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Affective-Emancipatory Islamic Pedagogy: A Critical and Reflective Reconstruction of the Internalization of Religious Values in Islamic Boarding Schools

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Abstract

The internalization of religious values in Islamic boarding schools (pesantren) plays a crucial role in shaping students' moral character and religious identity, yet its relationship with the development of critical consciousness remains a significant pedagogical challenge. This article critically examines the transformation of religious value internalization in Islamic boarding schools (pesantren) through the tension between epistemic obedience and the formation of critical consciousness. Using a Systematic Literature Review (SLR) approach, this study analyzes scholarly works on Islamic pedagogy, affective learning, critical pedagogy, and religious authority to reconstruct a more transformative educational framework. The findings reveal that epistemic obedience in pesantren is deeply rooted in affective relations such as ta'dzim, mahabbah, and loyalty toward the kiai, which effectively facilitate the transmission of religious values and moral formation. However, this affective foundation often produces surface internalization, where values are accepted emotionally but remain insufficiently reflected upon critically, resulting in normative rather than substantive religiosity. In response, this article proposes an affective-based Islamic pedagogy that integrates critical pedagogy, Islamic epistemology, and spiritual experience into a conceptual model termed emotional-spiritual critical consciousness. This model reconstructs the process of value internalization through four interrelated dimensions: affective attachment, critical reflection, spiritual deepening, and ethical action. The study contributes theoretically by shifting the paradigm from indoctrinative learning toward Affective-Emancipatory Islamic Pedagogy, positioning pesantren as transformative spaces for cultivating ethical, reflective, and socially responsible religious consciousness.

Keywords: *Affective, Emancipatory, Islamic Pedagogy, Religious Value*

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INTRODUCTION

The transformation of global education today can no longer be understood solely as a process of knowledge transmission, but rather as an integrative effort that unites cognitive, affective, and moral dimensions within a unified pedagogical practice (Mardatillah *et al*., 2025). This shift demands a new orientation that emphasizes not only intellectual achievement but also the formation of ethical awareness and spiritual depth in students (Hanif *et al*., 2025). In the context of Islamic education, Islamic boarding schools (*pesantren*) occupy a strategic position as socio-religious spaces that have historically functioned to

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internalize religious values while shaping the character of students (Anam *et al*., 2019; Jaenullah *et al*., 2022). However, the currents of modernization, digitalization, and contemporary social complexity present new challenges that test the effectiveness of traditional patterns of value internalization. This tension between tradition and change opens up space for critical reflection on the extent to which Islamic boarding school pedagogy can respond to the dynamics of the times without losing its normative basis (Ju'subaidi *et al*., 2024). Therefore, a reconstruction of a pedagogical approach is needed that is not only normative-doctrinal, but also reflective, dialogical, and contextual.

Several previous studies have positioned Islamic boarding schools (*pesantren*) as educational institutions based on strong religious authority, where the *kiai* (religious leader) functions as a center of epistemic legitimacy and an authoritative figure in the production and transmission of knowledge (Didin *et al*., 2026). Within this framework, the concept of epistemic obedience is often used to explain the hierarchical pattern of obedience among students rooted in the ethics of *ta'dzim* (religious obedience), reflected in the principle of *sami'na wa atho'na* as a form of normative obedience in the *pesantren* tradition (Iklila *et al*., 2024). This obedience is not only cognitive but also internalized through affective relationships that shape intellectual and spiritual loyalty within a patron-client framework (Nisa'u and Karsidi, 2025). On the other hand, studies on the internalization of religious values tend to focus on the normative and cognitive dimensions, thus paying less attention to the underlying affective processes (Sholehuddin and Malik, 2024). Meanwhile, critical pedagogy and affective-based education approaches have begun to develop in global educational discourse in response to the need for more humanistic and emancipatory learning (Safitri *et al*., 2026). However, the integration of these two approaches in the context of Islamic boarding school education remains relatively limited and has not yet been conceptually formulated.

Contemporary educational discourse increasingly recognizes that education extends beyond the transmission of knowledge, encompassing an integrative process that nurtures cognitive, affective, and moral development within a holistic pedagogical framework (Albab *et al*., 2025). This shift demands a new orientation that emphasizes not only intellectual achievement but also the formation of ethical awareness and spiritual depth in students. In the context of Islamic education, Islamic boarding schools (*pesantren*) occupy a strategic position as socio-religious spaces that have historically functioned to internalize religious values while shaping the character of students (Anam *et al*., 2019; Jaenullah *et al*., 2022). However, the currents of modernization, digitalization, and contemporary social complexity present new challenges that test the effectiveness of traditional patterns of value internalization. This tension between tradition and change opens up space for critical reflection on the extent to which Islamic boarding school pedagogy can respond to the dynamics of the times without losing its normative basis (Ju'subaidi *et al*., 2024). Therefore, a reconstruction of a pedagogical approach is needed that is not only normative-doctrinal, but also reflective, dialogical, and contextual.

These limitations indicate a significant gap in Islamic education studies, particularly regarding the role of the affective dimension in the internalization of religious values. Numerous studies confirm that the development of affective competencies in Islamic education plays a significant role in shaping students' religious and social participation, yet this aspect has not been systematically integrated into the pedagogical framework of Islamic boarding schools (Aspuri *et al*., 2025). Furthermore, uncritical approaches to Islamic education tend to fail to capture spiritual and moral messages in depth, necessitating a more reflective and contextual educational paradigm (Saada *et al*., 2020). The relationship between epistemic adherence and the development of critical awareness is also rarely explored, although studies on critical pedagogy demonstrate its potential in increasing social awareness and student participation (Prakosa *et al*., 2023). In practice, the internalization of religious values in Islamic boarding schools often remains trapped in indoctrination, although some institutions are beginning to show a shift toward a more critical approach (Istiami *et al*., 2025). Meanwhile, the integration of Islamic epistemology into modern education also faces challenges in aligning ethical values and cultural sensitivity, necessitating a more integrative conceptual framework (Mahmudulhassan *et al*., 2025). Thus, there is an urgent need to formulate a new approach capable of holistically bridging the affective, critical, and spiritual dimensions.

Building on this gap, this study offers an affective-based reconstruction of Islamic pedagogy as an alternative approach to understanding and developing the process of internalizing religious values in Islamic boarding schools (*pesantren*). This approach does not negate the role of affect, but rather repositions it as a reflective energy that fosters critical awareness. Within this framework, the concept of emotional-spiritual critical consciousness is developed as a synthesis of affective experience, intellectual reflection, and spiritual depth (Jemal, 2017). This concept seeks to shift the educational paradigm from epistemic obedience to a

more dialogical and emancipatory critical consciousness (Dantley, 2003). Thus, internalization of values is no longer understood as a passive absorption process, but rather as an active and reflective process of meaning-making. The main contribution of this research lies in the development of the conceptual model of Affective-Emancipatory Islamic Pedagogy as a new framework in Islamic boarding school education.

Based on this conceptual framework, this research aims to answer several fundamental questions. First, how does epistemic adherence play a role in the internalization of religious values in Islamic boarding schools? Second, to what extent does this approach have limitations in developing critical awareness among students? Third, how can affective-based Islamic pedagogy reconstruct the process of internalizing values to make it more reflective and emancipatory? These questions are not only descriptive but also analytical and transformative, as they seek to examine and formulate conceptual alternatives. Therefore, the purpose of this research is to critically analyze the dynamics of the internalization of religious values and formulate an integrative model of Islamic pedagogy that integrates affect, reason, and spirituality. Thus, this research navigates the intersection of epistemological critique and pedagogical reconstruction.

Theoretically, this research contributes to the expansion of Islamic education studies by integrating the affective dimension into a critical pedagogical framework that has previously focused primarily on rational and structural aspects. This approach allows for a more holistic understanding of the process of religious consciousness formation, which is determined not only by knowledge but also by emotional and spiritual experiences. Conceptually, this study offers an emancipatory model for internalizing religious values, where students are positioned as active subjects in interpreting religious teachings. Practically, the findings can serve as a reference for developing a more dialogical and reflective curriculum and learning strategies in Islamic boarding schools. Furthermore, this approach opens up the possibility of transforming Islamic boarding schools into educational spaces that not only reproduce obedience but also foster critical and ethical awareness. Thus, Islamic boarding schools can play a strategic role as laboratories for the formation of reflective, humanistic, and transformative religious individuals.

METHOD

This study employed a qualitative Systematic Literature Review (SLR) approach to critically examine the process of religious value internalization in Islamic boarding schools (*pesantren*) and to develop a conceptual model of Affective-Emancipatory Islamic Pedagogy. The SLR method was selected because it enables a systematic, transparent, and rigorous synthesis of existing scholarly knowledge while facilitating the identification of conceptual gaps and theoretical reconstruction based on accumulated evidence (Snyder, 2019; Xiao and Watson, 2019). Literature was collected from several academic databases, including Scopus, Google Scholar, ERIC, and Dimensions, using combinations of the keywords “religious value internalization,” “*pesantren*,” “Islamic boarding school,” “critical pedagogy,” “affective education,” “religious consciousness,” and “Islamic pedagogy.” To ensure the relevance and quality of the reviewed studies, only publications addressing religious value internalization, affective learning, critical pedagogy, Islamic education, and *pesantren* studies published between 2015 and 2026 were included. Conversely, duplicate records, non-academic publications, inaccessible full texts, and studies unrelated to the research objectives were excluded. The literature selection process followed the Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses (PRISMA) framework to ensure methodological transparency, consistency, and accountability throughout the review process (Page *et al*., 2021).

As presented in Figure 1, the literature selection process involved four stages: identification, screening, eligibility assessment, and inclusion. A total of 203 records were initially identified from four academic databases. After removing duplicate records and applying title and abstract screening, 63 publications were subjected to full-text assessment. Subsequently, studies that did not meet the inclusion criteria were excluded, resulting in 41 publications being retained for the final qualitative synthesis. The final corpus was considered methodologically sufficient because thematic saturation was achieved, with no substantially new concepts or analytical categories emerging during the final stage of the review. Accordingly, the emphasis of this review was placed on the conceptual richness and relevance of the selected studies rather than on maximizing the number of included publications. This procedure ensured that only studies with direct relevance to religious value internalization, affective learning, critical pedagogy, and *pesantren* education were included in the review. The selected literature was subsequently analyzed using thematic synthesis, which involved four stages: open coding, categorization, theme development, and conceptual reconstruction (Thomas and Harden, 2008). Through this process, key themes related to epistemic obedience, affective relationships, critical consciousness, spirituality, and religious value internalization were identified and

synthesized. The final stage focused on reconstructing these findings into an integrative framework termed *Affective-Emancipatory Islamic Pedagogy*, which serves as the principal conceptual contribution of this study.

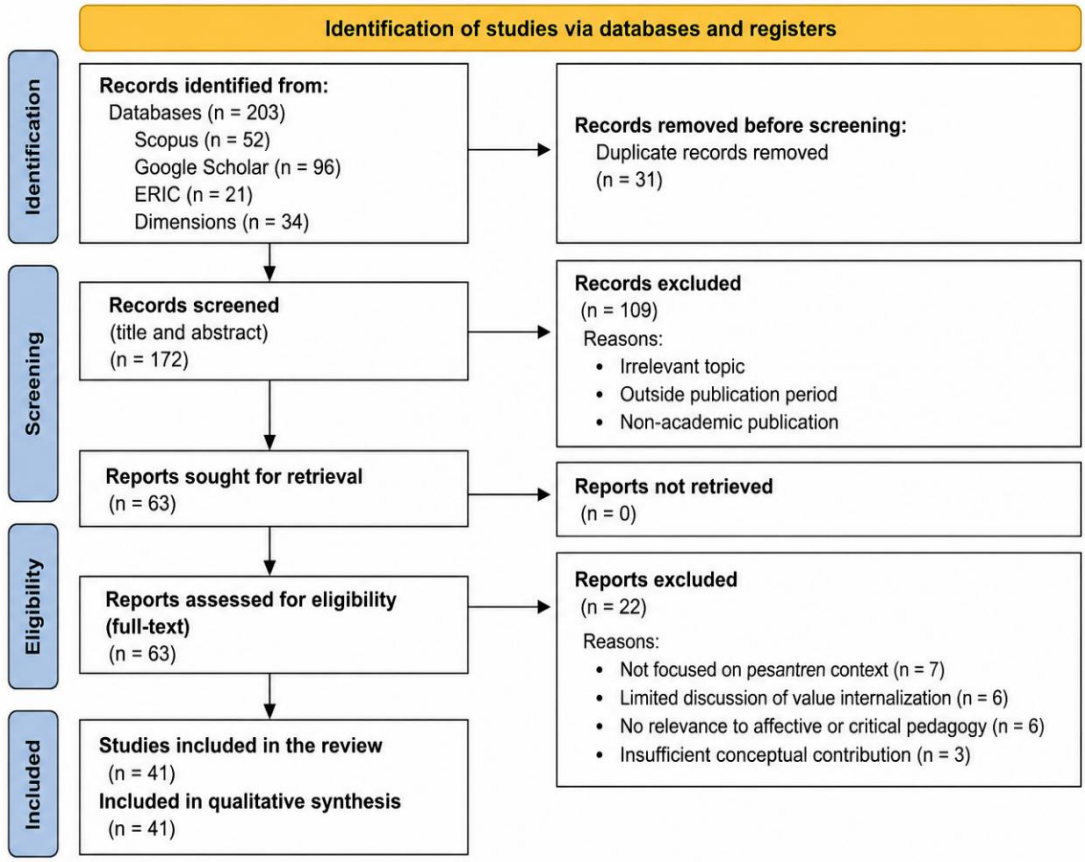


Figure 1. PRISMA Diagram of the Literature Selection Process

This study did not involve human participants or animals, nor did it use identifiable personal data or other materials requiring formal ethical approval. Accordingly, formal ethical approval (Ethical Clearance) was not required under the applicable institutional requirements.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Epistemic Obedience as an Affective Foundation for Internalizing Religious Values

The results of the literature synthesis indicate that epistemic obedience in the Islamic boarding school tradition cannot be reduced to mere intellectual compliance with scientific authority, but rather must be understood as a phenomenon deeply rooted in the affective dimension. The discussion of the Islamic boarding school pedagogical ecosystem by Maryam (2023) and Chasanah (2021) demonstrates how the relationship between students and *kiai* is built through complex emotional bonds, such as *ta'dzim* (reverence), love, respect, and loyalty, which simultaneously shape the students' epistemic orientation. Similarly, research by Musaddad *et al*. (2025) shows that the process of internalizing religious values occurs not only through the transfer of knowledge but also through inner experiences that foster spiritual closeness and relational role models. In this synthesis, affect becomes the medium that brings values to life, so that teachings are not merely understood but also felt and internalized in the students' daily practices. Thus, epistemic obedience functions as an affective praxis that connects the cognitive and spiritual dimensions within a unified pedagogical experience. Furthermore, systematic reviews demonstrate that the internalization of religious values in Islamic boarding schools operates through social symbols that reinforce the depth of affection. Research by Firmansyah *et al*. (2024) shows that symbolic practices such as kissing the hand, bowing, and the use of religious greetings are expressions of respect that shape the affective structure of students' learning experiences. Conversely, research by Nisa'u and Karsidi (2025) demonstrates that students' obedience is not only structural but also emotional, subject to symbolic domination internalized

in a spiritual-charismatic manner. This situation suggests that epistemic obedience does not exist in a vacuum of rationality but lives within a network of intense affections. In this context, knowledge in Islamic boarding schools gains legitimacy not only because of its intellectual validity but also because of its connection to a beloved and respected authoritative figure. Thus, the internalization of values occurs through affective mechanisms that establish the *kiai* as the center of moral and epistemic orientation.

However, the affective dimension that strengthens the transmission of these values also opens up an area of ambiguity that requires critical examination. Intense affection can deepen religious commitment, but it also has the potential to create epistemic dependency that limits the autonomy of students' thinking. Within this framework, the relationship between *kiai* and *santri* can be read through the perspective of power/knowledge as explained by Foucault (1980) and Poorghorban (2023), where authority not only produces knowledge but also shapes subjects who obey that structure. This condition, as noted by Nauval (2024), shows that the symbolic authority attached to *kiai* works subtly through affective and cultural mechanisms, so that their obedience is not felt as coercion, but rather as an internalized awareness. Research by Najib *et al*. (2026) strengthens this finding by showing how curriculum practices and habituation continuously shape the disposition of obedience in students. In it, affection functions as an instrument that normalizes power relations in the educational process. Therefore, epistemic obedience not only reflects respect but also reproduces the structure of authority embedded in the students' daily consciousness and practices.

A synthesis of various literature shows that the pattern of internalization of religious values in Islamic boarding schools tends to occur through a top-down affective transmission mechanism, where values are transmitted from authority to students through strong emotional relationships. Research by Mubarok *et al*. (2025) shows that this pattern is effective in shaping the character, moral accountability, and social engagement of students through the internalization of deep moral feelings. On the other hand, research by Muhammad Yasin *et al*. (2022) shows that this effectiveness is not entirely free from problems, because strong patron-client relationships also have the potential to limit the space for critical reflection and give rise to a tendency towards non-dialogical thinking. Internalization of values then emphasizes acceptance rather than meaning, so that affective depth is not always accompanied by reflective depth. This condition, as noted by Safitri *et al*. (2026), indicates the need for a transformation of religious authority towards a more participatory model is essential to open up space for critical awareness and ethical dialogue in Islamic boarding school education. In line with this, Maiese (2017) emphasized that transformative learning involving affect and whole-body experience can encourage deeper changes in consciousness. Therefore, epistemic obedience needs to be redefined as an affective-epistemic phenomenon that not only reproduces authority but also has the potential to become the basis for the formation of emancipatory critical consciousness, as proposed by Febrianingsih (2025).

The Crisis of Internalization of Values: The Imbalance between Affective Depth and Critical Thinking

The results of the literature synthesis indicate that the crisis of internalization of religious values in the context of Islamic boarding schools (*pesantren*) needs to be read more dialectically by considering the strengths and limitations of the affective dimension, which has long been the main foundation of learning. Research by Anam *et al*. (2019) shows that affection in Islamic boarding schools plays a central role in the formation of character, morals, and emotions of students through close *kiai-santri* relationships, which are manifested in attitudes of humility, love (mahabbah), and an orientation towards blessings. In line with this, research by Mubarok *et al*. (2025) shows how a 24-hour parenting pattern allows for the formation of an intense pedagogical environment, where values such as sincerity, patience, discipline, and responsibility are continuously internalized through daily religious habits and practices. Furthermore, research by Abdillah and Maskuri (2022) shows that the tradition of service and interpersonal communication that touches the affective realm helps strengthen the formation of moral identity and community solidarity, while fostering sincerity and emotional closeness between students and *kiai*. In this context, affection functions as a pedagogical force that strengthens community solidarity and shapes the moral identity of students. Thus, Islamic boarding schools demonstrate a strong capacity for fostering internalization of values through an intense and sustained affective approach.

However, systematic reviews also indicate that the dominance of affection in the process of internalizing values poses a complex epistemological problem. This situation, as noted by Anne-Lise Cornu (2009), demonstrates a distinction between deep internalization and surface internalization of values. In the context of Islamic boarding schools, values are often emotionally accepted as moral obligations, but are not

fully understood through a process of reflective interpretation. Research by Yasin and Khasbulloh (2022) shows that a strong patron-client pattern in Islamic boarding school education does shape character and ethics, but also has the potential to foster fatalistic attitudes and epistemic dependence. In situations like this, affection, which should be a medium of liberation, can instead become a mechanism for reproducing unreflective obedience. Thus, the power of affection that is not balanced with a space for critical dialogue has the potential to stagnate the development of students' critical reasoning.

This imbalance between affective depth and cognitive processing ultimately leads to the stagnation of critical reasoning in the Islamic boarding school educational process. Affection built through ta'alluq relationships and disciplinary structures is indeed effective in fostering obedience and moral stability, but without adequate space for dialogue, it can block the possibility of alternative thinking. Knowledge then tends to be accepted as a final, unquestionable authority, approaching a condition conceptualized by Mohammed Arkoun as epistemic closure, namely the closed space for interpretation and criticism within the knowledge system (Arkoun, 2002). Research by Istiami and Saihu (2025) reinforces these findings by demonstrating how the indoctrinative learning tradition in Islamic boarding schools can undermine students' independent thinking and intellectual creativity. On the other hand, research by Keriapy *et al*. (2022) shows that a religious education model that emphasizes memorization and obedience tends to hinder the development of critical awareness and social responsibility. In this context, students are trained to obey, but not always trained to question and criticize. Thus, uncritically reflected affection has the potential to hinder the development of autonomous intellectual awareness.

The impact of this condition is evident in the emergence of a form of religiosity that is more normative than substantive. Internalization of religious values does indeed succeed in shaping behavior in accordance with norms such as devotion to worship, discipline, and respect for authority, but it does not necessarily give rise to an ethical awareness capable of dialogue with more complex social realities. Research by Selvia *et al*. (2025) shows that without religious maturity, internalization of values tends to stop at formal ritual obedience and fails to develop into substantive religiosity that is ethical and contextual. This condition, quoted by Selvia *et al*. (2025), demonstrates the phenomenon of religious superficiality, namely religiosity that is strong symbolically but shallow in the meaning of values. From the perspective of transformative learning, Asmara (2020) emphasizes that religious education must move from merely maintaining doctrine to social transformation through critical reflection and dialogue. Values such as justice, empathy, and social responsibility are not enough to be taught as doctrine, but must be lived through conscious reflective experience. Thus, the failure to integrate affective engagement with critical reflection may reduce religiosity to procedural compliance rather than transformative ethical awareness. This condition can be further understood through the hierarchy of the affective domain proposed by Krathwohl *et al*. (1964), which describes five progressive stages of value internalization: receiving, responding, valuing, organization, and characterization by a value or value complex. The conceptual progression of these affective stages is presented in Figure 2.

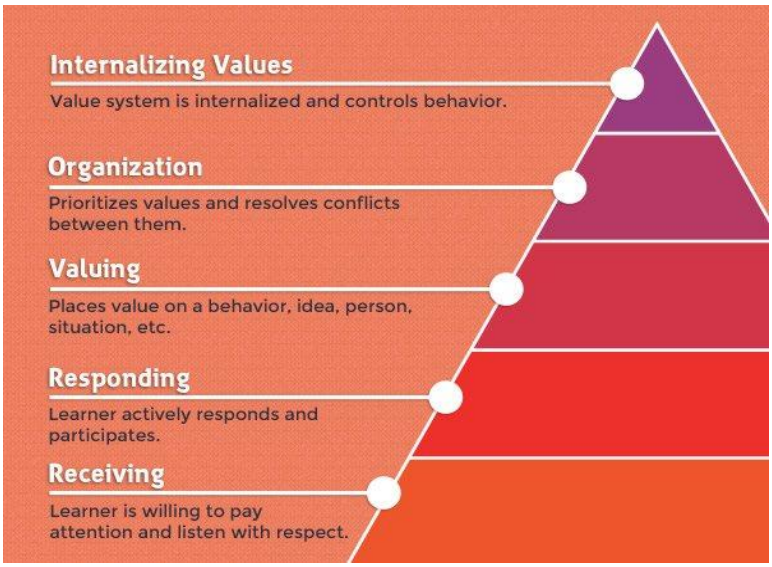


Figure 2. Stages of Value Internalization in Krathwohl's Affective Domain Taxonomy (Krathwohl *et al*., 1964)

As illustrated in Figure 2, Krathwohl's affective taxonomy conceptualizes value internalization as a progressive process that extends beyond acceptance and compliance toward the integration of values into an individual's personality structure. The literature synthesis indicates that many practices of religious education have succeeded in fostering the initial stages of affective development, particularly receiving, responding, and valuing; however, they have not consistently facilitated progression toward organization and characterization, where values become enduring principles that guide ethical judgment and behavior. Research by Zaidi (2025) shows that in many religious education practices, students have indeed demonstrated adherence to and engagement with religious values, but this engagement remains normative and not fully borne of reflective awareness. This condition explains why religious behavior appears to tend toward a formalistic approach, simply carrying out teachings without deep meaning. Similarly, Krathwohl (2002) indicates that the educational process has not succeeded in encouraging students to advance to the stage of organization and, especially, characterization, where values are not only understood and appreciated but also consistently integrated into the personality system and become the foundation for responding to the complexities of social reality. As a result, values such as justice, empathy, and social responsibility have not yet been realized as reflective and contextual life principles, but remain at the doctrinal level, reproduced rather than transformed. Thus, the primary problem with internalizing values lies not in the absence of affection, but in the failure to achieve a deep characterization of values within the student's personality structure.

However, systematic reviews demonstrate that this crisis should not be understood as a total failure, but rather as a productive tension that opens up the possibility of pedagogical reconstruction. Research by Ana *et al*., (2026) demonstrates that the *kiai-santri* relationship, habituation, and the tradition of service have great potential as a basis for developing a more reflective and dialogical pedagogy. The established affective dimension within Islamic boarding schools can actually become a foundation for transforming obedience into awareness, if guided through a space for dialogue, self-reflection, and a more open interpretation of values. Furthermore, research by Istiami (2024) demonstrates that the transformation of pedagogy from an indoctrinative to a dialogical model allows religious values not only to be inherited but also to be reinterpreted according to the evolving social context. In line with this, research by Hafidhuddin and Suparman (2025) emphasizes the importance of balancing affection and reason as key to building an educational model that not only fosters individual piety but also transformative ethical and social awareness. Therefore, this crisis of internalization of values actually marks an epistemological opportunity to reformulate the relationship between emotion, knowledge, and freedom in Islamic education, so that Islamic boarding schools can move toward a more emancipatory and contextual educational model.

Affective-Based Islamic Pedagogy as a Paradigm for Transforming Value Internalization

The results of the literature synthesis indicate that affective-based Islamic pedagogy emerged as a conceptual response to the crisis of internalization of values characterized by an imbalance between emotional depth and critical reasoning. This approach does not negate the role of affect, but rather reconstructs it as a reflective energy capable of connecting inner experience with intellectual awareness, as emphasized in the theory of transformative learning, which emphasizes the importance of reflection on experience as the basis for changes in consciousness (Mezirow, 2015). In line with this, research by Michela Maiese (2017) shows how the enactivism approach places bodily and emotional experiences as an integral part of the learning process, allowing values to be understood existentially. In the context of Islamic boarding schools, this condition shows that affect is understood not merely as an instrument for forming obedience, but as a medium that allows students to experience values existentially and interpret them consciously. Furthermore, Paulo Freire (1970) emphasized the importance of dialogical pedagogy as a liberating space, where the *kiai-santri* relationship is maintained as an affective space rich in meaning, but opened towards dialogue that allows for a process of reflection. Thus, the internalization of values no longer stops at emotional acceptance, but moves toward critical and contextual interpretation, reflecting a shift toward liberating and reflective education. This shift marks a transformation from reproductive pedagogy to reflective-emancipatory pedagogy.

The integration of critical pedagogy and Islamic epistemology serves as a theoretical foundation that strengthens this approach. In a literature synthesis, Freire's (1970) research demonstrated that education is essentially a process of conscientization, namely the development of critical awareness through dialogue and reflection on reality. Conversely, research by Khumaedy *et al*. (2026) demonstrates that in Islamic epistemology, concepts such as *adab*, *tazkiyah*, and *ihsan* position education not merely as an intellectual

process but also as a comprehensive moral and spiritual transformation (Mubarokah *et al*., 2026). This situation demonstrates a meeting point between critical pedagogy and Islamic epistemology: both position education as a process of forming conscious, ethical, and responsible subjects. Demonstrating that the integration of critical consciousness and spirituality enables the formation of religious subjects who not only understand values but also internalize them in their lives. Thus, affection in Islamic pedagogy is no longer understood as a tool for obedience, but as a bridge between rational reflection and spiritual depth.

From this synthesis, a key concept emerged that can be called emotional-spiritual critical consciousness, namely, awareness formed through the interaction of affective experience, critical reflection, and spiritual depth. Research by Sosa-Provencio *et al*. (2020) shows that critical consciousness develops not only through intellectual processes but also through deep emotional engagement and existential experiences. Similarly, research by Baharun *et al*., (2025) shows that the internalization of religious values is more effective when they are not simply taught but lived through reflective and dialogical inner experiences. In this context, affection functions as a gateway to awareness, not as a control tool that limits freedom of thought. Hani *et al*., (2026) research strengthens this argument by demonstrating that dialogic learning spaces enable students not only to receive values but also to interpret, question, and actualize them in real life. Thus, the internalization of values moves from obedience to the formation of autonomous and reflective ethical awareness. This transformative process can be better understood through Freire's critical pedagogy framework, which emphasizes dialogue, critical reflection, and the development of critical consciousness as fundamental elements of emancipatory education (Freire, 2000). The conceptual relationship among these elements is illustrated in Figure 3.

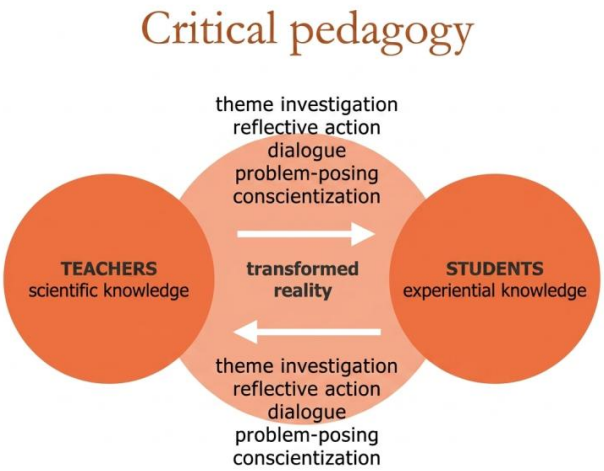


Figure 3. Freire Critical Pedagogy (Van Amstel, 2020)

As illustrated in Figure 3 Freire's critical pedagogy conceptualizes learning as a dialogical and transformative process through which teachers and students collaboratively construct knowledge and critically engage with reality (Freire, 1970). Rather than positioning learners as passive recipients of knowledge, this framework emphasizes dialogue, problem-posing, and conscientization as mechanisms for developing critical awareness and transformative action. In the context of *pesantren* education, this perspective provides a theoretical basis for reconstructing the traditionally hierarchical *kiai–santri* relationship into a more dialogical interaction while preserving its ethical and spiritual foundations (Prakosa *et al*., 2023). The model further highlights students' experiential knowledge as a legitimate source of learning, affirming that personal experiences possess epistemological value because they enable learners to connect knowledge with their lived realities (Breuning, 2011). Likewise, emotional and spiritual experiences become important foundations for the formation of critical consciousness when they are consciously reflected upon as sources of value construction (Sosa-Provencio *et al*., 2020). Consequently, the role of the teacher shifts from being the sole authority of knowledge to becoming a facilitator who creates spaces for investigation, dialogue, and reflective action, thereby fostering a more participatory and emancipatory learning process (Mufid, 2025).

The dialogical and reflective processes represented in Figure 2 provide an important pedagogical foundation for transforming the internalization of religious values from a predominantly indoctrinative approach into a reflective and meaning-oriented learning experience. Similarly, Khandekar (2021) explains

that conscientization, as formulated by Paulo Freire, is at the heart of pedagogical transformation, namely the process by which students become aware of their position in social reality and are able to act ethically and critically. In the context of Islamic boarding schools, this condition indicates that religious values are no longer positioned as final, finished answers, but rather as a space for reflection that continues to live in the students' experiences. Research by Endaryono *et al*. (2020) shows that when this reflective process is combined with affective dimensions such as *mahabbah* (compassion), *tawadhu'* (religious service), and *khidmah* (service), learning becomes more integral because it touches the mind, heart, and action simultaneously. Thus, the problem-posing process functions as an epistemological bridge between tradition and transformation, the image can be read as a visual representation of a new paradigm of internalizing religious values that is integrative between affection, reflection, and social transformation.

A Critical-Affective Model of Religious Value Internalization in Islamic Boarding Schools

The results of a systematic synthesis of various literatures indicate that the critical-affective model of religious value internalization formulated in this study is a conceptual reconstruction that places affection, reflection, and spirituality as the foundation for the formation of religious awareness. This model starts from the assumption that the internalization of values is not sufficiently understood as a normative transmission process, but as an existential experience that involves all dimensions of human being. Research by Cochran (2015) shows that an effective learning process places four main components formulated in an integrative manner: affection as religious emotional energy, reflection as critical awareness, spirituality as a deep inner experience, and action as the actualization of values in life's praxis. These four components do not stand separately, but are intertwined in a dynamic pedagogical process. In line with this, research by Cornu (2019) shows that affective and spiritual experiences are important media in the formation of moral identity and ethical awareness, where affection gives vitality to values, reflection gives direction to awareness, spirituality deepens meaning, and action becomes a concrete manifestation of this internalization. Thus, this model positions the internalization of values as a holistic process that moves from experience to awareness and action.

Mechanistically, the internalization process in this model can be understood as a gradual transformation that begins with emotional attachment, continues with critical reflection, and culminates in value embodiment. Research by Danvers (2016) shows that emotional attachment is a crucial initial stage in developing a subject's openness to values, as emotions create an existential closeness with the object of learning. In the context of Islamic boarding schools (*pesantren*), the affective relationship between *kiai* (Islamic boarding school) and *santri* (students) serves as the primary gateway for the acceptance of religious values through mahabbah (religious service), *ta'dzim* (religious service), and khidmah (service). However, unlike the traditional model, research by Bartier *et al*. (2020) shows that effective value internalization must progress toward critical reflection, the stage when subjects begin to interpret, question, and connect values with the realities of their lives. This process leads to value embodiment, the state when values have been integrated into the structure of self-awareness and manifested in concrete actions. Thus, value internalization moves from dependence to autonomy, from loyalty to reflective awareness.

The implications of this model indicate a significant epistemological shift in Islamic education, particularly in Islamic boarding schools (*pesantren*). Moilanen (2025) research demonstrates that the contemporary learning paradigm is shifting from indoctrinative learning to emancipatory learning, where students are positioned as active subjects in the process of meaning-making. Similarly, research by Murtadho (2026) demonstrates that religious values are more effectively internalized when presented not as closed, final truths, but as horizons of meaning open to interpretation within the context of social life. In this new paradigm, affection no longer functions as a tool of pedagogical control, but as a liberating medium that opens up space for reflection and dialogue. Research reinforces these findings by demonstrating that reflective-contextual education is more capable of producing transformations of consciousness than normative-reproductive education. Thus, Islamic boarding schools have the potential to transform into pedagogical spaces that foster not only religious obedience but also critical awareness and social responsibility.

From a broader perspective, this model offers what can be called Affective-Emancipatory Islamic Pedagogy, an Islamic educational paradigm that integrates affection, reflection, spirituality, and action within a unified transformational process, as a new framework for understanding the internalization of religious values (Ta'rifin *et al*., 2025). This model offers a synthesis of the Islamic pedagogical tradition based on adab and spirituality with a critical pedagogical approach that emphasizes awareness and emancipation. By

integrating the dimensions of affection, reflection, spirituality, and action, this model provides a new perspective that internalizing values does not have to choose between obedience and freedom, but can combine the two in a dialectical relationship. Conceptually, this model broadens the horizon of Islamic education studies by positioning affection as the meeting point between religious experience and critical awareness. Practically, this framework opens possibilities for developing more dialogical, reflective, and transformative learning strategies within *pesantren* education. Therefore, it is relevant not only as a critique of existing practices but also as a constructive proposal for the future development of Islamic education. Furthermore, Table 1 presents the proposed model of Affective-Critical Religious Value Internalization and its key pedagogical components.

Table 1. Internalization of Affective-Critical Based Religious Values

Component	Brief Description	Pedagogical Mechanism	Expected Impact
Affect (Religious Emotions)	Emotional attachment (*mahabbah*, *ta'dzim*, *tawadhu'*) between *kiai* and students as the foundational basis	Personal relationships, role modeling, habituation, *khidmah* (service)	Development of inner connectedness and readiness to receive values
Reflection (Critical Consciousness)	Reflective thinking process to understand and interpret values	Dialogue, problem-posing, *muhasabah* (self-reflection), critical discussion	Formation of critical reasoning and meaningful awareness
Spirituality (Inner Experience)	Deep internalization of values through religious experience	Worship practices, contemplation, internalization of *adab* and *tazkiyah*	Deep existential understanding of values
Action (Value Practice)	Implementation of values in real-life contexts	Social practice, service (*khidmah*), social interaction	Manifestation of ethical behavior and social responsibility

According to Table 1, the proposed model conceptualizes religious value internalization as a multidimensional process that integrates affective, reflective, spiritual, and practical dimensions into a coherent pedagogical framework. Rather than treating religious learning as a process of transmitting doctrine alone, the model emphasizes the dynamic interaction between emotional attachment, critical consciousness, inner spiritual experience, and ethical action. The synthesis suggests that affect functions as the initial foundation for value reception, while reflection enables learners to interpret and critically engage with those values in relation to their lived realities. Spiritual experience deepens the existential meaning of religious teachings, whereas action serves as the arena in which values are embodied and translated into social responsibility. Consequently, value internalization is understood not as passive acceptance of religious norms but as a transformative process through which values become integrated into learners' moral consciousness, personal identity, and everyday practices.

Nevertheless, this study has several limitations that should be acknowledged. First, as a Systematic Literature Review, the proposed Affective-Critical Religious Value Internalization model is derived from the synthesis and conceptual reconstruction of existing scholarly literature rather than from direct empirical observation of pedagogical practices in Islamic boarding schools. Although the review involved 41 studies selected through a systematic process, the diversity of research contexts, methodological approaches, and conceptual orientations across the reviewed literature may influence the interpretation and integration of the findings. Second, the model remains conceptual and has not yet been empirically validated through field-based research involving *kiai*, *santri*, teachers, or other educational stakeholders in *pesantren* with different institutional traditions and sociocultural contexts. Consequently, the proposed relationships among affective attachment, critical reflection, spirituality, and ethical action should not yet be interpreted as universally applicable or causally established. Third, the reconstruction emphasizes the potential of affective relationships as a foundation for critical and emancipatory consciousness, but the literature does not provide sufficient empirical evidence to determine how these dimensions interact across different *pesantren* settings. Future studies should therefore employ qualitative, mixed-methods, or longitudinal designs to examine the implementation, contextual adaptability, and empirical effectiveness of the model, including the conditions under which affective relationships can facilitate rather than constrain students' critical autonomy. Such empirical validation is necessary to strengthen the explanatory power, practical applicability, and generalizability of the proposed framework.

The implications of this model suggest that the reform of *pesantren* education does not require radical disruption of existing traditions; rather, it can be achieved through a reflective reconstruction of pedagogical practices that have long constituted the institution's cultural strengths. Affective relationships, which have historically served as the foundation of *pesantren* education, can become a powerful basis for cultivating deeper critical awareness and ethical responsibility. By integrating emotional, intellectual, spiritual, and social dimensions, the proposed framework offers a pathway toward a form of religiosity that is not merely normative but also substantive, contextual, and transformative. From this perspective, *pesantren* can maintain their identity as centers of Islamic tradition while simultaneously evolving into educational institutions capable of responding to contemporary social challenges. Thus, the Affective-Critical Religious Value Internalization model contributes not only to theoretical discussions on Islamic pedagogy but also provides practical guidance for developing a more humanistic, participatory, and emancipatory educational practice.

CONCLUSION

This study highlights that the internalization of religious values in Islamic boarding schools should be understood as a transformative pedagogical process that integrates affective experience, critical reflection, and spiritual consciousness rather than merely reproducing normative obedience. The findings demonstrate that the affective dimension, which has long been a defining characteristic of *pesantren* education, possesses significant potential to foster a more reflective and emancipatory form of religiosity when combined with dialogical and critical pedagogical practices. In this context, the proposed Affective-Emancipatory Islamic Pedagogy offers a conceptual framework that repositions students as active subjects in the construction of ethical and religious meaning, while preserving the cultural and spiritual identity of Islamic boarding schools. This approach contributes to the broader discourse of contemporary Islamic education by emphasizing the integration of emotional, intellectual, and moral dimensions within a holistic educational process. Furthermore, the study suggests that *pesantren* can evolve into transformative educational spaces capable of responding to contemporary social challenges without losing their traditional foundations. The future development of this research lies in the empirical exploration and contextual implementation of affective-emancipatory pedagogical practices across diverse Islamic educational settings to strengthen the relevance and applicability of transformative Islamic pedagogy in contemporary society.

AUTHOR CONTRIBUTIONS

Ulul Albab: Conceptualization, Methodology, Investigation, and Writing – Original Draft; **Abdul Khobir**: Conceptualization, Formal Analysis, and Writing – Original Draft; **Ma'mun Hanif**: Formal Analysis and Data Curation; **Ahmad Ta'rifin**: Investigation, Data Curation, and Writing – Original Draft; **Hani Hasnah Safitri**: Validation, Visualization, and Writing – Review & Editing; and **Tengku Zawani Tengku Zawawi**: Supervision, Conceptualization, Project Administration, and Writing – Review & Editing. All authors have read and approved the final version of the manuscript.

DATA AVAILABILITY STATEMENT

The data supporting the findings of this study are available from the authors upon reasonable request, subject to ethical approval and applicable institutional regulations.

DECLARATION OF COMPETING INTEREST

The authors declare no known financial conflicts of interest or personal relationships that could have influenced the work reported in this manuscript.

DECLARATION OF ETHICS

The authors declare that the research and writing of this manuscript adhere to ethical standards of research and publication, in accordance with scientific principles, and are free from plagiarism.

DECLARATION OF ASSISTIVE TECHNOLOGIES IN THE WRITING PROCESS

The authors declare that generative artificial intelligence (Gen AI) and other AI-assisted tools were used prudently, not excessively, during the research and preparation of this manuscript. Specifically, ChatGPT was used for brainstorming ideas, drafting, and refining text; Grammarly for grammar and style correction; and Consensus AI for identifying relevant and internationally accredited references, as well as synthesizing

evidence from the literature. All AI-generated material was reviewed and edited for accuracy, completeness, and compliance with ethical and scholarly standards. The authors accept full responsibility for the final content of the manuscript.

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