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Reconstructing Critical Spiritual Awareness in Islamic Religious Education: Integrating Transcendental Reason and Social Concern in the Era of Disruption

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Abstract

The era of disruption has brought rapid transformations in technological, social, and cultural dimensions, significantly affecting human consciousness and value orientation. Islamic Religious Education (PAI) is therefore required not only to maintain normative spiritual values but also to develop a critical consciousness capable of responding to contemporary challenges. This study aims to reconstruct the concept of critical spiritual consciousness through the integration of transcendental reasoning and social concern as a new paradigm in PAI. Using a qualitative library research approach, data were collected through an extensive review of classical and contemporary literature on spirituality, Islamic epistemology, and critical educational theory. The findings reveal that spirituality within PAI tends to be ritualistic and lacks reflective and social depth. Transcendental reasoning is essential for deepening learners' understanding of divine meaning and modern phenomena, while social concern serves as a concrete manifestation of spirituality grounded in humanitarian principles. The integration of both dimensions produces a model of critical spirituality relevant to the demands of the disruptive era, which includes reflective-transcendental learning, the strengthening of social justice values, and transformative pedagogical practices. This study concludes that reconstructing critical spiritual consciousness can enhance the role of PAI in shaping students who are faithful, critically minded, and socially committed, thus strengthening PAI's relevance in today's digital and global contexts.

Keywords: Islamic Religious Education; critical spiritual consciousness; transcendental reasoning; social concerns; disruptive era.

Abstract

Era disruptif membawa perubahan yang cepat dalam aspek teknologi, sosial, dan budaya yang berdampak signifikan terhadap struktur kesadaran manusia. Pendidikan Agama Islam (PAI) dituntut tidak hanya mempertahankan nilai-nilai spiritual normatif, tetapi juga mengembangkan kesadaran kritis yang mampu merespons tantangan kehidupan modern. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk merekonstruksi konsep kesadaran spiritual kritis melalui integrasi nalar transendental dan kepedulian sosial sebagai paradigma baru dalam Pendidikan Agama Islam. Penelitian ini menggunakan pendekatan kualitatif dengan jenis penelitian kepustakaan, di mana data dikumpulkan melalui analisis literatur klasik dan kontemporer yang berkaitan dengan spiritualitas, epistemologi Islam, dan teori pendidikan kritis. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa spiritualitas dalam PAI selama ini cenderung bersifat ritualistik dan belum menyentuh dimensi reflektif serta sosial secara memadai. Nalar transendental diperlukan untuk memperdalam pemahaman peserta didik terhadap makna ketuhanan dan fenomena modern,



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sementara kepedulian sosial merupakan manifestasi konkret dari spiritualitas yang berorientasi pada nilai-nilai kemanusiaan. Integrasi kedua aspek tersebut melahirkan model spiritualitas kritis yang relevan dengan era disrupsi, yang meliputi pembelajaran reflektif-transcendental, penguatan nilai-nilai keadilan sosial, serta praktik pembelajaran transformatif. Penelitian ini menyimpulkan bahwa rekonstruksi kesadaran spiritual kritis dapat memperkuat fungsi Pendidikan Agama Islam dalam membentuk peserta didik yang beriman, bernalar kritis, dan memiliki komitmen sosial, sekaligus meningkatkan relevansi Pendidikan Agama Islam dalam kehidupan digital dan global masa kini.

Kata kunci: Pendidikan Agama Islam; kesadaran spiritual kritis; nalar transcendental; kepedulian sosial; era disrupsi.

Introduction

The era of disruption is marked by the acceleration of technology, the digitalization of life, and non-linear social change. This transformation has not only shaken economic and cultural structures but also influenced mindsets, value orientations, and how humans understand themselves in relation to God and others. Islamic Religious Education (PAI), as an institution for character and spirituality formation, faces a major challenge: how to maintain the depth of faith while developing social sensitivity in a landscape of life that is instantaneous, pragmatic, and fragmented? It is at this point that the reconstruction of critical spiritual awareness becomes an epistemological and practical necessity.(Samsudin, 2019).

Spiritual awareness in the Islamic tradition never stops at the ritual dimension alone, but encompasses a reflective-transcendental capacity to read God's signs in life, as emphasized in various verses of the Qur'an that stimulate reason, contemplation, and ethical action. However, spirituality is often reduced to symbolic activity without depth of reason and without adequate social implications. Paulo Freire calls this condition naive unconsciousness, namely piety that is uncritical of social reality. In the context of Islamic education, this situation is evident in the tendency towards religious formalism that does not foster critical thinking, moral awareness, and social empathy.(Santoso, 2025).

Therefore, it is necessary to integrate transcendental reason, as the human ability to penetrate divine meaning, understand the purpose of creation, and



internalize divine values, with social concern, namely an active awareness to eliminate injustice, spread welfare, and strengthen social cohesion. This integration is the foundation for a critical spirituality that does not fall into two extremes: a spirituality that is soaring without a social foundation or social activism without a strong theological foundation. In the classical Islamic tradition of thought, this integration is seen in the concepts of *ihsan* and *akhlak*, while in contemporary discourse it emerges in the idea of transformative ethics that combines the dimensions of faith, intellect, and social practice.(Hubbi et al., 2020a).

In the era of disruption, the development of artificial intelligence, social media, and digital culture is creating new patterns of relationships between humans and reality. Society is increasingly vulnerable to information bias, identity polarization, and the commodification of spirituality. Without a paradigm shift, Islamic Religious Education (PAI) has the potential to lose its relevance due to its inability to address the changing structure of societal consciousness. Therefore, reconstructing critical spiritual awareness is not merely about reinforcing teaching materials, but also about developing a mental habitus capable of interpreting reality holistically, combining the sharpness of faith, clarity of reason, and social commitment.(Hubbi et al., 2020b).

This reconstructive approach demands methodological renewal in Islamic Religious Education (PAI): dialogic learning, integration of contemporary social issues (justice, ecology, technology, humanity), and the development of transformative pedagogy that engages cognitive, affective, and spiritual dimensions in a balanced manner. Thus, PAI will not only produce students who are ritually obedient but also possess critical transcendental reasoning and strong social sensitivity. This formulation is expected to become the basis of an Islamic civilization that is relevant to modern challenges without losing the eternal values of the Quran.(Sari et al., 2025).

Based on this urgency, this paper aims to reanalyze the concept of



critical spiritual awareness in Islamic education, examine the relevance of transcendental reasoning in shaping students' spirituality, and propose a model of integration with social awareness as a response to the challenges of the disruptive era. This reconstruction is expected to provide both theoretical and practical contributions to the development of Islamic Religious Education (PAI) in universities, schools, and non-formal educational settings.

Research methods

This study uses a qualitative approach with library research, as the focus of the study is directed at exploring, analyzing, and reconstructing theoretical ideas related to critical spiritual awareness, transcendental reasoning, and social concern in Islamic Religious Education (PAI). This approach was chosen to gain a deep understanding of relevant philosophical, theological, and pedagogical concepts, while simultaneously formulating a contextual and responsive PAI reconstruction framework to the challenges of the disruptive era.

The data sources in this study consist of primary and secondary sources. Primary sources include the major works of Islamic philosophers and educational thinkers, as well as critical thinkers, such as Syed Muhammad Naquib al-Attas, who discusses the concepts of reason and adab, Kuntowijoyo with his ideas on Islamic scholarship and transformative social ethics, and Paulo Freire, who emphasizes the importance of critical awareness in education. Furthermore, this study also uses interpretations of the Qur'an relevant to the themes of spirituality, reason, and social concern as a normative-theological foundation. Secondary sources include books on contemporary Islamic education studies, national and international journal articles, scientific proceedings, and research reports related to spirituality, social ethics, and the challenges of education in the digital era.

Data collection was conducted through a documentation method,



namely by searching through relevant classical and contemporary literature, such as reference books, scientific journal articles, Quranic interpretations, academic documents, and research reports in the fields of Islamic education and spirituality studies. This search process was strengthened by digital searches through various scientific databases, including Google Scholar, DOAJ, ScienceDirect, and the Garuda portal. This technique enabled researchers to systematically and comprehensively identify, map, and examine the arguments and thought patterns of the figures.

The data analysis in this study used content analysis, which was carried out in stages. The first stage is data reduction, which involves selecting and focusing conceptual information related to spiritual awareness, transcendental reasoning, and social awareness, as well as filtering literature relevant to educational issues in the era of disruption. The next stage is data presentation by categorizing the literature findings into analytical themes, such as the concept of critical spirituality, the epistemology of transcendental reasoning, social ethics in Islamic education, and efforts to reconstruct Islamic Religious Education in the digital era. The final stage is drawing conclusions through in-depth interpretation to formulate a reconstruction model of critical spiritual awareness and the integration of transcendental reasoning and social awareness as a new orientation for Islamic Religious Education. Conclusions are drawn inductively based on a synthesis of the literature and a coherently constructed philosophical argument.

To maintain the validity and credibility of the data, this study employs several strategies, including source triangulation by comparing various classical and contemporary literature, critical reading of the figures' arguments, and intertextual analysis to examine the consistency, interconnectedness, and relevance of ideas across sources. Through this approach, the resulting conceptual reconstruction is expected to be not only normative but also have a strong epistemological foundation and be relevant to contemporary social and



educational contexts.

Results and Discussion

Reinterpreting Spiritual Awareness in Islamic Religious Education

The results of this study indicate that the concept of spirituality in Islamic Religious Education (PAI) has tended to be understood within a ritualistic framework and solely oriented toward personal morality. This understanding has not yet fully reached the critical dimension that allows students to read and interpret social reality as an integral part of the expression of faith. Spirituality is often positioned as an individual matter between humans and God, thus detached from concrete and complex social issues. This view aligns with Paulo Freire's critique, which highlights the dangers of spirituality alienated from reality, when religious practices stop at symbolic piety and ignore the structures of social injustice experienced by society.(Hilmin Hilmin & Dwi Noviani, 2023).

In the Islamic tradition itself, authentic spiritual awareness is integral and holistic, connecting the divine dimension (hablun minallah) with humanitarian and social responsibility (hablun minannas). Spirituality is not understood simply as inner peace or ritual obedience, but rather as a transformative awareness that fosters ethical sensitivity, a commitment to justice, and active involvement in improving social realities. Thus, faith is not only manifested in individual worship but also in concrete actions that reflect the values of humanity and social justice.(Rosyadi, 2018).

An analysis of various literature reveals a significant gap between the normative objectives of Islamic Religious Education (PAI) and its practical implementation. The PAI learning process still places a heavy emphasis on text memorization, normative adherence, and religious symbolism, while space for critical reflection on social realities, issues of poverty, inequality, and humanitarian crises is relatively limited. Consequently, students are poorly



trained to connect Islamic values to the real-life contexts they face.

These findings reinforce the urgent need to reconstruct the concept of spirituality in Islamic Religious Education (PAI) to be more comprehensive and contextual. Spirituality needs to be understood as a multidimensional awareness that encompasses transcendental awareness as the foundation of a relationship with God, rational-reflective awareness as the ability to think critically and ethically, and socio-empathic awareness as sensitivity to the suffering and needs of others. These three dimensions form an important foundation for the integration of transcendental reason and social concern, so that PAI can function not only as a means of forming individual piety, but also as a force for social transformation relevant to the challenges of the times.

The Role of Transcendental Reason in Shaping Critical Spirituality

Analysis shows that transcendental reason in Islam is firmly rooted in the teachings of reason as a crucial instrument for understanding divine signs, both of a kauniyah and qauliyah nature. Reason is not positioned as a stand-alone entity separate from revelation, but rather as a means to grasp the deepest meaning of God's created reality. Thinkers such as Syed Muhammad Naquib al-Attas assert that transcendental reason is the human ability to penetrate layers of empirical and rational meaning to understand the purpose of creation, so that thinking activity does not stop at mere instrumental logic, but is directed toward the awareness of monotheism. Within this framework, transcendental reason becomes an important foundation for the formation of a spirituality that is not anti-intellectual, but rather rooted in deep intellectual understanding and has the value of worship.(Telaumbanua et al., 2025).

The study also shows that students in the era of disruption require a rational framework capable of critically interpreting technological phenomena, globalization, and social change through an Islamic cosmological perspective. The development of digital technology and the massive flow of information often shape pragmatic and secular perspectives, putting spirituality at risk of



being reduced to mere identity symbols or shallow formal practices. Without a strong transcendental rationale, students easily become trapped in a digital lifestyle that separates faith from everyday reality, or in a religiosity that lacks depth of meaning and ethical orientation.

The integration of transcendental reasoning into Islamic Religious Education has significant pedagogical implications for student development. Through this integration, students are expected to develop reflective skills in understanding modern phenomena, be able to harmoniously connect faith and reason, and be better prepared to face the crisis of meaning arising from the rapid flow of digital information. Thus, transcendental reasoning serves not only as an epistemological foundation in Islamic Religious Education but also as a strategic pedagogical instrument for developing a critical, conscious, and relevant spirituality to the challenges of contemporary life.(Al Asadullah & Nurhalin, 2021).

Social Concern as a Manifestation of Critical Spirituality

The results of the literature analysis show that social concern is an important indicator of spirituality in Islam, as reflected in the concepts of amar ma'ruf nahi munkar, ukhuwah, and the practice of social morals in community life. Spirituality in Islam is never separated from social responsibility, because the quality of a person's faith is also reflected in their concern for justice, welfare, and the common good. However, in educational practice, these social values are often reduced to merely theoretical normative moral discourse, without being accompanied by real experiences and the habituation of sustainable social action.(Hianadi, 2024).

Paulo Freire reminded that critical awareness can only develop through students' active involvement in the social realities they face, not merely through the delivery of theory or moral advice. This finding aligns with the progressive Islamic educational approach, which views social action as an integral part of worship and a manifestation of faith. Therefore, the educational process should



not only shape personal piety but also encourage students to be sensitive, responsive, and courageous in taking part in responding to social problems around them.

In the context of the era of disruption, social awareness needs to be interpreted more broadly and contextually. This awareness is not only related to conventional social relations, but also encompasses ethical digital literacy, solidarity with vulnerable groups impacted by technological developments, concern for the ecological crisis, and sensitivity to the unequal access and use of digital technology (the digital divide). Integrating social awareness into Islamic Religious Education makes spirituality more relevant to contemporary challenges, while preventing the development of individualistic spirituality that is detached from social reality and increasingly strengthened amidst digital culture.(Sukadana, 2025).

Integration of Transcendental Reason and Social Concern: A Model of Islamic Education Reconstruction in the Era of Disruption

The results of the data synthesis indicate that the integration of transcendental reasoning and social concern forms a critical spiritual model that is much needed by Islamic Religious Education (PAI) in the current context. This critical spiritual model is built on three main pillars that are interrelated and mutually reinforcing. The epistemological pillar is realized through reflective-transcendental learning that emphasizes philosophical dialogue, the practice of contemplating kauniyah verses, and the interpretation of digital and social phenomena through a monotheistic perspective. Within this framework, the learning process does not stop at mastering material or cognitive aspects alone, but is directed towards fostering depth of meaning, existential awareness, and students' critical and holistic reasoning abilities.(Wisnu & Snjpsfisunp, 2019).

The second pillar is axiological, namely the strengthening of social values as the primary orientation of Islamic Religious Education. Islamic Religious



Education (PAI) is aimed at fostering students' sensitivity to the increasingly complex issues of social justice, poverty, digital polarization, moral degradation, and environmental damage in the era of disruption. In this context, moral values are no longer understood narrowly as personal ethics or individual piety, but rather as a social commitment that demands partisanship, responsibility, and active involvement in community life.

The third pillar is the pedagogical pillar, which emphasizes transformative praxis in learning. The educational process is designed to encourage students to directly engage in various forms of social action, humanitarian projects, ethical digital literacy activities, and interdisciplinary collaborative work as an integral part of developing critical spirituality. This approach aims to bridge the gap between religious theories taught in the classroom and the social realities students face in their daily lives, so that religious values become alive and meaningful.

This integrative model demonstrates that Islamic Religious Education is not sufficient to merely reinforce ritual or cognitive aspects, but must also be able to instill an existential awareness that guides students toward becoming individuals with faith, reason, and a strong social commitment. The spirituality developed is not a passive one, but rather one that is reflective, critical, and oriented toward social transformation.(Belen Keban & Soi Leton, 2023).

The findings of this study have significant relevance for the future development of Islamic Religious Education. Islamic Religious Education needs to be reoriented from an indoctrination paradigm to a dialogic-transformative paradigm that opens up space for dialogue, reflection, and active student participation. Critical spirituality can serve as a new conceptual framework to face the challenges of the disruptive era marked by accelerated technological and social change. The integration of faith, reason, and social action has proven to be an effective formula for fostering mature and responsible religious awareness. Therefore, Islamic teachers and educators are



required to develop philosophical and critical pedagogical competencies, as well as digital literacy, to facilitate contextual and meaningful learning. Thus, the reconstruction of critical spiritual awareness not only improves the quality of students but also revitalizes the relevance of Islamic Religious Education in modern life.

Conclusion

This research confirms that the reconstruction of critical spiritual awareness in Islamic Religious Education (PAI) is an urgent need amidst the dynamics of the disruptive era marked by technological acceleration, social fragmentation, and a crisis of meaning in modern life. Spirituality in PAI has tended to be trapped in ritualistic and formalistic patterns, thus failing to fully respond to the complexity of contemporary issues faced by students. As a result, religious education often loses its transformative power and functions only as a transmission of normative knowledge. Therefore, a more comprehensive paradigm renewal is needed by integrating transcendental reasoning and social concern as both a conceptual framework and a pedagogical practice.

Transcendental reason serves as an epistemological foundation that enables students to understand reality through a monotheistic perspective, to penetrate the deepest meanings of life, and to develop critical reflection on social, cultural, and technological phenomena. Through this reasoning, students are not only encouraged to think logically and rationally but are also guided to interpret reality as part of Divine signs laden with values and purposes. Meanwhile, social concern is a concrete manifestation of living spirituality, connecting humanity's relationship with God with humanity's responsibility in social life. The integration of transcendental reason and social concern gives birth to a critical spirituality that goes beyond personal piety but also presents a social piety that is sensitive to issues of injustice, technological disruption, moral degradation, and the ecological crisis.



This research also demonstrates the need for a reorientation of Islamic Religious Education through the development of a reflective-transcendental learning model, the strengthening of social values, and the application of transformative practices in the educational process. With this approach, Islamic Religious Education has the potential to produce students with deep faith, mature critical reasoning, and a strong and sustainable social commitment. This reconstruction is expected to not only improve the quality of students' religious understanding but also revitalize Islamic Religious Education in shaping a generation with integrity, adaptability to current developments, and the ability to actively contribute to building a civilized and just civilization.

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