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Recontextualizing Critical Pedagogy in Contemporary Islamic Religious Education: A Systematic Literature Review of Critical Consciousness, Digital Literacy, and Transformative Learning

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to analyze the recontextualization of critical pedagogy in contemporary Islamic Religious Education (PAI), focusing on the construction of critical pedagogy, the representation of critical consciousness and digital literacy, and the synthesis of these three dimensions in shaping transformative learning. The study employs a Systematic Literature Review (SLR) method with a qualitative-interpretative approach. The literature was obtained through searches of scientific databases and relevant publication sources using the keywords critical pedagogy, Islamic education, critical consciousness, digital literacy, and transformative learning. The selection and reporting processes followed the PRISMA 2020 framework, while the analysis was conducted through thematic analysis and interpretative synthesis. The findings indicate that critical pedagogy in PAI needs to be recontextualized from a knowledge transmission paradigm toward dialogical, contextual, reflective, and praxis-oriented learning. Critical consciousness and digital literacy were found to be mutually reinforcing dimensions, with digital literacy functioning as an epistemic capacity to trace, verify, compare, and evaluate religious information. The originality of this study lies in synthesizing critical pedagogy, critical consciousness, and digital literacy into a transformative learning framework for PAI that integrates Islamic values as an ethical-spiritual orientation and praxis as a link between knowledge and action. The implications suggest that educators and curriculum developers need to strengthen learning through dialogue, problematization, reflection, digital source analysis, and contextual action. The limitation of this study lies in its dependence on the available literature, therefore, the resulting framework still requires empirical validation.

Keywords:
critical pedagogy; Islamic Religious Education; critical consciousness; digital literacy; transformative learning; Systematic Literature Review.

INTRODUCTION

The ways in which students acquire, interpret, and produce knowledge have changed as a result of advances in digital technology, transformations in knowledge production, and the increasing complexity of socio-religious issues. These changes require students in Islamic Religious Education (IRE) not only to use technology as a learning medium but also to critically examine religious information, assess the credibility and authority of sources, and connect religious knowledge with evolving social realities (Husnizar et al., 2026). Digital literacy is often regarded as an operational skill, without sufficient attention to how

information, technology, algorithms, and power relations shape learning experiences (Yao & Lin, 2026). Although the use of digital technology does not necessarily entail significant pedagogical change, systematic research indicates that digital literacy is increasingly recognized as an essential competency in education (Sarva et al., 2023). Moreover, the integration of technology into learning remains frequently centered on the use of media and devices without transforming learning practices, educator–student relationships, or the processes through which critical consciousness is developed (Bedeker, 2026). This situation is particularly important in religious education, where students encounter information from multiple digital religious sources, including religious narratives, implicit information, and simplified doctrinal interpretations that may constrain their capacity for reflection (Liesdiana et al., 2026). Therefore, an educational approach is needed that positions students not merely as recipients of instruction but also as active participants in dialogue, self-reflection, critical reasoning, and the transformation of knowledge into meaningful action. In this context, recontextualizing critical pedagogy within contemporary Islamic Religious Education is essential. This approach aims to ensure that digitalization is not viewed merely as a transition between learning media but also as an opportunity to redefine how individuals perceive and internalize social and religious realities.

Previous scholarly literature indicates that the orientation of Islamic Religious Education is increasingly moving toward learning systems that are transparent, digitalized, interactive, and responsive to the development of students' analytical thinking skills. The expansion of interaction beyond the classroom has become increasingly evident through the use of platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, TikTok, WhatsApp, and YouTube. Several studies on the digitalization of Islamic Religious Education have demonstrated that these social media platforms have evolved into both learning resources and spaces for educational communication (Fajri & Wibowo, 2026). Findings from another study confirm a paradigm shift from teacher-centered to student-centered learning. This shift is reflected in students' increasing independence in exploring religious literature through the internet and social media, followed by discussions in both virtual and face-to-face settings (Ju'subaidi et al., 2025). Meanwhile, assessments of Islamic Religious Education teachers' digital literacy reveal a competency gap. Their technological proficiency generally remains limited to using classroom-support tools such as PowerPoint, YouTube, Quizizz, Google Forms, and Google Classroom, while their capacity to produce more sophisticated and diverse digital educational content remains relatively limited (Habibah, 2022). A systematic review of digital literacy in the context of Islamic Religious Education indicates that current research predominantly focuses on conceptual development, implementation strategies, positive impacts, existing challenges, and the internalization of moral values through digital competencies (Dewi et al., 2026). In contrast, scholarly discussions integrating critical pedagogy with Islamic Religious Education have begun to emphasize curriculum transformation to foster transformative learning. Within this orientation, the development of critical consciousness and the promotion of dialogical spaces are positioned as central pillars of the educational ecosystem (Ruslan & Luthfiyah, 2026). Taken together, these findings indicate that although critical pedagogy, digital competencies, and transformative learning models have emerged in Islamic Religious Education research, they have largely been examined as separate areas of scholarly inquiry.

Despite the growing body of research on the digitalization of Islamic Religious Education, digital competencies, critical reasoning, and transformative learning models, the theoretical integration of these dimensions continues to present a substantial conceptual gap. Several limitations in the existing literature need to be addressed. First, discussions of digital competencies in Islamic Religious Education have predominantly focused on technical and operational aspects, instructional media design, teacher qualifications, and expanded access to

religious learning materials. By contrast, critical dimensions involving students' abilities to analyze, deconstruct, validate, and critically respond to the dominance of particular forms of knowledge and power dynamics in digital spaces have received comparatively insufficient attention. Yet, the essence of critical digital literacy lies in developing awareness of technological architectures, the underlying interests of digital platforms, and users' active roles within educational ecosystems (Pambudi et al., 2026). Second, research on critical pedagogy in Islamic education has generally focused on examining the relevance of thinkers such as Paulo Freire or exploring its implementation in classroom settings in general, without methodologically connecting it to digital ecosystems and shifts in the ways students acquire religious knowledge (Moh.Abdullah et al., 2026). Third, transformative learning is often treated primarily as a pedagogical aspiration. Few studies have established a conceptual framework that systematically integrates critical pedagogy, analytical awareness, and digital competencies within Islamic Religious Education (Jamaluddin, 2026). In practice, however, the adoption of technology does not automatically produce disruption or transformation in learning. Such transformation depends substantially on thinking paradigms, prior experiences, pedagogical principles, and the capacities of teachers and students to reconstruct their teaching and learning practices (Abedi et al., 2024). Therefore, there is a pressing need to synthesize three domains that have largely been examined separately: critical pedagogy as an emancipatory paradigm, digital literacy as the capacity to evaluate and interact critically in digital spaces, and transformative learning as a means of reconstructing perspectives and translating them into concrete action.

The novelty of this study lies in recontextualizing critical pedagogy within contemporary Islamic Religious Education by integrating three main analytical dimensions: critical consciousness, digital competencies, and transformative learning. This recontextualization does not simply transplant critical pedagogy theory into Islamic Religious Education. Rather, it reconstructs the principles of dialogue, self-reflection, problematization, critical consciousness, and social transformation in a contextually appropriate manner that takes into account the epistemological characteristics and educational ideals of Islam. This study seeks to integrate emancipatory pedagogical approaches while recognizing the urgency of strengthening students' digital literacy to navigate increasingly complex religious information environments (Moh. Affan et al., 2026). Transformative learning serves as a catalyst for comprehensive changes in students' cognitive, affective, and psychomotor domains (Sezer et al., 2026). The relevance of this approach is supported by recent findings confirming that contemporary Muslim communities actively use the internet and social media to seek religious materials (Zaid et al., 2022). This phenomenon requires a critical analytical framework to ensure that digitalization not only expands access to information but also fosters wisdom and spiritual consciousness (Polizzi & Harrison, 2022). Although research on critical pedagogy in Islamic Religious Education has begun to emphasize transformative curriculum development, a systematic framework that integrates critical pedagogy, analytical awareness, digital competencies, and transformative learning into a coherent theoretical model remains underdeveloped (Prastiwi et al., 2026). Accordingly, the original contribution of this study lies in developing a theoretical framework that maps the adaptation of critical pedagogy to respond to digital challenges in Islamic Religious Education while preserving the essential goals of fostering students' critical consciousness, reflection, value internalization, and concrete action.

Based on these gaps, this study aims to systematically analyze the development of research on critical pedagogy in contemporary Islamic Religious Education and synthesize its connections with critical consciousness, digital literacy, and transformative learning. Specifically, the study seeks to identify the concepts and principles of critical pedagogy most relevant to the context of Islamic Religious Education, map how critical consciousness and digital literacy have been conceptualized in previous studies, and analyze the patterns of their interrelationships with transformative learning. In line with these objectives, the study

addresses three research questions: (1) How has critical pedagogy been conceptualized and developed in contemporary Islamic Religious Education research? (2) How are critical consciousness and digital literacy represented as pedagogical dimensions in Islamic Religious Education? and (3) How can the synthesis of critical pedagogy, critical consciousness, and digital literacy contribute to the development of a transformative learning framework for Islamic Religious Education? By employing a Systematic Literature Review (SLR), this study is expected not only to map existing research trends but also to generate a conceptual synthesis that strengthens scholarly discourse on Islamic Religious Education pedagogy in response to changes in digital knowledge and learning ecosystems.

RESEARCH METHODS

This qualitative study employed a Systematic Literature Review (SLR) to identify, evaluate, interpret, and synthesize findings from previous research on the reconstruction of critical pedagogy in contemporary Islamic Religious Education (IRE), with a particular focus on critical consciousness, digital literacy, and transformative learning. The SLR approach was adopted to develop a structured conceptual understanding of scholarly trends and existing research gaps, rather than to collect empirical field data, thereby enabling fragmented bodies of knowledge to be mapped more comprehensively (Christou et al., 2025). The reporting process for this study followed the PRISMA 2020 guidelines to ensure transparency throughout the identification, screening, eligibility assessment, and inclusion of manuscripts (Page et al., 2021).

The data sources comprised national journal articles accredited by Sinta and internationally reputable journal articles indexed in databases such as Scopus and Web of Science, covering publications from the past five years, while also incorporating older seminal works, particularly Paulo Freire's contributions to critical pedagogy. Document selection was based on stringent inclusion criteria, including topical relevance, journal validity, and full-text accessibility. Meanwhile, duplicate articles, non-scholarly opinion pieces, and popular publications were excluded to minimize bias arising from arbitrary selection (Shaheen et al., 2023). Data collection was conducted through documentary analysis, using Boolean operators (AND and OR) to combine relevant keywords. This process was followed by successive screening stages involving the examination of titles and abstracts, followed by full-text reading, before the extracted data were organized into a literature matrix (Page et al., 2021).

All retrieved bibliographic records and digital documents were subsequently organized using Mendeley to facilitate reference management, thematic categorization, and duplicate detection. The data were then analyzed qualitatively using thematic analysis and interpretive synthesis, organized around the stages of data condensation, data display, and conclusion drawing, following the analytical framework of Miles, Huberman, and Saldaña (Maulida & Ratnasari, 2024). The validity of the final synthesis was rigorously maintained through the traceability of referenced documents and the consistent application of selection criteria. Consequently, this study aims to develop a novel conceptualization that offers an applicable framework for recontextualizing critical pedagogy within contemporary Islamic Religious Education.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

1. How Critical Pedagogy Is Constructed and Developed in Contemporary Islamic Religious Education Studies

Discourse on critical pedagogy in modern Islamic Religious Education (PAI) has shifted from the mere direct replication of Paulo Freire's ideas toward an educational paradigm that positions learners as the primary actors in the learning process. Within this model, students are encouraged to independently examine and critically evaluate religious understanding and the social phenomena surrounding them, while actively constructing their own interpretations (Rahma et al., 2026). This reconceptualization responds to the limitations of conventional teaching systems, which tend to rely on one-way information transfer, rote memorization of doctrines, and the positioning of educators as the absolute authorities on truth (Kakamad et al., 2025). From the perspective of critical pedagogy, educational institutions and practices are inherently never free from particular value orientations, since the transfer of knowledge is always intertwined with how knowledge is constructed, selected, distributed, and internalized within communal structures (Crowley, 2021). Therefore, the orientation of PAI learning needs to be transformed from the rigid delivery of dogma into an interactive space for discussion that connects theological doctrines with empirical realities, social challenges, and contemporary developments. This relevance is reinforced by the findings of (Fauzi & Usman, 2024), who emphasize that Freirean principles of praxis, democratic freedom, and critical consciousness are highly compatible with the spirit of Islamic education, particularly in translating an understanding of spiritual values into concrete actions and meaningful social contributions.

The restructuring of critical pedagogy within PAI rests on a shift in the role of learners, who are transformed from passive recipients of information into active subjects equipped with personal experiences, prior understanding, and the capacity to reconstruct meaning. This shift also entails a reorientation of the educational relationship between educators and students (Fazal & Graefen, 2026). Educators are no longer positioned as the absolute holders of scientific truth; rather, they act as initiators of discussion, facilitators of reflection, and learning partners who guide students in examining theological doctrines through the lens of social realities and empirical experiences (Faishol et al., 2026). This idea is rooted in Freire's rejection of the concept of banking education, an instructional system that treats students as empty piggy banks into which teachers deposit knowledge (Nugraha et al., 2024). When applied to PAI learning, this rejection is not intended to undermine teachers' authority or diminish the sacredness of religious teachings. Instead, it seeks to reformulate how educational authority is exercised. Teachers' charisma and authority should be used to foster an inclusive environment for discussion, stimulate critical thinking through questioning, sharpen the logic of argumentation, and guide students toward a deeper internalization of religious texts. Recent investigations into the application of critical approaches in Indonesian Islamic education confirm that restructuring power relations, fostering student autonomy, adapting to local cultures, utilizing digital tools, and reforming assessment methods are crucial pillars for aligning critical pedagogy with Islamic values.

In contemporary PAI scholarship, the dialogical dimension is one of the most crucial elements in constructing critical pedagogy. Dialogue is not merely an exchange of opinions but an epistemological process that enables students to bring together texts, experiences, social contexts, and contemporary questions (Pavlyk, 2026). In PAI learning, discussions of issues such as diversity, social justice, the environment, culture, digital media, and other aspects of life with religious dimensions can be facilitated (Anisa' et al., 2026). Furthermore, by positioning students as recipients of information, this study indicates that PAI learning needs to move toward a more contextual and transformative approach (Syaifuddin et al., 2026). Problem-based learning, project-based learning, group discussions, social reflection, and problem-oriented learning can enable students to engage in meaning-making and problem-

solving (Lee & Jung, 2025). These findings indicate that critical pedagogy can be constructed not only through theoretical change but also through changes in patterns of learning interaction that provide greater space for students' questions, experiences, arguments, and reflections.

The concept of critical pedagogy has become increasingly closely associated with the development of critical consciousness among learners. In the context of Islamic Religious Education (PAI), critical consciousness extends beyond logical or analytical thinking skills. It also encompasses the sensitivity required to reflectively examine the relationships among religious teachings, social conditions, power relations, and everyday life experiences (Moh.Abdullah et al., 2026). Through this consciousness, students are encouraged to recognize that religious issues do not exist in isolation but are always intertwined with cultural, political, economic, and social dynamics, as well as technological developments (Skrefsrud, 2023). Accordingly, students no longer passively accept information or teachings. Instead, they are trained to trace the origins of knowledge, understand the contexts in which it emerges, identify the interests that may be embedded within it, and consider its effects on individuals and society. (Fauzi & Usman, 2024) emphasize that critical consciousness in Islamic education can help students read social structures more deeply and critically evaluate their Islamic understanding by connecting religious values with their lived experiences. This perspective indicates that critical pedagogy in PAI is not intended to cultivate a critical attitude detached from religious belief. Rather, it seeks to develop reflective capacities grounded in Islamic values, moral responsibility, and an orientation toward the common good. (Fauzi & Usman, 2024) also found that critical consciousness can integrate religious teachings with students' lived experiences, thereby fostering a more contextual, inclusive, and socially responsible understanding of Islam.

The integration of critical pedagogy into contemporary Islamic Religious Education (PAI) has become essential for equipping students to face information disruption in the digital era. The increasingly open access to religious materials through algorithm-driven platforms and social media has created epistemological challenges concerning the validity and potential biases of circulating content (Azka & Awang, 2026). Therefore, the PAI curriculum needs to redefine digital literacy not merely as an operational technical skill but as an ethical and reflective capacity to filter, evaluate, and compare the authority of digital learning sources, which are no longer limited to conventional texts (Vischa Dewayanie & Tentiasih, 2026). Through this approach, transformative PAI learning can encourage conscientization, or the development of critical awareness, enabling students not only to analyze the digital world objectively but also to understand their social responsibilities within it (Aziz et al., 2026).

Transformative Islamic Religious Education (PAI) integrates theological teachings with social realities in order to position religion as an analytical instrument for understanding the dynamics of life. By incorporating local and global contexts, PAI materials are designed to connect Islamic values directly with issues of diversity, cultural transformation, and the digital-era challenges faced by students (Rian Saputri & Khoeron, 2025). This contextual internalization reinforces the essence of critical pedagogy, in which students are not merely required to memorize normative doctrines but are challenged to understand how these values can be implemented in concrete situations (Karwadi et al., 2025). Consequently, religious education can attain a practical dimension that bridges theoretical knowledge with a cycle of understanding, in-depth reflection, and tangible social action.

Integrating critical pedagogy into Islamic Religious Education (PAI) requires a transition from theoretical understanding to responsive action through the realization of the concept of praxis. In line with Paulo Freire's transformative thought, the educational process must not remain confined to cognitive reflection alone; rather, it must connect critical consciousness with concrete action in the social environment (Gioti & Toka, 2026). In religious learning, this framework can be implemented by training students to identify social problems,

analyze their root causes through an Islamic theological perspective, and formulate applicable ethical solutions for the common good (Fauzi & Usman, 2024). Consequently, the success of PAI learning should no longer be measured solely by academic achievement or mastery of normative material. It should also be assessed in terms of students' moral responsibility and their actual capacity to address and resolve real-life challenges wisely (Nasrudin et al., 2025). Thus, the integration of critical pedagogy transforms PAI from a process of doctrinal knowledge transfer into an instrument of social empowerment that shapes students into morally grounded and solution-oriented agents of change.

Against this background, transformative learning emerges as a necessary consequence of critical pedagogy. The transformative learning paradigm focuses on reconstructing learners' ways of thinking through critical examination of experiences, underlying assumptions, and worldviews that were previously accepted as unquestioned dogma (O'Grady, 2023). When integrated with critical pedagogy, the dynamics of learning transformation are not limited to the cognitive domain but also extend to the development of awareness and an orientation toward concrete action (Stubbs & Hullinger, 2022). The findings of (Ruslan & Luthfiyah, 2026) indicate a convergence of values between critical pedagogy and the principles of Islamic education, particularly in the dimensions of tafakkur (reflection), dialogue, and self-transformation. This synthesis has the potential to restructure PAI learning into a more dynamic process oriented toward dialogue, contextual relevance, critical reflection, and substantive change. These implications strengthen the argument that critical pedagogy can be incorporated into PAI, not by replacing the objectives of Islamic education but by expanding how Islamic values and knowledge are internalized through critical argumentation and dialogue.

Another development is the effort to bring critical pedagogy into dialogue with the epistemology of Islamic education. From this perspective, recontextualization does not mean accepting all of Freire's assumptions about critical pedagogy without modification, since secular critical traditions and Islamic education have different epistemological foundations (Dian Nopita Sari et al., 2024). Islamic education has a transcendental dimension that places revelation, reason, experience, and moral values in a complementary relationship. Therefore, concepts such as critical consciousness, dialogue, emancipation, and transformation need to be interpreted within an Islamic value framework (Toto Ahmad Sahid, 2025). Other studies identify points of convergence between dialogue, conscientization, and the rejection of the banking model, on the one hand, and Islamic values such as tarbiyah, 'adl, and shura, on the other (Alwy Ahmed Mohamed et al., 2026). Meanwhile, research on critical consciousness in Islamic education also indicates the possibility of connecting Freire's ideas with Muhammad Iqbal's concept of khudi to develop a framework of critical consciousness that retains an Islamic orientation (Mirza, 2024).

Thus, the synthesis indicates that critical pedagogy in contemporary PAI scholarship is constructed through at least five interrelated shifts: from transmission to dialogue, from learners as objects to learners as subjects, from isolated knowledge to contextualized knowledge, from technical digital literacy to critical digital literacy, and from informative learning to transformative learning. These shifts do not eliminate the normative and spiritual dimensions of PAI. Rather, they place Islamic values within a more reflective and contextual process of meaning-making (Irawan & Rohman, 2025). PAI learning that integrates social issues, diversity, digital sources, case studies, and reflection can develop students' critical thinking abilities alongside their social sensitivity (Subakti et al., 2025). Meanwhile, the digital transformation discussed in the literature indicates that technological change requires educators to move from the role of information providers to that of facilitators who help students access and use knowledge sources critically.

These findings demonstrate that critical pedagogy in contemporary PAI should not be positioned as a foreign theory merely adopted from the Freirean tradition. Instead, critical pedagogy develops through dialogue between the concepts of critical consciousness, praxis,

dialogue, and transformation and the principles of Islamic education, including tarbiyah, tafakkur, ta'awun, 'adl, shura, and moral responsibility (Karwadi et al., 2025). This development reflects a process of recontextualization, namely the adaptation of critical pedagogy to the epistemological characteristics, objectives, values, and needs of Islamic education (Ruslan & Luthfiyah, 2026). Recent studies further indicate that integrating critical pedagogy into Islamic education involves changes in authority relations, student agency, cultural adaptation, technological integration, and assessment practices (Karwadi et al., 2025). Therefore, the contribution of critical pedagogy to PAI lies not primarily in replacing the paradigm of Islamic education but in strengthening PAI's capacity to become a dialogical, reflective, critical, contextual, and transformative learning space.

Based on this synthesis, the construction of critical pedagogy in contemporary PAI can be formulated as a conceptual relationship among dialogue, experience, critical consciousness, digital literacy, reflection, and praxis. Dialogue opens a space for exchanging knowledge; experience provides the context for meaning-making; critical consciousness enables students to interpret reality reflectively; digital literacy strengthens their ability to evaluate knowledge within the information ecosystem; reflection re-examines assumptions and understanding; and praxis connects knowledge with action. This sequence leads to transformative learning that produces not only changes in understanding but also changes in students' orientations and actions. Accordingly, critical pedagogy in PAI can be understood as a pedagogical construction that seeks to bring the depth of Islamic values together with the capacity to interpret reality critically, so that religious education moves beyond the mastery of knowledge toward the development of awareness and responsible action in social life.

2. How Critical Consciousness and Digital Literacy Are Represented as Pedagogical Dimensions in Islamic Religious Education Learning

The literature synthesis indicates that critical consciousness and digital literacy in Islamic Religious Education (PAI) can no longer be understood merely as supplementary abilities outside the substance of religious learning. Both have developed into pedagogical dimensions that influence how students acquire, evaluate, interpret, and use religious knowledge when engaging with the realities of life (Zulfiqri, 2026). Critical consciousness encourages students not to accept knowledge passively but to question assumptions, understand contexts, identify social problems, and connect knowledge with lived experience (Widiantie, 2025). Meanwhile, digital literacy expands the space in which this consciousness develops because much of students' learning experience takes place within a digital information ecosystem that provides access to diverse sources, perspectives, and religious discourses (Zuhri, 2021). From Freire's (2000) perspective, critical education develops students' ability to read both the word and the world, ensuring that knowledge is not separated from the social realities surrounding it (Gul et al., 2022). When this principle is applied to contemporary PAI, reading the world also involves reading digital spaces as a new social environment in which religious knowledge is produced, disseminated, debated, and consumed (Rohmiati, 2025). Thus, critical consciousness and digital literacy reinforce one another in shaping reflective and contextually grounded PAI learning.

Critical consciousness in PAI learning is primarily represented by a shift in learning orientation from mastering knowledge toward understanding its meaning and context. Students are not only guided to understand Islamic concepts but are also encouraged to identify real-life issues related to those concepts (Muhajjalina, 2025). For example, learning about tolerance need not stop at mastering definitions and scriptural evidence; it can be developed through the analysis of experiences of diversity, social conflict, hate speech, or intergroup interactions in digital spaces. Similarly, learning about justice, responsibility, the environment, or social ethics

can be directed toward identifying problems, analyzing their causes, reflecting on Islamic values, and formulating actions. This pattern aligns with the concept of critical consciousness, which positions reflection on reality as an essential part of the educational process (Ratri Ayu Bethari, 2024). The implementation of integrative, contextual, and future-oriented learning through spiritually grounded projects and Islamic digital literacy represents a practical step toward realizing critical consciousness and praxis (Nuraini & Shohib, 2026). Through this integration, religious knowledge becomes directly connected to students' social actions, while educators retain a central role as *murabbi* and moral exemplars whose role cannot be replaced by artificial intelligence (AI) (Yolanda Dwintarisma Andrini et al., 2025). Thus, critical consciousness in PAI is not merely an abstract capacity for critical thinking but an ability to understand the relationship between religious values and the concrete problems faced by individuals and society.

The representation of critical consciousness is also evident in the strengthening of students' ability to ask questions and challenge assumptions. In transmissive learning models, students' questions are often directed toward finding predetermined answers, whereas in critical pedagogy, questioning becomes an instrument for opening up processes of inquiry (Ashari et al., 2026). Students are encouraged to ask about the reasons, contexts, implications, and alternative perspectives associated with an issue (Rosyad et al., 2026). In PAI, this process can be implemented when teachers introduce authentic problems that have both religious and social dimensions (Julhijah et al., 2026). Students are then given opportunities to identify problems, express their views, seek evidence, compare sources, and justify their conclusions (Yulisriyanti, 2024). The conceptual foundation of this study indicates that PAI learning needs to move toward a contextual and transformative approach through discussions, case studies, problem-based learning, projects, and social reflection (Izzah & Wardan, 2026). These practices demonstrate that critical consciousness can be integrated into instructional design without depriving PAI of its normative character. Rather, religious values become a source of reflection for understanding problems more deeply.

Within this context, digital literacy is represented as an epistemic capacity rather than merely a technical skill. Students must be able to do more than operate search engines, social media, learning applications, or digital devices; they also need to identify relevant sources, verify the credibility of information, compare perspectives, recognize bias, and understand the context in which information is produced (Aliyah et al., 2025). This shift is particularly important in PAI because religious knowledge available on the internet varies in authority, quality, and purpose (Arbiah et al., 2025). Students may obtain information from educational institutions' websites, religious portals, social media, short videos, online forums, and content produced by individuals whose scholarly competence is unclear (Rodin et al., 2026). Therefore, digital literacy needs to be positioned as part of students' capacity for critical inquiry. Systematic research on digital literacy indicates that its development in education is increasingly moving beyond operational skills toward critical, social, and reflective abilities in the use of technology and information (Aliyah et al., 2025).

The representation of digital literacy in PAI is further reflected in changes in how students engage with religious sources. In conventional learning, teachers and textbooks often serve as the primary sources of knowledge (Bahrudin et al., 2025). The digital ecosystem expands these sources, giving students opportunities to compare different explanations and perspectives (Safitri et al., 2025). However, expanded access does not automatically improve the quality of knowledge. Indeed, the greater the number of available sources, the greater the need for selection and verification skills. Therefore, PAI teachers need to develop learning activities that require students to compare several digital sources, identify differences in argumentation, trace the origins of information, and assess its consistency with reliable religious sources. Learning resources also need to be enriched through digital media and broader literature so that PAI learning can remain connected to developments in knowledge

and students' experiences. At this stage, digital literacy is no longer external to PAI learning but becomes part of the process through which students construct religious knowledge.

The relationship between critical consciousness and digital literacy becomes increasingly apparent when students encounter ideologically laden information. Digital spaces do not merely provide information; they also shape how information is selected, presented, and consumed (Huszár et al., 2022). Platform algorithms may reinforce users' preferences through content recommendations, while the characteristics of social media tend to encourage the dissemination of information that is brief, emotional, and easy to share (Paletz et al., 2023). In religious contexts, these conditions may expose students to highly diverse religious perspectives without necessarily equipping them to understand their epistemological and social backgrounds (Rokibullah & Laksana, 2025). Critical pedagogy therefore requires students to ask not only whether information is true but also how it is produced, who produces it, what interests may be involved, and how it affects people's understanding of reality (Ross et al., 2022). Critical digital literacy thus extends critical consciousness into the digital environment (Arvianti et al., 2026). This indicates that critical digital literacy requires the ability to understand technology and information reflectively, including consideration of the structures, interests, and power relations embedded in the digital ecosystem.

In PAI learning, the integration of these two dimensions can be realized through problem-based learning strategies focused on current issues. Teachers can introduce an issue circulating in digital spaces and ask students to investigate various sources, identify the claims being made, compare arguments, and connect their findings with Islamic principles (Walsh-Moorman & Pytash, 2022). This process can be applied to issues such as tolerance, diversity, social media ethics, the environment, social justice, religious moderation, or moral problems encountered in everyday life (Sihotang, 2024). Students are then asked not merely to provide answers but also to explain the basis of their arguments and the process through which they reached their conclusions (Ruwaida & Mauizdati, 2024). This pattern demonstrates that digital literacy can serve as a means of developing critical consciousness (Dooly & Darvin, 2022). It also indicates that PAI learning integrating social contexts, diversity, case studies, and reflection can strengthen students' ability to understand the relationship between religious values and social realities.

The pedagogical dimension of critical consciousness is also evident in the changing role of PAI teachers. Teachers can no longer function merely as transmitters of information; they need to become facilitators who guide students in searching for, examining, and interpreting knowledge (Muhammad Khoirul Amri Nst et al., 2025). This change is increasingly important in digital environments because teachers cannot remain the sole source of information available to students (Wohlfart & Wagner, 2023). Their role becomes even more important in helping students identify reliable sources, understand contexts, formulate questions, test arguments, and develop reflective capacities (Schaffalitzky, 2024). Digital transformation shifts educators from being the center of information to becoming facilitators who help students use various knowledge sources critically (Afriani et al., 2024). This position aligns with critical pedagogy, which understands the relationship between teachers and students as dialogical rather than one-directional (Hennessy et al., 2023). Dialogue also enables teachers and students to participate together in the pursuit of knowledge, although their respective roles and responsibilities remain distinct.

Changes in teachers' roles also have implications for the design of learning activities. PAI teachers need to create learning environments in which students can express questions and viewpoints without losing sight of the values and objectives of Islamic education. Dialogue in critical pedagogy does not mean that all viewpoints are considered equally valid. Rather, it provides space for arguments to be examined through reasoning, evidence, accountable

sources, and moral principles. In this way, PAI learning can cultivate intellectual openness alongside epistemic responsibility (Hasyanto et al., 2026). Students learn that freedom of thought must be accompanied by the ability to take responsibility for information and arguments (Wright, 2023). This is particularly important in responding to digital culture, which enables individuals to produce and disseminate information rapidly without adequate verification (Fathorrahman et al., 2026). Therefore, critical consciousness and digital literacy need to be developed simultaneously so that freedom of access to information does not lead to epistemic relativism but instead improves the quality of thinking and decision-making.

The representation of critical consciousness and digital literacy also has implications for PAI assessment systems. If learning objectives are measured only through students' ability to recall concepts and scriptural evidence, the development of critical consciousness and digital literacy will not be adequately captured. Assessment needs to consider students' abilities to analyze problems, evaluate sources, construct arguments, reflect on experiences, and formulate actions (Vlachopoulos & Makri, 2024). For example, students may be asked to analyze two or more digital religious contents addressing the same issue, identify differences in their arguments, evaluate their sources, and then prepare a reflection based on Islamic principles (Walsh-Moorman & Pytash, 2022). Such activities provide a more comprehensive picture of students' ability to use religious knowledge critically (Subakti et al., 2025). Studies on digital pedagogical transformation indicate that technological change needs to be accompanied by changes in learning and assessment strategies so that technology does not become merely an additional tool in educational practice. Accordingly, PAI assessment also needs to move from measuring the reproduction of knowledge toward evaluating thinking processes, reflection, and the ability to apply values in real contexts.

Ultimately, critical consciousness and digital literacy have a strong ethical dimension in PAI learning. Digital literacy that focuses only on the ability to search for and disseminate information is insufficient to develop responsible students. Students also need to understand the moral consequences of digital actions, such as sharing unverified information, engaging in insults, reinforcing stereotypes, or spreading narratives that may trigger social conflict (Haryanti et al., 2025). Here, PAI values function as an ethical framework guiding the use of digital capabilities (Muksin & Afandi, 2025). Principles of honesty, *tabayyun* (careful verification), responsibility, justice, respect for human dignity, and the common good can serve as foundations for developing reflective digital behavior (Mukhlis & Cahyadi, 2026). Thus, the recontextualization of critical pedagogy does not merely adopt the concept of critical consciousness but also extends it through the moral orientation of Islamic education. Students are expected not only to recognize information manipulation but also to develop awareness of their moral responsibility when producing and disseminating information.

When these two dimensions are synthesized, the findings indicate that critical consciousness and digital literacy have a complementary relationship. Critical consciousness provides a reflective orientation for questioning knowledge and reality, while digital literacy provides the capacity to undertake this process within the digital information ecosystem (Gutiérrez-Ujaque, 2024). Critical consciousness without digital literacy may be insufficient when students face the complexity of digital information, whereas digital literacy without critical consciousness risks remaining at the level of technical skills (Ilomäki et al., 2023). Contemporary PAI learning therefore requires their integration, as illustrated in the figure below:

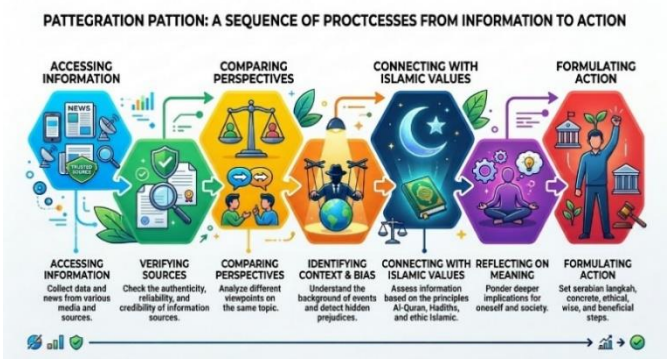


Figure 1. Framework of Information Integration & Critical Action

This sequence demonstrates that digital literacy serves as a medium for developing critical consciousness, while critical consciousness provides epistemic and ethical direction for the use of digital technology.

Thus, the representation of critical consciousness and digital literacy as pedagogical dimensions in PAI can be understood through changes in six principal aspects: learning objectives, students' positions, teachers' roles, the use of learning resources, learning activities, and assessment. Learning objectives are directed toward the ability to understand and reflect on reality; students are positioned as active subjects; teachers act as facilitators and dialogical partners; learning resources are expanded to include verified digital sources; learning activities are developed through dialogue, problematization, case analysis, small-scale research, and reflection; and assessment focuses on the abilities to analyze, evaluate, reflect, and act (Vlachopoulos & Makri, 2024). This pattern indicates that critical consciousness and digital literacy are not two additional competencies attached to PAI learning but integral components of a pedagogical transformation that changes how religious knowledge is learned and used.

Based on the overall synthesis, critical consciousness and digital literacy can be affirmed as two mutually reinforcing dimensions in the recontextualization of critical pedagogy in contemporary PAI. Critical consciousness enables students to interpret reality reflectively, while digital literacy allows this capacity to be applied within an increasingly digitalized knowledge environment. Both converge in learning practices that are dialogical, contextual, reflective, and problem-based. In Islamic education, this integration must remain situated within the values and objectives of Islamic education so that criticality does not develop into merely the ability to question but into the ability to construct knowledge, take positions, and act on the basis of intellectual, moral, and social considerations. At this point, critical consciousness and digital literacy begin to lead toward transformative learning, because the learning process produces not only changes in knowledge but also changes in how students understand themselves, their social environments, the information they consume, and their responsibilities as members of society.

3. How the Synthesis of Critical Pedagogy, Critical Consciousness, and Digital Literacy Can Form a Transformative Learning Framework in Islamic Religious Education

The literature synthesis indicates that critical pedagogy, critical consciousness, and digital literacy have complementary conceptual relationships in shaping transformative learning in Islamic Religious Education (PAI). Critical pedagogy provides the philosophical and pedagogical foundation for positioning students as active subjects in knowledge construction, critical consciousness constitutes the reflective capacity to understand and question reality, and digital literacy provides the epistemic capacity to select, verify, compare, and interpret information within digital environments (Nomdo, 2023). These three concepts should not be positioned as independent competencies but as an integrated pedagogical process

connecting knowledge, experience, reflection, values, and action (Kusbiantoro et al., 2026). This synthesis is important because contemporary PAI learning environments no longer operate solely through interactions among teachers, textbooks, and students but also through extensive and diverse flows of digital information (Abil Fida Muhammad Qois Al Hadi et al., 2025). Research emphasizes the need to enrich PAI content by connecting local and global realities while developing students' capacity to respond critically to information and ideologies emerging in the digital era (Oktahariana et al., 2025). Accordingly, transformative PAI learning needs to be designed as a process that enables students to read religious texts while also critically interpreting social and digital realities.

From the perspective of critical pedagogy, learning transformation begins with a change in students' positions. Students are no longer understood as recipients of information who must memorize religious knowledge delivered by educators. Instead, they are positioned as subjects with experiences, questions, and the capacity to construct understanding through dialogue (Datuzuhriah et al., 2026). This idea intersects with Freire's thought on dialogical education, critical consciousness, and praxis (Majola et al., 2026). In the context of Islamic education, (Fauzi & Usman, 2024) demonstrate that praxis enables students to connect knowledge and Islamic values with concrete actions, while critical consciousness helps them understand social structures and interpret Islamic teachings more reflectively. Therefore, transforming PAI learning cannot be achieved merely by changing the teaching method from lecturing to discussion. A more fundamental transformation involves changing how students acquire knowledge, question information, understand contexts, take positions, and connect religious knowledge with life-related problems.

The synthesis further indicates that critical consciousness functions as an internal mechanism linking knowledge with the transformation of perspectives. Students can be considered to be experiencing transformative learning when they not only acquire new information but also examine assumptions, understandings, or perspectives that they previously accepted without question (Carlson et al., 2025). In PAI, this process can occur when students encounter real-world issues such as religious and cultural diversity, social conflict, intolerance, injustice, media ethics, the dissemination of religious information, or differences of opinion in matters of Islamic jurisprudence (*fiqh*) (Takunas et al., 2024). A case-study approach can be used to encourage students to analyze social phenomena while seeking solutions that reflect Islamic values, allowing learning to move beyond theoretical understanding toward contextual learning experiences (A. Faizul Mubarak & Aminoto, 2026). Thus, authentic problems function as catalysts for reflection, enabling students to reassess their religious knowledge in response to the complexity of reality.

At this point, digital literacy assumes a more strategic position. Within a transformative learning framework, digital literacy cannot be understood merely as the ability to use devices, search for information online, or operate learning applications (Farias-Gaytan et al., 2022). Instead, it needs to be understood as the ability to comprehend how knowledge is produced, disseminated, constructed, and influenced by particular interests in digital spaces (Gouseti et al., 2024). Studies of critical digital literacy indicate that students need the capacity to identify, understand, and respond critically to issues arising in digital environments (Hämäläinen et al., 2021). This capacity is increasingly important in PAI because students encounter diverse digital religious sources with different levels of quality, authority, context, and orientation (Vamanu & Zak, 2022). Therefore, digital literacy needs to be positioned as an epistemic infrastructure for developing critical consciousness. Students should not merely be expected to find religious answers, they must also be able to explain where those answers originate, how the credibility of their sources is verified, which perspectives are employed, and how the information can be justified academically and ethically.

The relationship between digital literacy and critical consciousness forms a more complex epistemic process. When students encounter religious information on social media,

for example, learning should not stop at determining whether the information is consistent with the knowledge they have previously received (Rizky Giansyah Putra et al., 2024). Students need to be guided to trace sources, examine contexts, compare perspectives, identify arguments, consider possible biases, and then connect the information with relevant Islamic principles (Walsh-Moorman & Pytash, 2022). This process turns the act of reading information into a pedagogical activity (Moore, 2025). Digital literacy is therefore not merely a technical skill but also part of the development of critical thinking (Amin et al., 2023). This position aligns with the need for a PAI curriculum that develops students' capacity to navigate the diverse information and ideologies of the digital era (Fadhilah Husna Nurbaiti et al., 2026). Within this framework, digital technology is not the objective of learning but an epistemic space in which students learn to examine knowledge and construct understanding reflectively.

The next dimension of the synthesis concerns changes in educators' roles. Transformative learning cannot develop if educators continue to be positioned as the sole source of truth and students as recipients of knowledge (Rzayeva & Karimli, 2025). Educators need to become facilitators, mediators, and dialogical partners who help students develop questions, locate sources, examine arguments, and reflect on their learning outcomes (Mufid, 2025). One of the study's conceptual foundations emphasizes that digital transformation expands students' access to learning resources while simultaneously shifting educators from the center of information toward the role of facilitators who help students access, understand, and process information from various sources (Aspandi & Muttaqin, 2025). This finding is directly relevant to critical pedagogy because open access to knowledge sources will produce transformative learning only when students are guided to use those sources critically (de Brún, 2026). In PAI learning, educators do not lose their scholarly authority, rather, the nature of that authority changes from being the sole holders of information to guiding the processes of interpretation, verification, dialogue, and reflection.

These changes in educators' roles also affect the design of learning activities. The literature synthesis indicates that transformative PAI learning is better served by activities that expose students to real-world problems and require investigation (Amirudin et al., 2025). Problem-Based Learning (PBL), case studies, dialogical discussions, project-based learning, social-phenomenon analysis, and reflection are several pedagogical approaches that can operationalize this synthesis (Rintia et al., 2026). Case studies concerning intergroup conflict or practices of tolerance can be used to develop students' analytical abilities, empathy, and social sensitivity (Younis, 2026). Such approaches can be expanded by incorporating digital dimensions. For example, students may be asked to compare news reports from several sources, analyze religious content on social media, identify differences in argumentation, and then discuss the issues using relevant Islamic sources. These activities bring together three elements: problematization as a principle of critical pedagogy, information evaluation as a digital literacy practice, and reflection as a mechanism for developing critical consciousness.

Based on this synthesis, transformative PAI learning can be formulated as a cycle that begins with reality, proceeds toward critical inquiry, and leads to reflection and action. The first stage is problematization of reality, which involves presenting issues close to students' lives that have religious, social, cultural, or digital dimensions. The second stage is information exploration and verification, in which students seek diverse sources, examine their credibility, compare perspectives, and identify the contexts of the information. The third stage is dialogue and interpretation, through which students discuss their findings with peers and educators to examine arguments and connect information with PAI concepts. The fourth stage is critical reflection, in which students reassess their assumptions and understanding in light of new knowledge. The fifth stage is integration of Islamic values, whereby the results of reflection are connected with principles such as justice, tolerance, responsibility, the common good,

moderation, and respect for human dignity. The sixth stage is praxis or action, in which students translate their learning into social action, digital behavior, collaborative projects, or other relevant forms of contribution. The final stage is reflective evaluation, through which students reassess the process and effects of their actions. This framework positions learning as a cyclical process rather than a linear one that ends when instructional content has been delivered.

This framework has a strong relationship with Mezirow's (1997) concept of transformative learning, particularly in terms of changing frames of reference through critical reflection. However, this synthesis indicates that transformative PAI learning cannot be equated entirely with transformative learning in the Western educational tradition (Sholeh et al., 2023). In the context of PAI, changes in perspective are directed not only toward the restructuring of individual meaning-making but also toward the development of moral and spiritual orientations rooted in Islamic values (Fakhruddin et al., 2026). Therefore, critical reflection needs to address not only questions such as "What do I know?" and "Why do I believe this?" but also "How does this knowledge align with the values of justice, the common good, responsibility, and moral character?" Accordingly, the transformative dimension of PAI simultaneously encompasses epistemological, moral, social, and spiritual characteristics. Recent studies of Islamic education and critical pedagogy also indicate a tendency to connect dialogue, critical consciousness, and praxis with Islamic educational values such as justice, emancipation, and social responsibility (Dr. Sumbul Ansar Khan & Dr. Syed Zubair Ahmed, 2025).

This moral dimension is important because critical pedagogy should not be reduced to granting students the freedom to question everything without any value orientation. In PAI, freedom of thought needs to be accompanied by epistemic and ethical responsibility (Mahfuzi & Solehudin, 2025). Students should be free to ask questions, compare opinions, and critically examine information, while the process remains directed toward the responsible use of knowledge (Hani Hasnah Safitri et al., 2026). The principle of *tabayyun*, for example, can be contextualized as an ethical foundation for information verification, justice can provide a basis for evaluating social issues, ukhuwah (brotherhood) and *ta'awun* (mutual assistance) can guide the development of social relationships, and moderation can provide a framework for engaging with differences. In this way, digital literacy moves beyond the ability to filter information and develops into an ethics of digital media use. Critical consciousness likewise moves beyond identifying weaknesses in information toward an awareness of the responsibility to use knowledge for the common good.

Another important aspect of this framework is the integration of local and global contexts. Students live within two overlapping realities: local realities encompassing culture, tradition, and the social environment, and global realities emerging through technological and scientific developments and cross-cultural interactions (Hauerwas et al., 2021). Both realities need to be presented simultaneously in transformative PAI learning. For example, discussions of tolerance need not be limited to normative concepts in the Qur'an and Hadith. They can begin with students' experiences of encountering differences in their school environments and then be compared with phenomena of diversity in national and global contexts (Zainal Abidin Muhja & Liza Shahnaz, 2026). Students can investigate digital information about these issues, compare perspectives, analyze root causes, and formulate responses based on Islamic values. This process establishes a direct connection between PAI learning and students' lives while broadening their understanding of wider issues.

This framework also has implications for learning outcomes and assessment. If transformative learning is assessed only through memorization tests, the paradigm shift fostered by critical pedagogy and critical consciousness will not be adequately measured (Pang et al., 2023). Learning outcomes need to include the ability to understand religious concepts, analyze problems, evaluate information sources, engage in reflection, communicate dialogically, and demonstrate actions consistent with the values being learned (Yoon, 2026).

PAI learning outcomes also need to maintain a balance among cognitive, affective, and psychomotor dimensions while taking into account the dynamics of multicultural societies, developments in information technology, and global challenges (Suwanto & Hamami, 2026). Accordingly, transformative assessment can employ case analysis, reflective journals, digital portfolios, social projects, argumentative presentations, digital-source evaluation, and assessments of decision-making processes. The focus of assessment should not be solely on whether an answer is correct but also on the quality of thinking, argumentation, reflection, and the connection between knowledge and action.

From the perspective of the SLR synthesis, the relationship among the three main concepts can be formulated more systematically. Critical pedagogy functions as a paradigm because it determines how relationships among educators, students, knowledge, and reality are constructed (Jemioł, 2022). Critical consciousness functions as an internal transformative process because it enables students to recognize, question, and reconstruct their perspectives on reality (Southworth, 2022). Digital literacy functions as an epistemic capacity because it enables students to engage critically with the digital information ecosystem (Zhou et al., 2026). These three elements are then guided by Islamic values as an ethical-spiritual orientation and realized through praxis as a form of transformative action. Within this structure, transformative PAI learning can be understood as an integrative process: reality gives rise to problems; problems encourage information seeking, information is critically analyzed, analysis generates reflection, reflection is connected with Islamic values, and those values are translated into action.

This synthesis also clarifies the position of digital technology in PAI learning. Technology is not treated as a variable that automatically makes learning modern or transformative (Wang et al., 2021). The use of videos, learning platforms, social media, e-books, scholarly databases, and artificial intelligence becomes transformative only when it is used to expand opportunities for inquiry, bring different perspectives together, encourage dialogue, and strengthen reflection (Grainger et al., 2024). Literature on transformative learning media in Islamic education indicates that digital media can be used to integrate moral values with more interactive learning experiences (Hayati & Basnang Said, 2025). Thus, the central issue is not how much technology is used but how it is positioned within the pedagogical structure. Technology used merely to deliver material more quickly may continue to reinforce transmissive learning patterns. Conversely, technology used for investigation, dialogue, verification, collaboration, reflection, and action can strengthen transformative learning.

Based on the overall synthesis, this study constructs a Critical Pedagogy-Based Transformative PAI Learning Framework consisting of seven interconnected processes: problematization of reality, digital literacy and verification, interpretive dialogue, critical reflection, integration of Islamic values, social praxis, and reflective evaluation. The framework can be understood as follows:

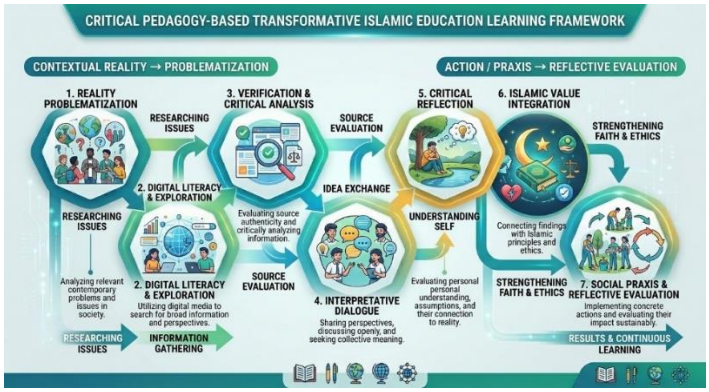


Figure 2. Integrative PAI Framework for Building Faith, Ethics, and Social Praxis

The distinctive feature of this framework lies in positioning digital literacy not as an additional competency outside critical pedagogy but as an epistemic infrastructure that enables critical consciousness to develop within contemporary learning environments. At the same time, Islamic values serve as an ethical-spiritual orientation, ensuring that transformation produces not only students who can critically evaluate information but also students who use knowledge responsibly.

These findings extend previous studies, which have generally discussed critical pedagogy, Islamic education, or transformative learning separately. (Fauzi & Usman, 2024), for example, emphasize the relationship among praxis, democracy, and critical consciousness in Islamic education, while (Ruslan & Luthfiyah, 2026) direct critical pedagogy toward restructuring the PAI curriculum for transformative learning. Meanwhile, studies of critical digital literacy have focused more heavily on information-evaluation skills and responses to digital environments. The synthesis presented in this study brings these three areas together within a single conceptual framework by positioning digital literacy as an epistemic mechanism, critical consciousness as a reflective mechanism, critical pedagogy as a learning paradigm, Islamic values as an ethical-spiritual orientation, and praxis as the bridge toward change. Because this framework is the result of a literature synthesis rather than empirical testing, the proposition should be understood as a conceptual framework that still requires validation through field research, classroom action research, and the development of appropriate assessment instruments.

Thus, synthesizing critical pedagogy, critical consciousness, and digital literacy produces a conception of PAI learning that moves from a knowledge-transfer paradigm toward the transformation of how reality is understood. Learning no longer ends with students' ability to explain religious concepts but develops toward their ability to interpret reality, evaluate information, question assumptions, engage in dialogue with different perspectives, reflect on their understanding, connect knowledge with Islamic values, and translate it into action (Husna et al., 2025). Within this framework, transformative learning is not merely a change in teaching methods but a comprehensive transformation of the relationships among students, knowledge, technology, values, and social realities (van Rensburg & Matahela, 2025). Therefore, contemporary PAI can be developed as a pedagogical space that enables students to become intellectually critical, digitally competent, morally mature, spiritually reflective, and socially responsible learners. This conceptual framework constitutes the principal synthesis of the study in addressing how critical pedagogy, critical consciousness, and digital literacy can be integrated to shape transformative PAI learning.

CONCLUSION

This study demonstrates that the recontextualization of critical pedagogy in contemporary Islamic Religious Education (PAI) should be directed toward dialogical, contextual, and participatory learning that fosters critical consciousness and concrete action while remaining grounded in Islamic ethical and spiritual values. The literature synthesis confirms that critical consciousness and digital literacy are complementary dimensions: critical consciousness helps students understand and question reality, whereas digital literacy supports their ability to trace sources, verify information, compare perspectives, recognize bias, and consider ethical aspects when using religious information. Based on these findings, this study proposes a transformative PAI learning framework comprising seven main processes: problematization of reality, digital exploration and verification, interpretive dialogue, critical reflection, integration of Islamic values, praxis or social action, and reflective evaluation. This framework positions critical pedagogy as the learning paradigm, critical consciousness as a reflective capacity, digital literacy as an epistemic capability, Islamic values as an ethical-spiritual orientation, and praxis as the link between knowledge and social change. Theoretically and practically, these findings encourage the development of a more contextualized PAI

curriculum and learning process through discussions, case studies, digital-source analysis, social projects, and assessment practices that measure students' analytical, evaluative, reflective, and argumentative abilities, as well as their capacity to apply Islamic values in real-life situations. However, because this study employs a Systematic Literature Review (SLR) method without collecting primary data, the proposed framework remains conceptual and requires empirical validation across diverse Islamic educational contexts to examine its implementation, effectiveness, and the factors influencing its outcomes.

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