

Tabayyun In The Qur'an As A Foundation For Information Literacy: Its Relevance To Contemporary Islamic Education

¹Rizki Sanjaya, ²Hilalludin, ³Muzanni, ⁴Miftahus Sulhi

¹Sekolah Tinggi Ilmu Tarbiyah Yogyakarta, Indonesia

²Universitas Alma Ata Yogyakarta, Indonesia

³University of Science and Technology, Yaman

⁴Islamic University of Madinah, Arab Saudi

Email: ¹rizkisanjay003@gmail.com, ²hilalluddin34@gmail.com,

³muzanniealhafny@gamil.com, ⁴miftahsolh@gmail.com

Abstract

The development of the digital information environment has made it increasingly easy for students to access and disseminate information, but this accessibility also creates a greater need to evaluate, verify, and use information responsibly. In Islamic education, information literacy should not be understood merely as a technical ability to locate information but should also be grounded in Qur'anic values that guide how individuals receive and respond to information. This study aims to analyze the concept of *tabayyun* in the Qur'an, particularly Q.S. Al-Hujurat [49]:6, and examine its relevance as a foundation for information literacy in contemporary Islamic education. This study employs a qualitative approach with a library research design. Data were obtained through the examination of the Qur'an, Qur'anic commentaries, and scholarly literature related to *tabayyun*, information literacy, digital literacy, and Islamic education. The data were analyzed using content analysis with a thematic approach through the stages of identification, classification, interpretation, and synthesis. The findings indicate that *tabayyun* entails not only the verification of information but also refraining from haste in accepting information, examining the credibility of sources, evaluating content and evidence, recognizing the limits of one's knowledge, and taking responsibility for the use and dissemination of information. These findings demonstrate that *tabayyun* can serve as both an epistemic and ethical foundation for information literacy in Islamic education. Its application is relevant to developing students who are critical in evaluating information, cautious in drawing conclusions, and responsible in using and disseminating information.

Keywords: *tabayyun, Qur'an, information literacy, Islamic education, contemporary education*

Abstrak

Perkembangan lingkungan informasi digital membuat peserta didik semakin mudah memperoleh dan menyebarkan informasi, tetapi kemudahan tersebut juga meningkatkan kebutuhan terhadap kemampuan memilah, memeriksa, dan menggunakan informasi secara bertanggung jawab. Dalam konteks pendidikan Islam, literasi informasi tidak cukup dipahami sebagai keterampilan teknis dalam menemukan informasi, tetapi juga perlu didasarkan pada nilai-nilai Al-Qur'an yang mengarahkan cara seseorang menerima dan menyikapi informasi. Penelitian ini bertujuan menganalisis konsep *tabayyun* dalam Al-Qur'an, khususnya Q.S. Al-Hujurat [49]: 6, serta mengkaji relevansinya sebagai landasan literasi informasi dalam pendidikan Islam kontemporer. Penelitian ini menggunakan pendekatan kualitatif dengan desain studi pustaka. Data diperoleh melalui penelaahan Al-Qur'an, kitab tafsir, serta literatur ilmiah yang berkaitan dengan *tabayyun*, literasi informasi, literasi digital, dan pendidikan Islam. Data dianalisis menggunakan analisis isi dengan pendekatan tematik melalui tahapan identifikasi, klasifikasi, interpretasi, dan sintesis. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa *tabayyun* tidak hanya mengandung tuntutan untuk memeriksa kebenaran informasi, tetapi juga mencakup sikap tidak tergesa-gesa dalam menerima informasi, pemeriksaan sumber, pengujian isi dan bukti, kesadaran terhadap keterbatasan pengetahuan, serta tanggung jawab terhadap penggunaan dan penyebaran informasi. Temuan tersebut menunjukkan bahwa *tabayyun* dapat diposisikan sebagai landasan epistemik sekaligus etis bagi literasi informasi dalam pendidikan Islam. Penerapannya relevan untuk membentuk peserta didik yang kritis dalam menilai informasi, berhati-hati dalam mengambil kesimpulan, dan bertanggung jawab dalam menggunakan informasi.

Keywords: *tabayyun, Al-Qur'an, literasi informasi, pendidikan Islam, pendidikan kontemporer*

INTRODUCTION

The development of information technology has transformed the ways in which people acquire, process, and disseminate knowledge. Information can now be accessed rapidly through various digital media, but this accessibility is accompanied by concerns regarding accuracy, credibility, and responsibility in receiving and sharing information (Effendi et al., 2026). In education, this situation requires students not only to access information but also to assess, verify, and use it appropriately (Dhuha et al., 2026). Information literacy, therefore, should not be understood merely as a technical ability to locate information. It also involves critical thinking, source evaluation, and consideration of the consequences of using information. Studies on information literacy in Islamic education indicate that such competence plays an important role in strengthening learning processes and empowering students in an increasingly complex information environment (Azura, 2026). The issue of information literacy is particularly important in Islamic education because the information encountered by students is not always neutral. Religious, educational, and social information may come from sources with different levels of credibility. Islamic education should therefore not merely equip students with the ability to obtain information but also cultivate caution, responsibility, and ethical awareness in dealing with it. This perspective is consistent with contemporary Islamic education, which increasingly recognizes digital literacy, Qur'anic literacy, digital transformation, and the ethics of technology use from a Qur'anic perspective as important dimensions of educational development (Arifatushshofwah & Shohib, 2026).

From the Qur'anic perspective, the principle of caution in receiving information can be found in the concept of *tabayyun*. Q.S. Al-Hujurat [49]:6 provides guidance to examine a report before accepting or acting upon it, particularly when its source cannot be established as credible. The verse contains not only a principle of communication but also epistemic and ethical guidance concerning the acquisition of knowledge (Alami & Azka, 2026).

Verification is necessary to prevent information from becoming the basis for harmful actions. Thus, *tabayyun* connects the process of establishing the truth of information with moral responsibility for actions arising from it. Studies examining the relationship between *tabayyun* and information literacy have already developed. Yunita and Illahi identify *tabayyun* and *tatsabbut* as Qur'anic concepts related to information literacy, alongside *iqra'* and *qalam* as concepts of literacy in the Qur'an. Other studies have examined *tabayyun* in relation to digital literacy and education, particularly as a verification principle for addressing hoaxes and unverified information. More recent studies have connected Q.S. Al-Hujurat [49]:6 with communication and digital literacy and have positioned *tabayyun* as an ethical basis for responding to disinformation. Furthermore, some studies have developed *tabayyun literacy* as an epistemological framework for Islamic education in the *post-truth* era (Akhtar, 2026).

Nevertheless, these studies tend to focus on digital literacy, hoaxes, disinformation, social media, or *tabayyun* as an ethic of digital communication. Research that specifically positions *tabayyun* as a conceptual foundation for information literacy in Islamic education, by examining its Qur'anic meaning and interpretations and then relating them to the principles of information literacy, still requires further development. Accordingly, this study addresses not merely how *tabayyun* can counter hoaxes, but how it can provide a foundation for receiving, verifying, evaluating, and using information within Islamic education.

Based on this gap, this study aims to analyze the concept of *tabayyun* in the Qur'an, examine its meaning through Qur'anic exegesis, and identify information literacy principles that can be derived from the concept and contextualized within contemporary Islamic education. The study positions *tabayyun* not merely as a response to hoaxes or digital communication problems, but as a Qur'anic foundation for information literacy in Islamic education. From this perspective, the study broadens information literacy

from technical skills toward an integration of verification, critical consideration, caution, and ethical responsibility rooted in Qur'anic values. This approach is consistent with the scope of *Al-Hudaya*, which provides space for studies of the Qur'an in relation to education, literacy, social life, and contemporary developments.

RESEARCH METHOD

This study employs a qualitative approach with a library research design. The study focuses on examining the concept and values of *tabayyun* in the Qur'an and their relevance to information literacy and contemporary Islamic education. The data consist of primary and secondary sources. Primary sources include the Qur'an, particularly Q.S. Al-Hujurat [49]:6, and Qur'anic commentaries discussing the meaning and context of the verse. Secondary sources include books, scholarly journal articles, and previous studies related to *tabayyun*, information literacy, digital literacy, and Islamic education. Data were collected through documentation by identifying, reading, recording, and classifying relevant sources (Adlini et al., 2022).

The data were analyzed using content analysis with a thematic approach through the stages of identification, classification, interpretation, and synthesis. The data were categorized into themes concerning *tabayyun* in the Qur'an, interpretations of Qur'anic exegetes, information literacy principles, and their relevance to contemporary Islamic education. The researcher then interpreted the relationship between *tabayyun* and information literacy to formulate a synthesis of *tabayyun* as a Qur'anic foundation for critical thinking, caution, and responsibility in dealing with information. Data validity was maintained through source triangulation by comparing the Qur'an, various Qur'anic commentaries, and relevant academic literature (Jamaluddin et al., 2025).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

***Tabayyun* in the Qur'an as a Principle of Information Verification**

The findings indicate that *tabayyun* in the Qur'an encompasses more than simply clarifying a report. It represents a process of receiving information that involves caution, examination of the source and content, evaluation of evidence, and consideration of the consequences of acting upon the information (Ahmad Sabri et al., 2026). This principle is particularly evident in Q.S. Al-Hujurat [49]:6:

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا إِن جَاءَكُمْ فَاسِقٌ بِنَبَأٍ فَتَبَيَّنُوا أَنْ تُصِيبُوا قَوْمًا بِجَهَالَةٍ فَتُصْحَبُوا عَلَىٰ مَا فَعَلْتُمْ
نَادِمِينَ

“O believers! If an evildoer brings you any news, verify it, so you do not harm a people unknowingly, then become regretful for what you have done” (Q.S. Al-Hujurat [49]:6).

The verse establishes a clear relationship between information, verification, action, and consequences. Information is not to be immediately accepted as a basis for judgment or action; rather, it must first undergo examination. The term *tabayyun*, derived from the root ب ي ن, conveys the meaning of clarification and establishing certainty. The expression *fatabayyanū* therefore indicates the command to establish clarity regarding a report before acting upon it. In another qira'ah, *fatatsabbatū* conveys the meaning of carefully examining or establishing the truth of something. Al-Tabari explains that both readings emphasize refraining from haste and establishing the truth of a report before taking action (Aghisna Khairunnisa et al., 2026).

This interpretation shows that *tabayyun* is process-oriented. A person is neither instructed to immediately accept nor reject information but to examine it first. Such examination is important because misinformation may result not only from completely false information but also from incomplete, decontextualized, or improperly conveyed information. Thus, *tabayyun* requires sufficient space for examination before forming a judgment or taking action. Ibn Kathir emphasizes caution when receiving information from an unreliable source, particularly because unverified information may lead to harmful decisions. Al-Qurtubi likewise highlights the importance of examining

a report and considering the circumstances and credibility of the person conveying it. Meanwhile, al-Sa'di emphasizes evaluating a report through evidence and indicators of its truth or falsehood. If its truth is established, it may be accepted; if it is proven false, it should be rejected; and if its status remains unclear, action should be withheld until sufficient clarity is obtained (Emrida Harahap et al., 2026).

Based on these interpretations, this study identifies four main layers of *tabayyun* in Q.S. Al-Hujurat [49]:6: (1) delaying acceptance of information rather than responding hastily; (2) considering source credibility; (3) examining information through evidence or comparison with other information; and (4) considering the consequences of actions based on the information. These layers demonstrate that *tabayyun* is broader than merely "fact-checking." Fact-checking is one component, while *tabayyun* also encompasses the attitude before verification and responsibility after information is obtained. This understanding is relevant to information literacy, which involves engaging with information critically and responsibly. Hadiati, Setianingrum, and Setiyo (2024) highlight the importance of information literacy in empowering Islamic education in Indonesia. The Qur'anic principle of *tabayyun* therefore provides a complementary value framework for information literacy by connecting the ability to evaluate information with caution, critical judgment, and responsibility for its consequences (Faradila et al., 2025).

***Tabayyun* and the Construction of Information Literacy: From Skills to Responsibility**

The synthesis of the findings indicates that the relationship between *tabayyun* and information literacy extends beyond technical skills toward epistemic and ethical responsibility. Information literacy involves the ability to identify information needs, locate relevant information, evaluate its quality, use it appropriately, and communicate it effectively. However, technical competence alone does not guarantee responsible information use.

Individuals may be able to find and compare sources while still accepting or disseminating information without adequate verification (Fatmal et al., 2026). Therefore, information literacy concerns not only the ability to access information but also how individuals evaluate, respond to, and use it. The principle of *tabayyun* provides an important dimension to this understanding. It teaches that information requires examination before becoming a basis for belief or action. Based on the findings, information literacy grounded in *tabayyun* can be formulated through five principles. First, epistemic delay. This principle refers to creating a distance between receiving information and reaching a conclusion. Individuals do not immediately transform received information into belief but allow space for questioning, examination, and consideration (Hidayah & Adnir, 2026). In a rapidly changing information environment, such restraint is important because immediate reactions may occur before adequate understanding is established. Delaying acceptance does not mean rejecting information but represents an effort to ensure that it is worthy of belief (Hidayah & Adnir, 2026).

Second, source evaluation. Q.S. Al-Hujurat [49]:6 draws attention to the person conveying a report. In information literacy, this principle involves examining the origin of information, the credibility and expertise of its source, the availability of primary sources, and the evidence supporting its claims. This is particularly relevant in Islamic education, where students encounter religious information from diverse digital sources (Ilman & Kanus, 2026). *Tabayyun* therefore encourages students to evaluate religious information based on source credibility rather than popularity, number of followers, or persuasive presentation. Third, examination of content and evidence. Source credibility alone is insufficient because even established sources may present incomplete or contextually inaccurate information. Information should therefore be examined through evidence, context, and comparison with other sources. In educational practice, this can involve *cross-checking*, tracing references, comparing sources, and reading texts in their entirety. Students

can thus be encouraged to ask not only what information says but also what evidence supports it and whether other sources provide different perspectives (Khasani, 2026).

Fourth, withholding judgment when certainty has not been established. The process of *tabayyun* may not always produce immediate certainty. In such circumstances, a responsible response is to suspend judgment rather than force a conclusion. This principle has epistemological value in Islamic education because acknowledging uncertainty or the limits of one's knowledge can reflect academic honesty (Masri & Warsodirejo, 2023). *Tabayyun* therefore encourages an academic culture that values careful examination over unsupported certainty. Fifth, responsibility for the consequences of information. Q.S. Al-Hujurat [49]:6 connects verification with the prevention of harm resulting from uninformed action. Information consequently carries moral as well as epistemic consequences. In information literacy, this means that individuals remain responsible for how information is used and communicated. Even accurate information may cause harm when presented without context or used irresponsibly (Muhafazhoh Hasanah Al-Faqiha & Fatimah Azzahra, 2026). Thus, information literacy based on *tabayyun* integrates truth-seeking with responsible information use, requiring individuals to consider not only how to find and evaluate information but also when, why, and how it should be used and communicated.

Based on these five principles, the relationship between *tabayyun* and information literacy can be formulated as follows:

Dimensions of <i>Tabayyun</i>	Information Literacy Process	Values Cultivated	Relevance to Islamic Education
Avoiding haste in accepting reports	Delaying conclusions and conducting initial examination	Caution	Developing a critical attitude
Examining the source	Assessing the credibility and authority of the source	Accuracy	Fostering an academic culture

Examining content and evidence	Comparing and evaluating information	Objectivity and openness	Developing critical reasoning
Withholding judgment when information remains unclear	Acknowledging the limitations of available information	Intellectual honesty	Preventing unsupported claims
Considering consequences	Assessing the use and dissemination of information	Trustworthiness and responsibility	Cultivating ethical information practices

The table demonstrates that *tabayyun* provides a value orientation for information literacy. While information literacy concerns the abilities needed to engage with information, *tabayyun* provides direction for how those abilities should be exercised. This finding is consistent with Yunita and Illahi, who identified *tabayyun* and *tatsabbut* as Qur’anic concepts related to information literacy through a library study using the Qur’an and Qur’anic commentaries as primary sources. The present study extends this discussion by positioning *tabayyun* not only as a model for processing information but also as a basis for educational responsibility in receiving, evaluating, and using information (Muhammad Mafaz Kholthy, 2026).

***Tabayyun* as an Epistemic and Ethical Foundation for Islamic Education**

The findings indicate that the relevance of *tabayyun* to Islamic education extends beyond teaching materials to the level of educational epistemology. Education is fundamentally concerned with how knowledge is acquired, whose knowledge is considered authoritative, how truth is evaluated, and how knowledge is used. Therefore, when students accept inaccurate information without examination, the problem extends beyond factual error and may influence their thinking, decision-making, and treatment of others (Musholli & Abdul Karim, 2026). Islamic education consequently needs to develop students’ epistemic attitudes toward information. Within this framework, *tabayyun* can be understood as an adab of acquiring knowledge. Students should not only learn what to know but also how knowledge should be acquired and evaluated. This includes identifying sources, examining

arguments, comparing evidence, and recognizing the limits of one's knowledge (Nabriz et al., 2026).

Knowledge is therefore not merely information to be accumulated but something that carries consequences for attitudes and actions. This perspective is relevant to contemporary Islamic education, particularly in the context of information literacy and the challenges of the *post-truth* era, where the abundance of information raises questions about how truth and credibility are established. Accordingly, *tabayyun* can be positioned at the intersection of epistemology, literacy, and ethics. Epistemologically, it guides the process of establishing clarity and certainty regarding information. From a literacy perspective, it encourages the examination and evaluation of information sources and content. Ethically, it emphasizes responsibility for information that is believed, used, and communicated. These dimensions need to be developed together in Islamic education. Critical ability without ethical responsibility may lead to irresponsible use of information, while ethical awareness without evaluative ability may leave individuals vulnerable to inaccurate information. Thus, *tabayyun* offers an integrated framework in which critical evaluation and ethical responsibility are developed simultaneously (Nabriz et al., 2026).

The Relevance of *Tabayyun* in Contemporary Islamic Education Practices

The findings indicate four areas in which *tabayyun* can be applied in contemporary Islamic education: learning, academic culture, the role of educators, and the information environment of educational institutions. In learning activities, *tabayyun* can be integrated through habits of information verification across subjects. When students encounter religious information, for example, teachers can encourage them to identify its original source, compare relevant references, and explain the basis for considering the information trustworthy. Thus, *tabayyun* becomes a learning practice rather than merely a moral principle (Nisa, 2026). In academic culture, *tabayyun* can support responsible use of sources through habits such as citing references,

checking quotations, and avoiding the dissemination of unsupported claims. This principle is closely related to academic integrity because both emphasize honesty toward sources and accuracy in communicating information. Regarding the role of educators, teachers function not only as providers of knowledge but also as guides in the process of evaluating information. They can demonstrate how to trace sources, compare references, assess evidence, and determine when information should be accepted or withheld pending further verification (Nurwahida et al., 2026).

In the broader educational environment, *tabayyun* can contribute to a culture of responsible communication. Students, teachers, and educational staff can be encouraged to verify information before disseminating it, particularly information that may cause misunderstanding, conflict, or social harm. Patricia and Maghfiroh (2026), for example, position *tabayyun* in Islamic education management as a principle of information verification, responsible communication, and fair decision-making, particularly in relation to information literacy and conflict resolution. The present study, however, approaches the issue from a different perspective. While Patricia and Maghfiroh focus on *tabayyun* within educational management and conflict resolution, this study examines *tabayyun* as part of the epistemic process of information literacy in Islamic education. The emphasis is therefore on how the Qur'anic principle shapes students' ways of receiving, evaluating, and using information and knowledge (Pitasari, 2026).

The Position of the Study in Relation to Previous Research and Its Scholarly Contribution

Previous studies indicate that the relationship between *tabayyun* and information literacy is not an entirely new area of inquiry. Riza (2021), through *Information Literacy as an Implementation of Tabayun Concept in Islam*, examines the relevance of information literacy to the principle of *tabayyun*, particularly in response to invalid information in digital environments. Yunita and Illahi likewise identify *tabayyun* and *tatsabbut* as

Qur'anic concepts related to information literacy (Putra & Ayyaisy, 2025). More recent studies have extended this discussion to digital literacy and Islamic education. Lathifah et al. demonstrate that digital and information literacy in Islamic Religious Education involves cognitive, ethical, and spiritual competencies, including information verification through *tabayyun*. Mukaromah, Janah, and Ahmad (2026) further develop *tabayyun literacy* as an epistemological framework for Islamic education in the *post-truth* era, while Sariyati and Nuriyati (2026) construct an Islamic digital literacy epistemology based on *tabayyun*. Research on Islamic education management has also connected *tabayyun* with information literacy and conflict resolution. These studies demonstrate that the research gap cannot be formulated as the absence of studies on *tabayyun* and information literacy. Rather, the gap concerns how the concept is positioned and synthesized. Previous research has established its relationship with information literacy, digital literacy, epistemology, *post-truth*, and Islamic education. This study therefore focuses on constructing the concept of *tabayyun* from Q.S. Al-Hujurat [49]:6 and Qur'anic exegesis to formulate information literacy principles with epistemic and ethical dimensions and relate them to contemporary Islamic education (Surbakti et al., 2026).

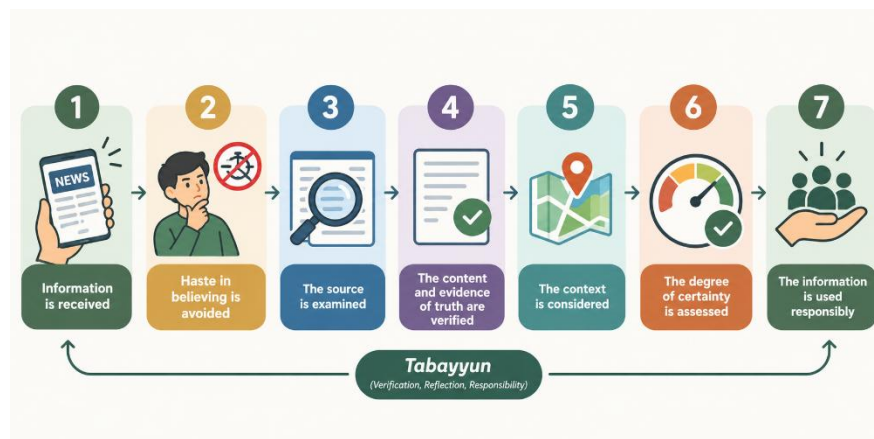
The scholarly contribution of this study can be identified in three aspects. First, conceptually, *tabayyun* is understood not merely as a method for clarifying reports but as an orientation for receiving, evaluating, using, and communicating information. Second, epistemologically, the study demonstrates how information literacy in Islamic education can connect truth-seeking, verification, and moral responsibility. Third, pedagogically, it identifies the application of *tabayyun* in learning, academic culture, the role of teachers, and communication within educational environments. This study does not replace modern information literacy with *tabayyun* but brings the two concepts into a complementary relationship: information literacy provides skills for dealing with information, while *tabayyun* provides a

Qur'anic orientation for using those skills responsibly. Thus, information literacy in Islamic education involves not only the ability to search for and evaluate information but also the development of critical, cautious, honest, and responsible attitudes toward information (Tatang et al., 2025).

Synthesis of Findings: *Tabayyun* as a Foundation for Information Literacy in Islamic Education

Based on the overall analysis, this study formulates *tabayyun* as a foundation for information literacy through three interconnected elements: verification, reflection, and responsibility. Verification refers to establishing the accuracy of information by examining its sources and content. Reflection involves considering context, the limits of available knowledge, and the possibility of error before reaching a conclusion. Responsibility refers to recognizing that information received, used, and communicated may have consequences for oneself and others. Together, these three elements position *tabayyun* as a Qur'anic framework that integrates the evaluation of information with critical reflection and responsible information use in Islamic education.

The three elements form a cycle that can be illustrated as follows:



This cycle demonstrates that *tabayyun* is not merely an activity of “checking news” but an epistemic culture, namely a habitual way of treating knowledge and information. In Islamic education, this culture is important because schools, madrasahs, Islamic boarding schools, and higher education

institutions are not only spaces for knowledge transfer but also places where students learn to distinguish accountable knowledge from information lacking an adequate basis. The relevance of *tabayyun* to contemporary Islamic education lies in its ability to connect critical thinking with character formation. Students need to question and evaluate information while maintaining moral responsibility, while moral values require intellectual abilities to be applied effectively in complex information environments. Accordingly, *tabayyun* can be formulated as a Qur'anic principle that guides individuals to avoid hasty acceptance, examine sources and truthfulness, consider context and consequences, and use information responsibly. When integrated into Islamic education, information literacy therefore develops not only students' ability to find and evaluate information but also their awareness of the epistemic and moral responsibility attached to it. The challenge for Islamic education is consequently not merely expanding access to information but cultivating an appropriate way of engaging with it. Within this framework, *tabayyun* can strengthen Islamic education's response to changes in the information environment while maintaining its orientation toward truth, responsibility, and ethical character (Taufiq & Hasnida, 2026).

CONCLUSION

Based on the findings, *tabayyun* in Q.S. Al-Hujurat [49]:6 can be understood as a Qur'anic principle for receiving, examining, and using information responsibly. The analysis of Qur'anic exegesis shows that *tabayyun* involves refraining from haste, considering source credibility, examining content and evidence, and considering the consequences of information. It therefore has both epistemic and ethical dimensions. In relation to information literacy, *tabayyun* provides a value foundation for evaluating sources, verifying and comparing information, withholding judgment when certainty has not been established, and using and communicating information responsibly. These principles can complement the skills dimension of

information literacy in contemporary Islamic education by cultivating caution, intellectual honesty, and awareness of the limits of knowledge.

The main contribution of this study is to position *tabayyun* not merely as a principle for addressing hoaxes, disinformation, or digital communication, but as an epistemic and ethical foundation for information literacy in Islamic education. This perspective connects critical thinking with ethical responsibility and can be integrated into learning, academic culture, student development, and the role of teachers in guiding the acquisition and evaluation of knowledge. Thus, *tabayyun* encourages students to pause before believing, verify before concluding, and consider before disseminating information, contributing to an Islamic educational culture in which truth, accuracy, and responsibility are integral to the process of acquiring and using knowledge.

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