures were applied through source and technique triangulation by continuously examining the alignment among verbal testimonies, classroom observation logs, and documentary evidence from the instructional modules.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Identification of Digital Media Varieties in Religious Moderation Learning

The empirical field investigation, classroom observations, and document analysis conducted at SMAN 3 Sidoarjo indicate a highly structured and intentional integration of various technological instruments within the Islamic Education curriculum. The instructional blueprint evaluated in the Chapter 6 teaching module, entitled "Love for the Homeland and Religious Moderation" and designed for the twelfth-grade even semester of the 2025/2026 academic year, shows that the teacher deliberately avoids static textual replication. Based on the school's initial non-cognitive diagnostic profiles, students' readiness levels and psychological learning modalities were mapped in advance. The distribution of research informants involved in this study, together with their verified sensory traits, is presented systematically in Table 1.

Informant Code	Role / Pedagogical Demographics	Learning Modality / Justification	Source of Verification Data
T1	PAI Teacher (12th Grade, 5 Years Tech Experience)	Instructional Designer / Visual Focus	Curriculum & PAI Department Log
T2	PAI Teacher (12th Grade, 4 Years Tech Experience)	Instructional Designer / Auditory Focus	Curriculum & PAI Department Log
T3	PAI Teacher (12th Grade, 3 Years Tech Experience)	Instructional Designer / Kinesthetic Focus	Curriculum & PAI Department Log
S1 – S5	5 Selected Twelfth-Grade Students	Strict Visual Learners (Graphic-reliant)	Official Psychological Assessment Records
S6 – S10	5 Selected Twelfth-Grade Students	Strict Auditory Learners (Verbal-reliant)	Official Psychological Assessment Records
S11 – S15	5 Selected Twelfth-Grade Students	Digital Kinesthetic Learners (Motor-reliant)	Official Psychological Assessment Records

Table 1. Empirical Distribution of Research Informants and Sensory Profiles

This administrative profiling directly corresponds to the modular planning recorded in the lesson plan, which seeks to identify the distinctive entry behavior of the classroom cohort, as shown in Figure 1.

B. IDENTIFIKASI KESIAPAN PESERTA DIDIK

Peserta didik pada umumnya telah memiliki pemahaman dasar tentang ajaran agama Islam dan nilai-nilai kebangsaan yang didapatkan dari jenjang pendidikan sebelumnya serta lingkungan keluarga dan masyarakat. Sebagian besar mungkin sudah mengenal konsep cinta tanah air dan persatuan, namun pemahaman mendalam tentang moderasi beragama mungkin masih perlu dikembangkan. Minat mereka terhadap isu-isu kebangsaan dan keagamaan dapat bervariasi, dipengaruhi oleh latar belakang sosial, media, dan pengalaman pribadi. Kebutuhan belajar mereka beragam, ada yang lebih suka diskusi, studi kasus, atau aktivitas proyek, sehingga perlu disediakan variasi metode pembelajaran.

Figure 1. Administrative Identity and Diagnostic Baseline

Documentary triangulation of the module's instructional architecture indicates that the teacher categorizes the available digital media into three operational phases: basic conceptual delivery, contextual case exploration, and autonomous summative project expression. In practice, the module outlines the use of standalone thematic infographics, interactive PDFs, digital Qur'an software, Mentimeter, Kahoot, YouTube educational videos, Canva workspaces, and social networking applications such as TikTok or CapCut. The technical positioning of these digital assets within the active learning design is illustrated in Table 2.

Operational Learning Phase	Primary Technological Instruments Used	Target Sensory Modality
Phase 1: Conceptual Delivery	Infographics, Interactive PDFs, Mentimeter, and Qur'an Digital	Visual Modality
Phase 2: Affective Resonance Exploration	YouTube Education Video Screenings & Audiovisual Documentary Cases	Auditory Modality
Phase 3: Autonomous Summative Expression	Product Agency Workspaces (Canva Posters, TikTok/CapCut Videos)	Kinesthetic Modality

Table 2. Structural Layout of The Chapter 6 Digital Teaching Module

This digital deployment strategy is explicitly supported by the module's physical and virtual environmental setup, which uses Google Classroom and interactive web-based polling to manage student activities, as outlined in Figure 2.

3. LINGKUNGAN BELAJAR:

- **Ruang Fisik:** Kelas yang nyaman untuk diskusi kelompok, dilengkapi dengan proyektor/layar, papan tulis, dan akses internet.
- **Ruang Virtual:** Pemanfaatan Learning Management System (LMS) seperti Google Classroom untuk berbagi materi, forum diskusi asinkron, pengumpulan tugas, dan sumber belajar tambahan (video ceramah, artikel, infografis).
- **Budaya Belajar:** Mendorong dialog terbuka, saling menghargai pendapat yang berbeda, berani bertanya, mengembangkan empati, dan menumbuhkan rasa tanggung jawab sebagai bagian dari bangsa.

4. PEMANFAATAN DIGITAL:

- **Pemanfaatan perpustakaan digital:** Mengakses e-book atau jurnal terkait Pendidikan Agama Islam, nasionalisme, dan moderasi beragama.
- **Forum diskusi daring:** Melalui Google Classroom atau platform lain untuk melanjutkan diskusi, berbagi temuan, dan mengajukan pertanyaan.
- **Kahoot/Mentimeter:** Untuk asesmen formatif interaktif yang menyenangkan, menguji pemahaman konsep dan sikap.
- **Google Classroom:** Sebagai platform utama untuk pengelolaan materi, penugasan, dan komunikasi.
- **YouTube/Platform Video Edukasi:** Menonton dokumenter atau ceramah inspiratif tentang cinta tanah air dan moderasi beragama.
- **Aplikasi Qur'an Digital/Hadis:** Untuk mempermudah pencarian dan analisis dalil naqli.

Figure 2. Digital Device Orchestration Framework

During the semi-structured interviews on curriculum planning, the PAI subject teacher (Informant T1) explained that the multimedia clustering within the teaching module was deliberately designed to move beyond the simple conversion of textbook content into presentation slides. According to the informant, key concepts such as *tawassuth* (moderation) and *tawazun* (balance) were organized into contrasting visual infographic sections to help students immediately identify the distinctions between moderate and extremist religious frameworks before engaging with real-world case studies. This instructional configuration was intended to strengthen conceptual understanding through visual comparison and contextual application (Informant T1, PAI Teacher Interview).

This instructional approach was further supported by students' experiences during classroom implementation. The school's localized curriculum provided students with a degree of agency by allowing them to select their preferred medium for the final assessment. Informant S3, a twelfth-grade student, explained that the opportunity to choose between producing a TikTok video and designing a Canva poster significantly influenced their engagement with the learning process. Rather than perceiving the task as a standardized assignment completed merely for assessment purposes, the student viewed the project as an opportunity to utilize existing digital editing skills to promote

peace and demonstrate how digital spaces could be used constructively to respond to intolerant online comments (Informant S3, Student Interview).

These empirical findings demonstrate that the structural transformation of PAI instruction at SMAN 3 Sidoarjo successfully shifts the learning environment away from traditional, static text-based paradigms. By operationalizing diverse digital tracks, the curriculum ensures that multiple channels of information processing are activated simultaneously. This instructional model aligns with Ritonga et al. (2024), who assert that media differentiation functions as a vital inclusive instrument that enables diverse groups of students to access core educational materials according to their respective processing speeds. Furthermore, this multisensory design provides a contextual bridge for high school students to internalize the complex principles of religious moderation, supporting the findings of Mandala & Witro (2024) regarding the importance of digital tools in protecting youth from online ideological polarization.

The strategic use of standalone infographics and interactive color-coded PDFs during the initial material presentation phase specifically reinforces visual memory retention. This finding is supported by Ningrum et al. (2025), who emphasize that translating abstract theological structures into concrete digital designs helps students establish stable mental schemas. Concepts such as tawassuth (moderation) and tawazun (balance) are no longer presented as lengthy dogmatic paragraphs but as logical flowcharts, thereby reducing the monotonous, lecture-heavy style that Ananda & Rahman (2022) identify as a common cause of student disengagement in religious classrooms.

During the affective exploration phase, short YouTube documentaries provide immediate real-world case studies of multicultural conflict resolution. As Linaci et al. (2025), argue, narrative-driven digital videos are effective in stimulating critical thinking and reducing student boredom. This active exposure enables Generation Z learners to conceptualize the boundaries between constructive religious tolerance and theological syncretism, a skill that Salim et al. (2023) identify as essential for survival in pluralistic societies.

Finally, the autonomous project workspace represents the highest level of digital media differentiation in this study. Granting students full agency to create digital posters or short videos through Canva, CapCut, and TikTok transforms their psychological relationship with the lesson. According to Rini et al. (2025), repurposing commercial entertainment platforms as academic digital channels equips students to counter

radicalism using their native digital skills. By independently producing advocacy artifacts, students engage in continuous self-reflection and psychomotor activity, accelerating authentic value internalization because they act as active producers of moderate content rather than passive and detached consumers (Gunawan et al., 2021). Therefore, the media variations documented at SMAN 3 Sidoarjo effectively use information technology to respect and accommodate individual differences in knowledge creation.

Accommodation of Students' Learning Style Preferences through Differentiated Content and Products

The empirical data obtained from the document analysis of differentiated learning steps in the Chapter 6 teaching module at SMAN 3 Sidoarjo indicate a structured accommodation of students' diverse learning styles, including visual, auditory, and kinesthetic modalities. Based on the active curriculum framework, differentiation is systematically applied across two primary components: content differentiation (instructional materials and sources) and product differentiation (evaluation outputs). Document observations reveal that during Meeting 1, which focused on "The Importance of Love for the Homeland in Islam," the PAI subject teacher mapped the core content into concept maps and simple infographics to facilitate the visual student group (S1-S5). Meanwhile, in Meetings 2 and 3, the pedagogical needs of the auditory student group (S6-S10) were accommodated through contemporary news clips on intolerance and short videos depicting Indonesia's cultural diversity, which triggered collaborative brainstorming and think-pair-share group discussions.

As the instructional flow progressed into Meeting 4, which focused on "The Implementation of Religious Moderation and Its Challenges," the teaching module explicitly shifted its emphasis toward product differentiation. The teacher granted students full autonomy to formulate concrete solutions to social challenges in the form of digital posters, short videos, or live simulation presentations. This variety of product formats is detailed in the module's summative assessment instruments; the project evaluation sheets include fair rubrics that assess graphic design clarity and audiovisual editing skills with equal weight. The operational distinction between content and product delivery based on students' learning modalities is summarized in Table 3.

Student Group	Dominant Learning Style	Content Differentiation Intervention (Materials)	Product Differentiation Intervention (Final Assignment)
S1 – S5	Visual	Logical charts, digital Qur'an verses, and standalone infographics of the *tawassuth* path.	Digital campaign posters and conflict-resolution infographics created with Canva.
S6 – S10	Auditory	National anthem playbacks, inspirational lectures, and audio-based news clip analysis.	Recorded reflective discussions or oral argumentative presentations.
S11 – S15	Kinesthetic	Real-world case study scenarios and direct socio-religious issue simulations.	Creative short video content for religious moderation campaigns via TikTok/CapCut.

Table 3. Matrix of Content and Product Differentiation Implementation Based on Learning Styles

Interviews with the PAI subject teacher (Informant T1) reinforced the practical rationale underlying the matrix. The informant explained that students' final assignments should not be standardized because different learning preferences influence how students engage with and demonstrate their understanding of religious concepts. Students with strong motor-kinesthetic tendencies, for example, were observed to show greater enthusiasm and produce better learning outcomes when assignments involved field activities, video recording, or short-video editing through applications such as CapCut rather than lengthy written essays. According to the informant, allowing students to express their understanding of religious moderation through media with which they were already familiar enabled them to communicate their ideas more effectively (Informant T1, PAI Teacher Interview).

This observation was further supported by Informant S8, an auditory learner, who reported that interactive discussions and audio-based news analysis helped them understand the essence of tolerance values more quickly than conventional text-based memorization. Similarly, Informant S7, a visual learner, explained that visual representations of religious moderation facilitated comprehension during the initial stages of learning. The use of infographics, color-coded sections, and logical flowcharts enabled the student to visualize the relationship between personal religious convictions and social harmony without becoming overwhelmed by abstract concepts (Informant S7, Student Interview).

Personalized sensory stimuli also played an important role in reducing cognitive barriers among students with auditory and kinesthetic learning preferences. Informant S11, an auditory learner, described how a short documentary on interfaith dialogue,

combined with the speakers' vocal expressions, background music, and the teacher's subsequent oral explanation, helped make the concept of religious harmony more concrete and emotionally meaningful. The student consequently found it easier to internalize the concept through this combination of auditory and contextual stimuli than through conventional text-based learning alone (Informant S11, Student Interview).

A similar pattern was observed among students with kinesthetic learning preferences. Rather than relying exclusively on listening or watching activities, these students responded more dynamically to tasks that required direct physical interaction with digital devices. Informant S14 explained that developing a multimedia project using CapCut, including selecting video clips, editing timelines, and arranging subtitles to communicate messages about religious tolerance, created a more active learning experience. The physical interaction involved in the editing process helped the student maintain focus and strengthened the retention of the concepts being learned (Informant S14, Student Interview).

The presentation of these empirical findings demonstrates that the implementation of digital media differentiation effectively responds to students' diverse sensory modalities. Islamic Education learning on religious moderation no longer forces students to follow a single, rigid pathway of information absorption. Through variations in digital instruments that are carefully designed in the teaching module, the teacher presents materials inclusively and allows each student to process the values of tolerance and nationalism according to their cognitive comfort. The use of interactive technology tailored to these personal modality characteristics aligns with Jamaludin et al. (2024), who argue that the effectiveness of digital content adaptation is strongly influenced by how well the instruments engage students' internal preferences and trigger deep conceptual understanding.

The accommodation of varied learning modalities indicates that technology-based media personalization is no longer merely a complement but a primary prerequisite for achieving pedagogical justice in the classroom. When religious learning instruments integrate text, graphics, audio, and virtual workspaces, students' psychological barriers to absorbing theological-philosophical materials can be minimized. This multisensory synchronization is reinforced by Prasetyo & Meiliasari (2025), who explain that multimedia approaches in the classroom are highly effective because they present

religious materials clearly while accommodating unique combinations of student learning styles.

Students with visual learning preferences demonstrate higher focus and information retention when interacting with infographics and digital posters. Graphic elements, contrasting color combinations, and the aesthetic layout of religious symbols help these students map abstract concepts of moderation into concrete and memorable cognitive schemes. Digital media that are static yet rich in visual information provide space for independent observation without distraction from sound elements. This cognitive adaptation pattern is consistent with Ningrum et al. (2025), who conclude that well-structured visual stimulation in digital spaces helps students organize complex new information into durable knowledge. Facilitating visual learners also shows that digital image representation functions as a semantic memory anchor for students' long-term memory. Visual materials designed to convey messages of peace and religious harmony can reduce biases arising from rigid textual interpretation. This phenomenon aligns with Badriyah (2024), who found that the precise selection of graphic-based media in religious materials correlates positively with the strengthening of students' moderate perspectives within a pluralistic school environment.

Conversely, for students with auditory learning preferences, cognitive needs are optimally addressed through the integration of audiovisual media in the form of short video screenings. Stimuli that combine narrator intonation, emotionally evocative background music, and verbal explanations in documentary videos help students grasp the substance of the material more deeply. This auditory conditioning pattern is reinforced by Nurjanah (2024), who states that the internalization of religious character values through voice media and interactive audiovisuals can affect students' affective domains more deeply than ordinary narrative texts. Hearing inclusive oral dialectics fosters strong moral sensitivity in understanding the essence of social tolerance.

Meanwhile, the kinesthetic learning style is accommodated not through conventional gross motor activities in the classroom but through digital psychomotor activities. Manipulating technological devices, such as editing videos in CapCut or arranging graphic elements in Canva, requires direct physical involvement and active sensory coordination. As emphasized by Ma'zumi et al. (2024), actively involving students in producing digital project-based work successfully transforms them from passive information receivers into independent knowledge creators. Motor involvement

in exploring these devices demonstrates that kinesthetic students require experiential learning engagement so that cognitive processes can operate in tandem with physical experience.

When students compile short video clips or design digital posters on moderation, they actively reconstruct their religious understanding. This dynamic demonstrates that the availability of various digital technologies at SMAN 3 Sidoarjo not only reduces instructional boredom but also transforms the classroom into an adaptive psychological laboratory that responds to the cognitive development of each Generation Z learner. The empirical findings above indicate that accommodating learning styles through content and product differentiation at SMAN 3 Sidoarjo successfully establishes an inclusive, student-centered learning ecosystem. Varied instructional sources effectively minimize understanding gaps within a heterogeneous classroom environment, a point strongly supported by scholars who argue that content flexibility in PAI instruction increases students' emotional attachment to the targeted affective values.

Furthermore, granting evaluation autonomy during the final project phase creates a rich environment for student agency to flourish. When visual learners are permitted to use Canva and kinesthetic learners optimize CapCut or TikTok, digital technology ceases to be a classroom distraction and becomes a structural tool for value conceptualization (Rini et al., 2025). Allowing students to choose their evaluation format based on their natural talents increases their academic sense of ownership, ensuring that the peace messages they produce do not feel like forced academic compliance. This strategy theoretically transforms the PAI assessment landscape from a rigid mechanism that tests passive memorization into a dynamic process that constructs critical consciousness, or assessment as learning. As Gunawan et al. (2021) note, this creative product-based approach provides vital psychomotor stimulation tailored to Generation Z. By independently designing posters and editing digital campaign clips, students engage in continuous self-reflection and implicitly internalize the core values of *tawassuth* (moderation) and *tawazun* (balance) into their daily digital behavior.

Convergence Theory Analysis in Technology-Based Learning

The empirical orchestration of differentiated digital media at SMAN 3 Sidoarjo provides a concrete baseline for analyzing how internal student capacities interact with structured environmental interventions in the digital age. Document analysis of Chapter

6 of the PAI teaching module reveals that the instructional designer did not treat technology as a mere substitution tool; rather, digital platforms were systematically engineered to serve as an external stimulus (nurture) that consciously meets the predefined internal cognitive and non-cognitive readiness of the students (nature). The internal baseline data, extracted from the school's psychological profiling, categorized students into specific visual, auditory, and kinesthetic potentials.

The operationalization of the teaching module shows that these inherent traits (nature) were deliberately met with corresponding environmental conditioning (nurture) across four structured meetings. In Meetings 1 and 2, the innate visual and auditory processing capacities of students S1-S10 were activated through targeted external materials: color-coded infographics detailing the concepts of *tawassuth* and *tawazun*, and YouTube-based short documentary screenings regarding multicultural harmonization. Furthermore, in Meetings 3 and 4, the motor-kinesthetic groups (S11-S15) had their latent behavioral potentials catalyzed through high-agency environments, specifically the open-ended creation of digital posters and creative campaign videos via Canva, CapCut, and TikTok.

During field interviews, the PAI subject teacher (Informant T1) explained that students' natural inclinations toward particular learning styles should be understood as latent potential rather than fully developed abilities. According to the informant, such potential may remain underdeveloped without an appropriate digital learning environment that provides opportunities for active video editing, collaborative digital brainstorming, and other forms of creative engagement. In this context, the integration of social media platforms into the learning module was perceived as a bridge that enabled students to activate their natural creativity while internalizing religious values (Informant T1, PAI Teacher Interview).

This finding was further supported by the reflection of Informant S12, a student identified with the digital-kinesthetic learning group. The student explained that conventional religious learning had previously felt restrictive because extended reading activities did not correspond to their natural learning preferences. However, when the teacher designed an assignment requiring students to create a short TikTok video addressing online intolerance, the student's existing interest in scrolling through and editing videos was transformed into a meaningful learning activity connected to religious education (Informant S12, Student Reflection).

The potential risks associated with students' digital environments were also emphasized by Informant T2, a veteran PAI teacher. The informant observed that although students generally demonstrate strong intuitive abilities in operating digital technologies and editing software, their digital competencies require ethical and pedagogical guidance. Without appropriate direction, students may be exposed to social media environments shaped by polarizing and aggressive religious content. Accordingly, the informant emphasized the importance of active curriculum intervention to guide students' technological abilities and innate potential toward peaceful, balanced, and ethically responsible interpretations of religious teachings (Informant T2, PAI Teacher Interview).

Participatory classroom observations confirmed this dynamic: when students were pushed to work on moderation projects, their initial tech-centric playfulness instantly shifted into highly focused, critical discussions regarding how to counter radical narratives using aesthetic visual language.

The interaction between students' internal predispositions (nature) and the digital learning environment designed by the teacher (nurture) can be comprehensively understood through William Stern's Convergence Theory. In the context of contemporary Islamic Education (PAI) at SMAN 3 Sidoarjo, this theory rejects both strict environmental determinism and pure nativism. It posits that the successful internalization of complex affective values, such as religious moderation, is neither merely a product of independent student maturity nor solely the result of external curricular coercion. Instead, it emerges at the point where the psychological modalities of Generation Z students converge harmoniously with targeted technological stimuli.

The visual infographics, digital Qur'an platforms, and interactive Mentimeter tools used in the core material delivery phase do not inject new traits into students. Rather, they stabilize and maximize students' pre-existing visual and cognitive processing architectures. As argued by Ramadhan et al. (2024), when technological interventions are carefully aligned with students' natural cognitive baselines, the retention of abstract religious values increases substantially. By replacing lengthy text blocks with logical graphic charts, the teacher creates a calculated nurture environment that directly complements the nature of digital natives and neutralizes the conventional pedagogical rigidity identified by Ananda and Rahman (2022).

Similarly, the transition to audiovisual documentaries on YouTube and creative product workrooms on Canva, CapCut, and TikTok represents a sophisticated convergence model. Students' natural familiarity with social media platforms is treated as an internal baseline potential (nature). When the teaching module purposefully repurposes these entertainment-centered spaces into structured academic channels for campaigning against radicalism, the external environment actively shapes latent potential into active moral competence (Rini et al., 2025).

This convergence effectively cultivates a deep sense of student agency. According to Gunawan et al. (2021), a creative product-based learning model bridges the psychomotor and affective domains. By actively producing digital moderation content, students do not merely absorb external rules passively; they reconstruct these principles within their own behavioral frameworks. Therefore, the implementation at SMAN 3 Sidoarjo demonstrates that when modern digital infrastructure (nurture) is systematically customized to accommodate individual psychological variations (nature), technology becomes an empowering catalyst for authentic character development and deeply rooted religious tolerance.

The synergy established in Islamic Education learning at SMAN 3 Sidoarjo provides a clear empirical illustration of the modern actualization of William Stern's Convergence Theory. This developmental psychology theory asserts that the process of character formation, potential development, and learning success cannot be viewed solely through a biological lens or through environmental determinism alone. Rather, it results from an intimate and continuous interaction between internal factors (innate potential) and external factors (environmental stimuli) (Wakhidyah et al., 2024). In the contemporary era, this classical psychological theory gains critical relevance when integrated into the analysis of information technology-based educational ecosystems. In line with Sepiyah (2026), the harmonious integration of children's innate digital talents and an Islamically designed digital ecosystem becomes a key variable in the successful internalization of moderate character in the modern era.

The application of this theory in modern education shows that technology is no longer an external entity separated from students' personalities; rather, it functions as a dynamic third space in which self-potential and external experience meet. This interaction shows that the teaching of affective values does not occur linearly but through a complex dialectical process between students' mental readiness and the quality of

instructional stimulation they receive. Such convergence-based educational conditioning is supported by Fauzi et al. (2025), who argue that the transformation of religious character in the modern era can be achieved optimally only when children's natural potential develops in tandem with positive and adaptive digital learning environments. This reconstruction of the digital ecosystem is further reinforced by Prasetyo & Meiliasari (2025), who explain that interactive multimedia variation approach is crucial for facilitating psychological uniqueness and accelerating students' spiritual intelligence in a balanced manner.

A closer examination of the twelfth-grade students at SMAN 3 Sidoarjo shows that they possess strong baseline characteristics as digital natives, or members of Generation Z. They naturally have talents, habits, cognitive flexibility, and innate potential that are highly adaptive to operating electronic devices and navigating social media platforms. Within the conceptual scheme of Convergence Theory, these internal characteristics represent the nativistic aspect. Their cognitive agility in adopting new technological developments constitutes a valuable initial modality in the formation of new knowledge.

However, this abundant innate digital potential will not automatically develop into noble religious competence or a substantial understanding of religious moderation without planned environmental intervention. As Jamaludin et al. (2024) warn, high internet-use potential among Generation Z, if not accompanied by systematic guidance and structured religious content design, may expose students to digital radicalism through uncontrolled and polarized social media algorithms. The absence of protective filters in cyberspace can divert students' innate nature (*fitrah*) toward extreme and intolerant religious understandings.

This vulnerable condition underscores that technological sophistication, in nativistic terms, does not guarantee spiritual or emotional maturity. Innate talent as a proficient device user requires an external moral compass capable of directing curiosity toward the substance of Islamic values of peace. Without functional learning scenarios designed by educators, Generation Z students' digital capacity may remain limited to entertainment consumption or teleologically shallow content (Umam & Koestanto, 2024).

Therefore, through the intentional design of the Chapter 6 teaching module, the PAI teacher introduces a critical empiricism factor. This factor manifests as a challenging, structured, educational, and value-laden digital environmental stimulus delivered

through interactive multimedia-based assignments. The convergence between students' innate technical proficiency (nativism) and the differentiated digital media instructional design prepared by the teacher (empiricism) creates an optimal meeting point within the classroom ecosystem. Borrowing from Sepiyah (2026), this convergence of internal and external factors creates a space for self-actualization in which students can reconstruct their religious thinking to become more inclusive and adaptive without losing the essence of Islamic sharia values. Through this systemic meeting point, the use of gadgets is no longer treated as a threat to moral development but is transformed into a fertile religious laboratory. Students do not merely submit to an instant digital environment; rather, they are empowered to control media to produce religious narratives that are friendly, moderate, and calming (*tawassuth* and *tawazun*) within the cyber community.

Pedagogical Implications and Originality of Instructional Innovation

The empirical implementation of digital media differentiation at SMAN 3 Sidoarjo provides important classroom evidence for the modern reconstruction of Islamic Education. The field findings of this case study show that the effectiveness of digital device adaptation is not determined solely by the sophistication of the technology itself but by the precision of instructional design in aligning religious moderation content with students' personal sensory modalities. Based on document analysis of the Chapter 6 module and field observations, the creation of a digital environment that explicitly responds to visual, auditory, and kinesthetic processing styles successfully accelerates the internalization of complex affective values. Students (S1-S15) did not view the digital assignments as forced academic requirements. Instead, the technological autonomy given to them transformed the classroom from a rigid instructional setting into an adaptive psychological space in which they could organically explore the principles of tolerance and national unity.

During evaluative reflections, educators at the school noted a profound shift in classroom dynamics after the multimedia framework was fully implemented. PAI teachers moved from acting as dogmatic, top-down instructors to becoming emotionally engaged cyber-facilitators who actively monitored how students navigated digital content. This practical shift enabled the school to use modern commercial editing platforms such as Canva and CapCut as formal educational environments. Participatory observations confirmed that when students were trusted to design their own anti-radicalism campaigns and digital

moderation posters, their technical literacy naturally converged with critical thinking. This digital implementation provides a practical guide for other secondary educational institutions by demonstrating that contemporary, value-intensive religious topics can be delivered interactively and safely within digital ecosystems without diminishing their noble spiritual values.

Theoretically, the actualization of Convergence Theory within this personalized curriculum framework contributes significantly to the literature on technology-assisted character education. This framework demonstrates that structured digital design can function as a calculated nurture environment that directly complements the nature of digital natives. This theoretical configuration challenges conventional technophobic assumptions that pessimistically regard the use of gadgets in religious classrooms as a primary source of spiritual and moral distraction. Conversely, when technology is adopted through the lens of psychological convergence, directed digital visualization and multimedia autonomy can reconstruct rigid theological abstractions into grounded, humanistic, and empathetic values. This finding closely aligns with Badriyah (2024), who shows that the precise selection of graphic-based media correlates positively with the strengthening of students' moderate perspectives in pluralistic school environments.

Furthermore, this study offers an applicable guide and strong legitimacy for PAI educators in implementing differentiated teaching principles within the framework of modern digital curricula. Directly involving students in processing multimedia-based religious values transforms them from passive information receivers into independent knowledge creators. This phenomenon is consistent with Ma'zumi et al. (2024), who state that active psychomotor involvement in multimedia projects strengthens learners' emotional and spiritual intelligence. Consequently, educational institutions can use this media differentiation model as a strategic reference for developing new digital teaching material standards that address the challenges of technological disruption while systematically minimizing learning barriers in the classroom.

The originality of this research lies in its theoretical effort to connect the ICT-based differentiated learning paradigm with the specific material of religious moderation through a Convergence Theory approach in secondary schools. Whereas most previous studies have focused only on media effectiveness in measuring cognitive learning outcomes, this study goes further by examining how technology acts as an environmental stimulus (empiricism) that dynamically directs students' innate talents (nativism)

toward the formation of inclusive religious character (Wakhidyah et al., 2024). This integrative approach fills a critical gap in the literature regarding the conceptual bridge between William Stern's developmental psychology and 21st-century digital pedagogy in religious education. This novelty aligns with the research framework of Salsabila et al. (2023), who argue that the use of information technology innovations in Islamic learning should not only target the mechanistic aspects of operating tools but also reach the deeper spaces of students' moral awareness and social reconstruction in the cyber world.

However, a notable limitation of this study lies in its specific geographic and institutional scope, which is restricted to a single senior high school in the Sidoarjo region. The high availability of digital infrastructure and the suburban demographic characteristics of students at SMAN 3 Sidoarjo may generate pedagogical dynamics that differ from those of educational institutions in isolated rural areas or traditional Islamic boarding schools. This localized constraint is expected to serve as a constructive stimulus for future research. Comparative studies across educational levels and sociological backgrounds remain necessary to verify the consistency, adaptability, and generalizability of technology-assisted personalized curriculum development across the broader landscape of modern religious education.

CONCLUSION

The case study and document analysis at SMAN 3 Sidoarjo demonstrate that the integration of differentiated digital media into Islamic Education (PAI), particularly in teaching religious moderation and love for the homeland, systematically shifts the instructional paradigm from rigid textual delivery to an inclusive, student-centered learning ecosystem. The empirical findings show that digital media are operationalized through three distinct modalities: visual tools (infographics, interactive PDFs, digital Qur'an platforms, and Mentimeter), auditory resources (YouTube documentaries and news analysis), and kinesthetic platforms (Canva, CapCut, and TikTok), all of which align with students' mapped psychological readiness. Furthermore, the implementation of content and product differentiation successfully cultivates a high level of student agency by allowing learners to express their affective understanding through media formats tailored to their natural visual, auditory, or motor-kinesthetic preferences.

Viewed through William Stern's Convergence Theory, this study concludes that the internal cognitive and psychological traits of Generation Z students (nativism) do not

stand alone in character building. Rather, they must converge with an intentionally engineered digital environment (empiricism) provided by the teacher. When technological instruments are customized to accommodate individual learning modalities, technology ceases to be an academic distraction and becomes a vital catalyst for value internalization. Ultimately, this measured integration enables students to move from passive consumers of religious texts to active and critical content creators who advocate tolerance and counter radicalism in contemporary digital spaces.

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