



Digital Competency Crisis amid Rapid Disruption: A Critical Study of Islamic Religious Education Teachers' Resistance for Learning Quality

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Abstract:

This study aims to critically examine the digital competency crisis among Islamic Religious Education (PAI) teachers, identify the factors underlying their resistance to digital transformation, and analyze its implications for learning quality. The rapid advancement of digital transformation has fundamentally reshaped educational practices; however, many teachers remain insufficiently prepared to adapt to these changes. PAI teachers face more complex challenges as they are required not only to master digital technologies but also to integrate them with Islamic values within the learning process. This study employed a qualitative approach using a library research design by reviewing reputable scholarly articles, international institutional reports, and relevant academic documents. Data were analyzed through content analysis, involving processes of data reduction, thematic categorization, conceptual synthesis, and critical interpretation. The findings reveal that the digital competency crisis among PAI teachers is not merely a matter of technical limitations but is also shaped by pedagogical, psychological, cultural, and institutional factors that contribute to resistance toward digital transformation. This resistance, in turn, reduces instructional innovation, limits meaningful technology integration, and weakens the relevance of Islamic Religious Education to the learning characteristics of the digital generation. Furthermore, the study highlights the urgency of developing a comprehensive and integrative framework to address this issue. Therefore, this study proposes a digital competency transformation model encompassing technical, pedagogical, epistemological, and ethical-spiritual dimensions as a strategic framework for enhancing the quality and relevance of Islamic Religious Education in the era of technological disruption.

INTRODUCTION

Digital transformation has fundamentally reshaped the educational landscape. The integration of digital technologies, artificial intelligence, learning management systems, and various adaptive learning platforms has shifted the learning paradigm from teacher-centered instruction toward more flexible, collaborative, personalized, and learner-responsive approaches grounded in

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student-centered learning (Bond et al., 2024; Zawacki-Richter & Latchem, 2018). This shift has been further accelerated by the emergence of the Fourth Industrial Revolution and Society 5.0, which position digital competence as one of the core competencies educators must possess to design learning experiences that are relevant to the characteristics and needs of twenty-first-century learners (Redecker, 2017; UNESCO, 2023). Within this context, teachers are no longer expected to function merely as knowledge transmitters; rather, they are increasingly required to serve as facilitators, information curators, instructional innovators, and mentors who guide students in developing digital literacy (Redecker, 2017; Caena & Redecker, 2019).

On the other hand, the acceleration of digitalization has revealed a paradox within the education sector. While technology continues to advance exponentially, many teachers still experience a digital competence gap that prevents them from utilizing technology to support educational transformation effectively (Falloon, 2020). Various international reports indicate that teachers' mastery of educational technology has not developed at the same pace as technological innovation itself. Consequently, the digital divide is no longer limited to infrastructure but also encompasses teachers' pedagogical capacity to integrate technology meaningfully into the teaching and learning process (OECD, 2023; UNESCO, 2023). As a result, digital transformation in schools often remains confined to administrative functions, while classroom practices continue to be dominated by conventional approaches characterized by limited pedagogical innovation (Tondeur et al., 2023; Basilotta-Gómez-Pablos et al., 2022).

This phenomenon becomes increasingly complex when examined within the context of Islamic Religious Education (Pendidikan Agama Islam/PAI). Unlike science and technology subjects, which have generally adopted digital innovations more rapidly, PAI instruction across many educational institutions continues to rely predominantly on lecture-based teaching, memorization, and textual explanation. Consequently, digital technologies have not yet been fully integrated into pedagogical strategies for teaching and learning (Mintasih et al., 2024; Apriyani et al., 2024). This situation contrasts sharply with the learning characteristics of Generation Z and Generation Alpha, who tend to prefer visual, interactive, multimodal, collaborative, and technology-enhanced learning environments that provide more personalized and flexible learning experiences (Seemiller & Grace, 2019; Bond et al., 2024). The mismatch between students' learning characteristics and teachers' instructional approaches may reduce student engagement, intrinsic motivation, and the quality of students' understanding of Islamic values, as the learning process no longer aligns with the preferences of digitally oriented generations (Bond et al., 2020; Fredricks et al., 2019).

These challenges cannot be attributed solely to limited technological proficiency but also stem from teachers' resistance to change. Resistance refers to the psychological and professional response that arises when individuals perceive change as a threat to their work routines, professional identity, or long-established pedagogical practices (Howard, 2013). Within educational settings, teachers' resistance to digital transformation may manifest in various forms, including reluctance to adopt digital media, limited willingness to participate in technology-related professional development, concerns regarding the use of

artificial intelligence (AI), and the perception that technology may diminish teachers' authority in the instructional process (Scherer et al., 2019; Demissie et al., 2022). Consequently, instructional innovation often progresses slowly despite the availability of technological infrastructure, as the success of digital transformation depends more heavily on teachers' readiness and acceptance than on infrastructure alone (Hennessy et al., 2022; Tondeur et al., 2023).

Previous studies have extensively examined teachers' digital competence and the implementation of technology in educational settings. Most have focused on the influence of digital competence on instructional effectiveness, teachers' digital literacy, or the use of technology-based learning media (Falloon, 2020; Tondeur et al., 2023). Other studies have primarily explored the application of artificial intelligence, digital media, and learning management systems to enhance students' learning outcomes and the quality of digital learning environments (Basilotta-Gómez-Pablos et al., 2022). Nevertheless, the majority of these studies conceptualize digital competence primarily as a technical capability involving the operation of digital devices or applications. As a result, relatively little attention has been devoted to examining teachers' resistance as a social, psychological, pedagogical, and cultural factor influencing the success of digital transformation in Islamic Religious Education (PAI) (Skantz-Åberg et al., 2022; Howard, 2013).

Furthermore, research focusing specifically on Islamic Religious Education (PAI) teachers remains relatively limited compared with studies conducted in other subject areas, particularly those integrating issues of digital competence, digital pedagogy, and technology-driven educational transformation. This gap is noteworthy because PAI teachers perform a distinctive educational role that extends beyond the transmission of knowledge to include the cultivation of students' character, spirituality, and the internalization of Islamic values as fundamental objectives of Islamic education (Mintasih et al., 2024). The transition toward digitally mediated learning is often perceived as a challenge to traditional instructional approaches that have long been regarded as effective in fostering meaningful teacher-student relationships, exemplary conduct, and moral development. Consequently, digital transformation in PAI requires not only technological proficiency but also the capacity to maintain a balance between pedagogical innovation and the Islamic values that constitute the philosophical foundation of the learning process (Apriyani et al., 2024). As a result, resistance to technology integration in PAI exhibits unique dynamics that distinguish it from other academic disciplines, as it is shaped by pedagogical, ethical, and religious considerations, as well as teachers' professional competence in integrating digital technologies into religious instruction (Mintasih et al., 2024; Oviyanti et al., 2025).

From a theoretical perspective, teachers' digital competence extends beyond technical proficiency in operating digital devices and encompasses the pedagogical, ethical, social, and professional capacities required to integrate technology meaningfully into teaching and learning (Falloon, 2020; Skantz-Åberg et al., 2022). The DigCompEdu framework further conceptualizes digital competence as a multidimensional construct that enables educators to design inclusive, learner-centered, collaborative, and technology-enhanced learning environments (Redecker, 2017). However, the successful integration of digital technologies is frequently constrained by teachers' resistance to change, which

may arise from limited self-efficacy, pedagogical beliefs, perceived risks, insufficient institutional support, and concerns that digital technologies could undermine established instructional practices (Howard, 2013; Demissie et al., 2022). Within the context of Islamic Religious Education (PAI), these challenges are particularly significant because technology integration must not only enhance instructional quality but also preserve the transmission of Islamic values, moral formation, and students' spiritual development. Consequently, improving teachers' digital competence while addressing the underlying factors of resistance has become a strategic prerequisite for achieving high-quality, student-centered PAI instruction that remains pedagogically innovative without compromising its religious and ethical foundations (Hennessy et al., 2022; Sanzi et al., 2025; Tondeur et al., 2023).

Based on these circumstances, a clear research gap can be identified. Previous studies have primarily focused on measuring levels of digital competence or evaluating the effectiveness of technology integration, whereas investigations into the relationship between the digital competence crisis, PAI teachers' resistance to digital transformation, and its implications for instructional quality remain scarce. Moreover, limited attention has been given to understanding how such resistance is formed, the factors that influence its emergence, and its consequences for the quality of teaching and learning processes in the era of digital disruption.

Accordingly, this study aims to critically examine the digital competence crisis among Islamic Religious Education (PAI) teachers amid rapid technological disruption by analyzing the various forms of teachers' resistance and their implications for instructional quality. The findings are expected to contribute to the advancement of theoretical perspectives on the digital transformation of Islamic education while providing strategic recommendations for the sustainable development of PAI teachers' digital competence.

RESEARCH METHOD

This study employed a qualitative approach using a library research design. The research data were collected through a systematic review of reputable national and international scholarly journal articles, academic books, reports published by international organizations, and policy documents relevant to teachers' digital competence, resistance to digital transformation, Islamic Religious Education (PAI), and instructional quality. Library research was adopted to identify, evaluate, and synthesize findings from previous studies in order to develop a comprehensive understanding of the phenomenon under investigation (Ghamrawi et al., 2025). Priority was given to sources published within the last ten years and indexed in Scopus, Web of Science, DOAJ, and SINTA.

The data were analyzed using content analysis, involving the stages of data reduction, coding, thematic categorization, conceptual synthesis, and critical interpretation. Content analysis enabled the researchers to identify patterns, themes, meanings, and conceptual relationships embedded within the selected scholarly documents (Kleinheksel et al., 2020). To enhance the trustworthiness of the findings, data validity was strengthened through source triangulation by comparing empirical findings, theoretical frameworks, and documentary evidence from multiple sources. This triangulation process was intended to increase the

credibility of the interpretations and to provide a more comprehensive understanding of the digital competence crisis among PAI teachers, the factors underlying their resistance to digital transformation, and the implications of these issues for instructional quality (Carter et al., 2014).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The Digital Competence Crisis among Islamic Religious Education (PAI) Teachers

The synthesis of the reviewed literature indicates that the primary challenge facing PAI teachers is not the inability to operate digital technologies but the limited capacity to transform these technologies into meaningful pedagogical tools. Although many teachers routinely use smartphones, presentation software, search engines, video-sharing platforms, and social media, technology integration generally remains at the level of substitution, where digital tools merely replace traditional instructional media without fundamentally changing teaching and learning practices. In contrast, digital competence encompasses the ability to critically select, evaluate, adapt, and create digital learning resources while employing them to design active, inclusive, safe, and learner-centered learning environments (Falloon, 2020; Smestad et al., 2023).

This finding highlights a fundamental distinction between the digitalization of education and genuine digital transformation. Whereas digitalization simply converts conventional teaching materials into electronic formats, digital transformation involves redesigning learning experiences, fostering meaningful interactions, providing timely feedback, implementing authentic assessment, and empowering learners through technology. Consequently, the availability of digital infrastructure alone does not guarantee educational transformation. Instead, successful digital transformation requires organizational change, visionary leadership, pedagogical competence, collaborative professional culture, and a shared institutional commitment to integrating technology as a pedagogical rather than merely technical resource (McCarthy et al., 2023). Accordingly, teachers who are capable of producing digital presentations cannot necessarily be regarded as digitally competent if classroom instruction continues to rely on teacher-centered approaches with limited student participation.

Within the context of Islamic Religious Education (PAI), this competence gap is particularly evident. Existing studies reveal that teachers primarily utilize digital technologies such as YouTube, PowerPoint, Google Classroom, and online search engines to support instruction (Reksiana et al., 2024). While these platforms broaden access to educational resources, their use is often not accompanied by the ability to evaluate the credibility of digital information, design collaborative learning activities, develop contextually relevant Islamic educational content, or implement authentic digital assessment. These findings suggest that the digital competence crisis among PAI teachers should not be interpreted as an absence of technology use but rather as a pattern of superficial, fragmented, and pedagogically disconnected technology integration.

The implications of this competence gap become increasingly significant as digital environments have evolved into one of the primary spaces in which students construct their religious knowledge and understanding. Contemporary learners no longer rely exclusively on teachers, textbooks, or religious institutions;

they also obtain religious information through short-form videos, social media platforms, search engines, generative artificial intelligence, and digital religious influencers. Consequently, PAI teachers who lack competencies in information curation, algorithmic literacy, source verification, and digital ethics risk losing their pedagogical authority to the rapidly expanding digital information ecosystem. Under these circumstances, the digital competence crisis extends beyond technological limitations and develops into a crisis of educational relevance, reducing teachers' ability to connect Islamic teachings with students' authentic digital experiences.

Therefore, evaluating PAI teachers' digital competence should extend beyond measuring the number of digital applications they use. Rather, it should emphasize teachers' ability to integrate technology, pedagogy, and Islamic disciplinary knowledge into coherent instructional practices. Digitally competent PAI teachers are expected to make informed pedagogical decisions regarding when technology should be employed, which digital tools are pedagogically appropriate, which Islamic values should be preserved, what ethical risks may arise, and how technology can facilitate students' deeper, more critical understanding of Islamic teachings. This perspective is consistent with contemporary conceptualizations of digital competence as a multidimensional construct encompassing technical, pedagogical, social, ethical, and professional dimensions (Basilotta-Gómez-Pablos et al., 2022; Falloon, 2020).

PAI Teachers' Resistance to Digital Disruption

The literature synthesis demonstrates that teachers' resistance to digital transformation should not be understood merely as explicit rejection of technology. Instead, resistance often manifests in more subtle forms, including delayed adoption, minimal technology use, continued reliance on conventional instructional practices, reluctance to participate in professional development, anxiety about making mistakes, and symbolic acceptance of digital innovation without substantive pedagogical change. Consequently, teachers may express support for educational digitalization while continuing to employ technology only as a one-way instructional medium, thereby preserving traditional teacher-centered practices rather than transforming the learning process.

From a psychological perspective, resistance is closely associated with low digital self-efficacy, technology-related anxiety, and perceptions that digital tools are difficult to use or provide limited instructional value. Technology acceptance theories suggest that educators' willingness to adopt technology is strongly influenced by their perceptions of its usefulness and ease of use (Scherer et al., 2019). When teachers perceive digital technologies as complex, time-consuming, or likely to increase the risk of instructional failure, their intention to integrate these technologies into classroom practice declines substantially. These findings indicate that administrative directives alone are insufficient to promote digital transformation. Instead, teachers need authentic experiences demonstrating how technology can effectively address the pedagogical challenges they encounter in everyday teaching.

Pedagogical beliefs constitute another critical factor shaping teachers' resistance. Educators who view effective teaching primarily as teacher explanation followed by student listening are more likely to use technology to

reinforce conventional instructional practices. In contrast, teachers holding constructivist beliefs tend to employ digital technologies to facilitate inquiry-based learning, collaborative projects, problem-solving, and knowledge construction. As demonstrated by Ertmer et al. (2012), teachers' pedagogical beliefs significantly influence both the nature and depth of technology integration. Consequently, professional development programs that focus exclusively on technical skills without addressing underlying pedagogical beliefs are unlikely to produce meaningful instructional transformation.

Within the context of Islamic Religious Education (PAI), resistance assumes a more complex dimension because it is closely linked to teachers' professional identity and religious authority. Some teachers perceive digital environments as difficult to regulate, saturated with unverified religious information, and potentially capable of weakening the direct educational relationship between teachers and students. While these concerns are not without foundation, digital environments indeed present challenges such as misinformation, religious extremism, commercialization of religion, fragmented religious authority, privacy issues, and content that may conflict with Islamic educational values. Nevertheless, distancing PAI instruction from digital technologies in response to these risks may leave students to navigate complex digital environments without adequate moral, intellectual, and religious guidance from educators.

It is therefore essential to distinguish value-based resistance from critical engagement with technology. Critical evaluation enables teachers to question the credibility of digital information, data security, algorithmic bias, the educational implications of artificial intelligence, and the compatibility of digital content with Islamic principles. However, such critical reflection should foster responsible and informed technology integration rather than complete rejection. Within Islamic education, digital technologies should be positioned as complementary pedagogical tools that support learning while preserving reflection, moral exemplarity, meaningful dialogue, and authentic human relationships as the core elements of educational practice (Sapir, 2024).

Beyond individual factors, teachers' resistance is also shaped by institutional conditions. Heavy administrative workloads, limited opportunities for pedagogical experimentation, inadequate technological infrastructure, unstable internet access, insufficient technical support, and a lack of professional recognition for innovation often encourage teachers to revert to familiar instructional approaches. Consequently, attributing resistance solely to teachers' unwillingness to change represents an oversimplification that overlooks the organizational context of schools. Research conducted in low- and middle-income countries consistently demonstrates that successful technology integration depends on relevant professional development, sustained mentoring, collaborative learning opportunities, and the alignment of digital innovations with local educational contexts (Hennessy et al., 2022).

Overall, the findings suggest that PAI teachers' resistance to digital transformation is a multidimensional phenomenon shaped by the interaction of personal, pedagogical, cultural, and structural factors. At the personal level, resistance is associated with technology-related anxiety and limited digital self-efficacy; pedagogically, it is influenced by teachers' beliefs about effective instruction; culturally, it reflects concerns regarding the role of technology in

religious education; and structurally, it is reinforced by institutional constraints such as infrastructure, workload, leadership, and professional development. Recognizing this multidimensional nature of resistance is essential for designing policies that strengthen teachers' digital competence through supportive and context-sensitive professional learning rather than through technology mandates that may inadvertently intensify resistance.

Implications of Teachers' Resistance for the Quality of Islamic Religious Education (PAI)

The findings suggest that teachers' resistance to digital transformation has significant implications for the quality and relevance of Islamic Religious Education (PAI). Contemporary learners are immersed in digital environments characterized by visual communication, rapid information exchange, multimodal interaction, and unrestricted access to online knowledge. Consequently, when PAI instruction continues to rely predominantly on lectures and memorization without connecting Islamic teachings to students' digital realities, a disconnect emerges between classroom learning and learners' everyday experiences. This disconnect may reduce student engagement, active participation, and the ability to relate Islamic values to contemporary social and technological issues.

Furthermore, the quality of PAI instruction should not be evaluated solely by curriculum completion or students' ability to recall religious concepts. High-quality learning should cultivate deep understanding, critical reasoning, religious reflection, and the capacity to apply Islamic principles in everyday life. Within contemporary digital society, these competencies include responsible social media engagement, ethical information sharing, digital privacy awareness, respect for diversity, critical media consumption, and the ability to evaluate the credibility of online religious information. Without adequate digital competence, PAI teachers are unlikely to integrate these essential dimensions systematically into classroom practice.

Teachers' resistance also limits the diversity of pedagogical representations available for PAI instruction. Topics such as Islamic history, acts of worship, Qur'anic verses, Hadith, Islamic ethics, and *muamalah* can be presented through instructional videos, digital maps, infographics, simulations, interactive quizzes, social media case studies, and student-generated digital content. Research has shown that appropriately designed digital learning media can enhance classroom interactivity and increase student engagement (Astuti, 2024). However, technology contributes to instructional quality only when it is aligned with clear pedagogical objectives. Simply displaying instructional videos without analytical discussion or replacing lectures with text-heavy presentation slides does not fundamentally improve learning outcomes.

Limited digital competence also constrains the quality of assessment practices. Teachers with insufficient technological proficiency often rely on traditional assessments emphasizing factual recall, memorization, and multiple-choice testing. By contrast, digital technologies enable more authentic assessment approaches, including formative assessment, digital portfolios, collaborative projects, reflective learning journals, immediate feedback, and continuous monitoring of students' learning progress. Within PAI, such approaches may involve analyzing issues of digital ethics, developing anti-

cyberbullying campaigns, producing responsible Islamic digital content, or critically evaluating the credibility of online religious information. These assessment practices provide a more comprehensive evaluation of students' ability to integrate religious knowledge with critical thinking and real-world application.

Beyond instructional practice, teachers' resistance may also widen existing disparities in digital literacy among students. Learners who receive strong family support and have adequate access to digital technologies are more likely to develop independent learning skills, whereas those with limited resources risk becoming increasingly marginalized. In this context, schools and teachers play a crucial role as mediators who ensure that technology promotes educational equity rather than reinforcing existing inequalities. Accordingly, teachers' digital competence should be viewed not only as a catalyst for instructional innovation but also as an essential component of inclusive and equitable education.

At a more fundamental level, the limited presence of PAI teachers within digital learning spaces increases the likelihood that students will obtain religious knowledge from popular yet potentially unreliable online sources. Rather than merely discouraging students from accessing inappropriate content, teachers should equip them with the competencies required to locate trustworthy sources, evaluate authors' credibility, compare diverse scholarly perspectives, recognize misleading digital narratives, and distinguish evidence-based religious arguments from unsupported opinions. In this regard, the role of PAI teachers extends beyond transmitting curricular content to serving as knowledgeable curators of religious knowledge within increasingly complex digital information ecosystems.

Overall, the relationship between teachers' digital competence and instructional quality should not be understood as deterministic. Technology alone does not guarantee educational improvement; however, persistent resistance to digital transformation may significantly restrict opportunities for pedagogical innovation. High-quality PAI instruction emerges when digital technologies are integrated with sound pedagogical practice, deep disciplinary knowledge, ethical responsibility, exemplary character, and a comprehensive understanding of students' developmental needs. Conversely, technology use that lacks pedagogical purpose may produce visually engaging learning experiences while remaining intellectually superficial and spiritually disconnected.

A Conceptual Model for the Digital Competence Transformation of Islamic Religious Education (PAI) Teachers

Based on the synthesis of the reviewed literature, this study proposes a five-stage conceptual model for strengthening the digital competence of Islamic Religious Education (PAI) teachers. The proposed model conceptualizes digital transformation not as the acquisition of technological infrastructure but as a comprehensive process of pedagogical, professional, and cultural change. The five interconnected stages comprise **diagnosis**, **paradigm reconstruction**, **contextual competence development**, **guided implementation**, and **institutionalization**, each addressing a critical dimension of sustainable digital transformation.

The first stage, **diagnosis**, emphasizes the systematic assessment of teachers' digital competence and sources of resistance. Rather than classifying

teachers simply as technologically competent or incompetent, schools should identify specific strengths and challenges related to information literacy, digital content creation, online communication, digital assessment, data security, ethical awareness, and the pedagogical integration of technology into PAI instruction. Equally important is understanding the underlying causes of teachers' resistance, as barriers rooted in limited technical skills require different interventions from those arising from pedagogical beliefs, professional identity, or value-based concerns.

The second stage involves paradigm reconstruction, whereby teachers reconceptualize the role of technology within educational practice. Digital technologies should not be perceived as replacing teachers but as expanding their professional capacity. While technology can automate routine instructional tasks, it cannot substitute for teachers' moral judgment, empathy, contextual decision-making, or educational exemplarity. Accordingly, digital transformation should reposition PAI teachers from being the sole transmitters of knowledge to becoming facilitators of learning, ethical mentors, validators of digital information, and curators of Islamic knowledge capable of guiding students through increasingly complex digital environments.

The third stage focuses on contextual competence development. Professional development should move beyond short-term technical workshops centered on introducing multiple digital applications. Instead, training should originate from authentic classroom challenges, such as low student engagement, difficulties in understanding abstract religious concepts, limited reflective thinking, or the widespread circulation of misleading religious information. Teachers should then be supported in selecting and implementing digital technologies that directly address these pedagogical issues through authentic practice, instructional modeling, collaborative learning, reflective dialogue, and iterative lesson improvement. This approach is consistent with previous research emphasizing that effective teacher education requires a shared pedagogical vision, opportunities for authentic instructional design, sustained collaboration, and continuous professional support (Tondeur et al., 2012; Instefjord & Munthe, 2017).

The fourth stage, guided implementation, highlights the importance of sustained mentoring during classroom innovation. Teachers should be encouraged to implement a specific digital innovation within selected learning units while receiving continuous observation, constructive feedback, and professional coaching. Such support may be provided through professional learning communities, academic supervision, peer coaching, or partnerships with higher education institutions. Rather than relying on one-time training initiatives, this stage recognizes that meaningful pedagogical transformation requires ongoing experimentation, reflection, and collaborative professional learning. Furthermore, within Islamic educational contexts, technology integration should remain responsive to local cultural and religious values instead of following standardized implementation models (Adler et al., 2025).

The final stage, **institutionalization**, aims to ensure the sustainability of digital transformation through organizational support. Educational institutions should establish comprehensive policies governing the use of digital technologies, artificial intelligence, data protection, the validation of online religious resources,

digital assessment, and students' digital ethics. School leadership should also provide adequate infrastructure, dedicated time for professional learning, recognition for instructional innovation, and psychologically safe environments in which teachers can experiment with new pedagogical approaches. Without institutional commitment, digital competence development is likely to remain dependent on individual initiative and difficult to sustain over time. Sustainable digital transformation therefore requires coherent leadership, adequate resources, collaborative organizational culture, and continuous professional learning (McCarthy et al., 2023).

Overall, the proposed conceptual model suggests that addressing the digital competence crisis among PAI teachers requires more than large-scale technology adoption. Instead, it calls for a critical, pedagogically grounded, context-sensitive, and values-oriented transformation. PAI teachers are not expected to master every emerging technology; rather, they should develop the professional capacity to evaluate, select, and utilize digital technologies in ways that deepen students' religious understanding, strengthen meaningful participation, cultivate Islamic character, and prepare learners to engage responsibly and ethically within contemporary digital society.

Accordingly, teachers' resistance should not be interpreted merely as an obstacle to innovation but as an indicator of unmet professional needs, technological anxiety, or value-based tensions that require thoughtful educational responses. Transformational initiatives based solely on compliance are likely to produce superficial technology adoption, whereas approaches that actively engage teachers as partners in the change process foster genuine professional commitment. In this sense, the digital competence transformation of PAI teachers extends beyond a technological agenda to become a broader project of renewing Islamic pedagogy in ways that are educationally relevant, pedagogically meaningful, and firmly grounded in Islamic values.

Picture 1. Mind map for enhancing digital competence to achieve effective technology integration in Islamic Religious Education (PAI)



DISCUSSION

This study aims to critically examine the digital competency crisis among Islamic Religious Education (PAI) teachers by situating the findings within relevant grand theoretical frameworks, particularly those related to digital competence, educational transformation, and resistance to change. From the perspective of digital competence theory, the findings indicate that the limitations experienced by PAI teachers extend beyond technical skills to include pedagogical and epistemological dimensions. This aligns with the concept that digital competence is a multidimensional construct encompassing not only the ability to use technology but also the capacity to integrate it meaningfully into teaching practices. The low level of digital integration observed reflects a gap between technological knowledge and its pedagogical application, which ultimately affects the effectiveness of learning processes.

Furthermore, viewed through the lens of resistance to change theory, the study reveals that the reluctance of PAI teachers to adopt digital transformation is influenced by psychological, cultural, and institutional factors. Psychologically, teachers may experience anxiety or lack of confidence in using digital tools; culturally, there may be a tendency to maintain conventional teaching traditions; and institutionally, limited support and training exacerbate this resistance. These findings reinforce the notion that resistance is not merely an individual issue but a systemic phenomenon shaped by broader educational contexts. Consequently, efforts to enhance digital competence must address these multidimensional barriers comprehensively rather than focusing solely on technical training.

Finally, in relation to the grand theory of transformative education, this study emphasizes the importance of integrating ethical and spiritual dimensions into digital competency development, particularly in the context of Islamic Religious Education. The proposed transformation model highlights that effective digital competence for PAI teachers should encompass technical, pedagogical, epistemological, and ethical-spiritual aspects. This integrative approach ensures that technology use remains aligned with Islamic values while responding to the needs of the digital generation. Therefore, the transformation of digital competence is not only a matter of skill enhancement but also a paradigm shift toward more holistic, value-oriented, and contextually relevant educational practices.

CONCLUSION

The digital competence crisis among Islamic Religious Education (PAI) teachers in the era of digital disruption extends beyond limited technical proficiency in using digital technologies. It is fundamentally shaped by pedagogical, psychological, and institutional forms of resistance that constrain the meaningful integration of technology into teaching and learning. As a result, PAI instruction continues to rely predominantly on conventional pedagogical approaches that are insufficient to address the learning characteristics of students growing up in digital environments. This situation not only restricts pedagogical innovation but also limits opportunities to foster students' digital literacy, critical thinking, and contextual understanding of Islamic values. Therefore, improving the quality of PAI instruction requires a comprehensive transformation of teachers' digital competence that encompasses not only

technological skills but also pedagogical expertise, the ability to curate reliable religious knowledge, and the integration of Islamic ethical principles into the use of digital technologies.

Based on the synthesis of the reviewed literature, this study proposes that the digital competence transformation of PAI teachers should be implemented systematically through the integrated development of technical, pedagogical, epistemological, and ethical-spiritual competencies, supported by institutional policies, continuous professional development, professional learning communities, and an organizational culture that encourages innovation. Within this framework, technology should no longer be perceived as a threat to teachers' professional roles but rather as a strategic pedagogical resource for enhancing the quality and relevance of Islamic Religious Education in the digital era. The conceptual model proposed in this study provides a theoretical foundation for future educational policies and professional development initiatives aimed at fostering PAI teachers who are adaptable to technological change, professionally competent in digital pedagogy, and steadfast in promoting students' moral character and Islamic values amid the continuing evolution of digital society.

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