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FREIRE'S PRAXIS, DEMOCRACY, AND CRITICAL CONSCIOUSNESS IN ISLAMIC EDUCATION

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Abstrak

Filsafat kritis dalam pendidikan beranggapan bahwa peserta didik begitu naif dan tidak mampu membaca realitas sosial secara kritis, begitu juga terjadi dalam pendidikan Islam. Paulo Freire mencoba untuk mempromosikan pentingnya pendidikan yang berpusat pada siswa, partisipasi aktif dan kesadaran kritis dalam pendidikan. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk: (1) menggali gagasan Freire tentang praksis; (2) menggali pemikiran Freire tentang demokrasi; (3) menggali pemikiran Freire tentang kesadaran kritis; (4) mengintegrasikan konsep praksis, demokrasi dan kesadaran kritis dalam pendidikan Islam. Ini adalah penelitian literatur yang melibatkan tinjauan literatur yang relevan dengan konsep Freire dan penerapannya dalam pendidikan Islam. Temuan penelitian ini adalah: (1) Praksis memungkinkan siswa menghubungkan pengetahuan dan nilai-nilai Islam dengan tindakan nyata dalam hidup; (2) Demokrasi mendorong partisipasi siswa dalam pengambilan keputusan dan dialog terbuka, memungkinkan mereka berkontribusi aktif dalam pembelajaran; (3) Kesadaran kritis membantu siswa memahami struktur masyarakat dan menganalisis pemahamannya terhadap ajaran Islam secara kritis; (4) Penerapan konsep praksis, demokrasi dan kesadaran kritis dalam pendidikan Islam memberikan kesempatan kepada peserta didik untuk mengintegrasikan ajaran agama dengan pengalaman hidupnya, memahami konteks sosial dan mengembangkan pemahaman kritis terhadap Islam.

***Kata kunci**: Praksis; demokrasi; kesadaran kritis; Paulo Freire; pendidikan Islam.*

Abstract

Critical philosophy in education assumes that students are so naive and unable to read social reality critically, and this also happens in Islamic education. Paulo Freire tries to promote the importance of student-centred education, active participation and critical consciousness in education. This study aims to: (1) explore Freire's ideas about praxis; (2) explore Freire's thoughts on democracy; (3) explore Freire's thinking about critical consciousness; (4) integrate the concepts of praxis, democracy and critical consciousness in Islamic education. This is literature research which involves review of literature that is relevant to Freire's concepts and their application in Islamic education. The findings of this study are: (1) Praxis allows students to link Islamic knowledge and values with concrete actions in life; (2) Democracy promotes student participation in decision-making and open dialogue, enabling them to actively contribute to learning; (3) Critical consciousness helps students understand the structure of society and analyze their understanding of Islamic teachings critically; (4) The concepts of praxis, democracy and critical consciousness in Islamic education provides opportunities for students to integrate religious teachings with their life experiences, understand the social context and develop a critical understanding of Islam.

Keywords*: Praxis; democracy; critical consciousness; Paulo Freire; Islamic education.*

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INTRODUCTION

Many critical educational philosophies assume that students are naive and unable to read their social reality critically (Hachem & Westberg, 2023, p. 101). In fact, education plays an important role in the formation of individuals, communities and nations. Quality education is expected to develop a generation with deep understanding, advanced skills, and a critical attitude toward the world around them. In the context of Islamic education, the main goal of education is to form people who obey religion and have

noble morals. Islamic religious education aims to transfer Islamic religious values in schools and implement the values of religious teachings well in community life (Kuswanto et al., 2022, p. 173). This is in line with the Islamic religion whose teachings cover various dimensions of life (Purnami, 2022, p. 55). In particular, Islamic religious education seeks to increase students' religious knowledge, understanding, appreciation and experience in order to civilize themselves and practice knowledge and skills in accordance with Islamic values (Masturin, 2022, p. 188).

However, in some cases, education is often a process dominated by an authoritative and transmissive approach, where teachers act as providers of information and students as passive recipients (Carless, 2020, p. 143). This approach tends to limit students' role in the learning process and inhibits the development of critical consciousness and the ability to think independently. Many Islamic educational institutions still use traditional, teacher-centred teaching approaches (Muhajir et al., 2024, p. 947) and focus on memorization rather than in-depth understanding and critical thinking (Sapiudin et al., 2024, p. 792). Many teachers in Islamic educational institutions have not practiced democratic teaching methods and promoted critical awareness (Ju'subaidi et al., 2024, p. 4). Some stakeholders in education are reluctant to adopt new methods due to fear of change or uncertainty about the results (Shofiyyah et al., 2023, p. 205).

The banking model of education (Portuguese: *modelo bancário de educação*) makes students passive. In this context, Paulo Freire's ideas about praxis, democracy and critical consciousness are very relevant and significant to solve this problem. Freire criticized this model of learning and clearly stated that educating is more than simply attempting to transfer knowledge to passive students (Matiti, 2024, p. 146). Freire argued that the reconciliation of teacher-student contradictions is a prerequisite for a proper education in which all participants must be simultaneously "teachers and students" (Svensson, 2024, p. 2). Current Islamic education can take inspiration from Freire's ideas by implementing more dialogic and

participatory learning methods, where students are invited to think critically, dialogue and actively participate in the learning process. Thus, Islamic education not only transfers religious knowledge, but also forms students' critical awareness, equipping them with the ability to understand and criticize social reality, and encouraging them to become active agents of change in society.

To overcome this challenge, the concepts of praxis, democracy, and critical consciousness proposed by Paulo Freire can provide inspiration. Freire emphasized the importance of a participatory approach in education (Costa et al., 2023, p. 6), where students are considered as active subjects in the learning process and have an active role in developing their understanding. Freire (1990, p. 85) argued that human activities develop from creative interactions with their environment which underscores the importance of work and culture. Freire's thinking highlights the importance of democracy in education. Democratic principles, such as participation, fairness, and respect for differences, can create an inclusive educational environment and enable students to participate actively in the learning process (Zammit & Zammit, 2023, p. 3). Apart from that, critical consciousness is also a key concept in Freire's thinking. Critical consciousness involves an individual's ability to read the world in a critical and reflective way, analyze existing power and social structures, and act for better change. Although Freire's work is pedagogical in nature, the principles of critical pedagogy are important and relevant in a variety of practices that shape social life (O'Connor et al., 2023, p. 3). This critical consciousness requires reflecting on local themes that are relevant to students' everyday lives (Cassiani & von Linsingen, 2023, p. 117). In the context of Islamic education, critical consciousness can help students to understand religious principles in depth, apply Islamic values in everyday life, and contribute to building a more just and sustainable society.

Concepts of praxis, democracy, and critical consciousness in education is still a challenge faced by many educational institutions. Changes in traditional educational paradigms, the presence of

cultural barriers, and a lack of understanding of these concepts, are some of the factors that influence effective implementation.

Therefore, research on concepts of praxis, democracy, and critical consciousness in Islamic education is important. By understanding these concepts in depth and analysing the experiences and challenges in applying them in the context of Islamic education, we can identify strategies and approaches that can improve the quality of Islamic education and facilitate the formation of individuals who are critical, active, and committed to Islamic values.

DISCUSSION

1. Paulo Freire and the Concept of Praxis

Freire was basically a dialectical thinker. For him, the pairings between consciousness and world, theory and praxis, individual and society, criticism and possibility, educator and learner, all these binomials form a problematic but necessary relationship. This makes it possible to overcome reductionist conceptions of idealism and solipsism on the one hand and mechanism and objectivism on the other. The social and the individual cannot be considered as mutually exclusive concepts, but on the contrary, when formulating a theory of education, it would be appropriate to avoid rejection of social goals, which are concrete and material, such as excessive insistence on the development of individual consciousness. In understanding the role of objectivity, it is necessary to stimulate the development of the social dimension (Freire, 1989, p. 65).

Freire's thinking centres on the concept of critical consciousness. Freire argued that education that values critical consciousness is important in building a deeper understanding of social and political contexts, as well as enabling individuals to identify and address injustice and take transformational action. Freire described critical consciousness as an important path to liberation. Critical consciousness can be achieved through developing one's awareness, identity and dialectical relationship with world conditions. However, awareness alone is insufficient to

change the world. One must continue to act to change the world and combat dangerous and oppressive conditions (Tilsen, 2023, p. 144).

Freire also advocated a dialogic educational approach in which students and teachers engage in dialogue and reflection together (Assumpção & Castral, 2024, p. 264). He opposes authoritative and transmissive approaches to education, in which teachers fill students with knowledge without paying attention to students' experiences, perspectives, and needs. According to Freire (1978, p. 11), effective education should encourage students' active participation, value their experiences, and facilitate the process of critical understanding. Freire, through his work, teaches that genuine assistance involves a collaborative effort where both parties engage in a mutual process of transformation. This ensures that helping does not become a form of dominance by the helper over the person being helped.

The concept of praxis is also central to Freire's thinking. Freire used the term "praxis", which originates from Latin meaning "doing", to describe the process of reflection and action aimed at transforming existing structures (Freire, 2000b, p. 126). He emphasized the importance of connecting theory with practice in education. Praxis (Dines, 2023, p. 5) refers to reflective and transformative actions that enable students to apply their knowledge and understanding in real-life contexts. In Freire's educational approach, praxis is human reflection and action on the world in order to change it. Without praxis, it's impossible to overcome the oppressor-oppressed contradiction (Jandrić et al., 2023, p. 65). Freire saw education as a tool of liberation and social change (MacMaoilir & McGillicuddy, 2023, p. 1048). Freire believed that through education centres on critical consciousness, students could become active agents of change in fighting injustice, poverty and social inequality.

Freire argued that in contemporary systems of oppression, significant severe imbalances weaken people's collective ability to shape the future. For example, Freire (2000a, p. 22) talks about the "Scourge of neoliberalism, with its cynical fatalism and its inflexible

negation of the right to dreams differently, to dreams of utopia." Traditional dualism that separates mind and body as well as theory and practice prevent humans from realizing complete humanity. Freire viewed praxis as a way for oppressed individuals to link reflection and analysis with action. This process enables them to pursue their true purpose of humanization and become active "subjects" with the power to change oppressive systems (Smith, 2023, p. 2). Freire calls theory without action as "verbalism" and action without theory as "activism" (Giroux, 1985, p. xxxiii). He believed that everyone is an intellectual, but emphasized that intellectual work alone is insufficient. Freire (1985, p. 154) argued that humans do not transcend concrete situations, the conditions in which they find themselves, simply by their awareness or intentions. In this argument, Freire follows Karl Marx in his famous statement that philosophers simply interpret the world in different ways, but the real challenge is to change it (Marx, 2001, p. 7).

Freire's educational work has as its primary focus the liberation of adult illiteracy, identifying the transformative power within it can build a better world (Aguilera-Morales, 2023, p. 2). This is in line with Freire's idea that to be human also means to exist historically and possess the ability to intervene, act, judge, change and constantly recreate reality (Fernandes & Da Trindade, 2024, p. 2). For Freire, educating basically means learning as a human being (de Figuerêdo Cavalcanti, 2022, p. 156). Freire's thinking has made a significant contribution to the development of critical education and participatory approaches in education.

According to Freire, the concept of praxis in education refers to the close relationship between action and reflection. Praxis is a process in which individuals engage in concrete action, put into practice the knowledge and understanding gained, and at the same time, critically reflect on these actions to gain deeper understanding. Freire's critical consciousness follows a process of awareness that inspires concrete, direct, and living reality, which in the pedagogical process is the reality of the subject (Pinheiro & Pasquier, 2023, p. 90).

Freire opposed educational approaches that focused solely on the mechanical transfer of knowledge, where students were passive recipients of information. Freire often emphasized the need for a problem-based approach that allows teachers and students to create knowledge together by listening to each other, engaging in dialogue with others, and acting (Tireli & Jacobsen, 2023, pp. 56–57). Freire argued that effective education must involve students actively in praxis, encouraging them to engage in real action and apply knowledge in everyday life situations.

Praxis in education according to Freire does not only mean the practical application of acquired knowledge, but also involves critical reflection on these actions. Freire's concept of praxis emphasizes dialogue and critical reflection as key elements in interacting with media within the educational setting (Albardía et al., 2023, p. 179). Praxis in education according to Freire also means connecting theory with practice. In Freire's view, pedagogy involves the concept of praxis, where practice and reflection are interwoven. This approach allows teachers and students to co-construct knowledge throughout the teaching and learning process (Lopes & Carbinatto, 2023, p. 2).

Praxis can increase student motivation and involvement in learning (Pratama et al., 2019, p. 59). When students see the relevance and practical benefits of learning, they are more motivated to engage and learn actively (Guaya et al., 2023, p. 17). Praxis also gives students the opportunity to develop practical skills that they can apply in everyday life (Agbaje, 2023, p. 144). Praxis follows dialogism so that real change can follow from dialogue, by enabling individuals to identify problems, solve them, and use society’s resources (Mckenzie-Brook, 2023, p. 120). Thus, praxis plays an important role in effective learning by connecting knowledge with real experiences, strengthening understanding and skills, activating students, encouraging critical thinking, facilitating knowledge transfer, and increasing student motivation.

Freire's notion of praxis is inherently collective, encompassing both reflection and action. According to Aronowitz (2012, p. 259),

Freire aimed for collective self-transformation rather than individual advancement. Freire stressed the importance of dialogue as a means for people to reflect on, analyse their experiences, and collaboratively generate new knowledge. Freire (1974, p. 133) wrote that "Dialogue as a fundamental part of the structures of knowledge needs to be opened to other Subjects in the knowing process." In Freire's view of praxis, action is also a collective endeavor, as Freire (2000a, p. 77) argues that breakthroughs in new forms of consciousness in understanding the world are not the exclusive privilege of an individual or group. The experiences that enable breakthroughs are collective experiences.

2. Paulo Freire's Democracy in Education

In the context of education, Paulo Freire defines democracy as a fundamental principle that guides the learning process and interaction between students and educators. For Freire, democracy in education is not only about adopting a democratic political system, but also about creating a participatory, inclusive and egalitarian climate in the classroom or learning environment. In democratic education (von Kotze et al., 2016, p. 7), the space is arranged to allow everyone present to interact with one another as distinct yet equal individuals. In Freirean dialogue pedagogy (Thomas, 2022, p. 249), the most important thing is to create roles where teachers and students learn in a reciprocal dialectic.

Freire (Soeiro et al., 2022, p. 123) tells us that no one is superior to anyone. Democracy in education emphasizes the principle of equality between students and educators. Every individual is recognized as having equal value and the right to participate in the learning process. There is no dominant hierarchy, but there is cooperation and respect for the contribution of each individual. Learning activities are understood as critical activities that aim to reveal reality so that all of us (not only students but also educators) can position ourselves more clearly and critically in the environment. In the liberation model (Monteagudo, 2002, p. 52), the

content of educational programs is flexible, non-formalistic and subject to democratic discussion.

Democratic principles encourage the active participation of all members of the educational community. Students are encouraged to speak, share ideas, discuss, and be involved in making decisions that impact the learning process. This participation allows students to feel like they have a role in their learning. In education, educators and students act as knowing subjects, mediated by the knowable objects they wish to know (Freire, 1983, p. 16).

The principle of democracy in education involves transformative action, namely developing awareness and courage to change unjust social realities (Tidmarsh, 2022, p. 180). Through democratic education, students are encouraged to become active agents of change, recognize injustice, and work towards positive change in society. This is also supported by Freire's ideas as an educational practitioner who challenged traditional gaps in the production and dissemination of knowledge (Gandolfi, 2023, p. 160).

Freire saw democratic education as a means of developing critical consciousness and active citizenship. Freire's approach to critical pedagogy remains pertinent for encouraging active citizen participation, as active citizenship is crucial for the survival of democracy (Mayo & Ranford, 2023, p. 100). Through democratic education, students are encouraged to look critically at social, political and justice issues. They are invited to question injustice and social differences, and develop the ability to participate in positive social change.

Freire opposed education that only flows in one direction, where knowledge is only transferred from teacher to student passively. For him, democratic education involves dialogue, two-way communication, and respect for students' knowledge and experience. Teachers and students learn from each other, share knowledge, and contribute to each other in the learning process. Educators are also basically learners of pedagogical action (Carvalhos & Junior, 2022, p. 147).

Freire saw democratic education as a tool of liberation and emancipation (Cabey et al., 2024, p. 48). A democratic educational approach provides students with the opportunity to recognize, understand, and address social injustice and promote positive change in society. Democratic education aims to help students become active agents of change and contribute to building a more just society. Through a democratic approach to education, Freire hoped to create a society that was more inclusive, just, and based on the active participation of all individuals. Democracy and education complement each other, where democratic education empowers individuals to participate in the democratic process and strong democracy creates an environment that supports democratic education. In Freire's theory, empowerment is aimed at fostering critical and innovative thinking among individuals, rather than creating new individuals (Nascimento et al., 2023, p. 2).

Education can be viewed as a component of a democratic development project, involving both educators' political engagement and students' exploration of their own perspectives as forms of praxis. In this context, knowledge produced through popular education is meant to be collaboratively created rather than imposed. This new knowledge aims to enhance awareness and stimulate action for radical change (von Kotze & Walters, 2017, p. 110).

3. Critical Consciousness in Education

Critical consciousness, as understood by Freire, arises as a result of praxis (Orsini et al., 2022, p. 1). According to Freire, the concept of critical consciousness is an important foundation in the liberation education approach. Freire views critical consciousness as a critical understanding of social reality, which goes beyond the given truth and is able to see the injustice and oppression that occurs in society. Freire (1974, p. 22) views that when oppression occurs to the oppressed, the oppressed here actually only "accommodate" the oppression, rather than developing awareness to escape the

oppression. To overcome oppression, it is essential to develop critical consciousness.

The development of critical consciousness in education has a big role. Freire proposed principles and concepts for developing critical methodologies tailored to educational experiences, such as curricula, within specific contexts (Salinas et al., 2023, p. 24). By developing critical consciousness, individuals can understand the social context they face in more depth. They can understand the power structures, norms, values and injustices that exist in society, so they become more sensitive to social problems that affect their lives.

Freire's critical pedagogy incorporates the concepts of praxis and critical consciousness, enabling students and teachers to become active participants who can perceive reality, critically reflect on it, and take transformative actions to alter it (Quarmby & Luguetti, 2023, p. 278). Fostering critical consciousness in education encourages individuals to actively engage in the learning process. They are encouraged to participate in discussions, share opinions, and engage in creating knowledge together. This builds critical thinking, argumentation and collaboration skills, which are essential for self-development and social progress. Additionally, the development of critical consciousness in education helps individuals to recognize the perspectives of others and appreciate diversity. By understanding different points of view, individuals can build the capacity for empathy, mutual respect, and the ability to work together in an inclusive environment.

The importance of developing critical consciousness in education also lies in its aim to create positive social change. Individuals who have critical consciousness are more likely to be involved in change efforts, whether on a small or large scale. They become active agents of change, able to build social movements, and fight for justice and freedom. In addition, developing critical consciousness in education also helps individuals to understand the impact of their actions on themselves, others, and the environment. By questioning the motivations and implications of their actions,

individuals can develop a deeper understanding of the social consequences of individual and collective actions (Uchôa & Pasqualucci, 2023, p. 3). Fostering critical consciousness in education is also important because it encourages individuals to involve themselves in the lifelong learning process. With critical consciousness that continues to develop, individuals will continue to learn, explore, and adapt to changes in society.

Critical pedagogy is an educational philosophy in which knowledge is produced in dialogue with others (Olave et al., 2023, p. 3). Developing critical consciousness in education is an important step to free individuals from shackled thinking, fight for social justice, and create a more inclusive and democratic society. With critical consciousness, individuals become more aware of existing social realities, understand the context, and play an active role in shaping a better future (do Nascimento et al., 2023, p. 104).

4. Freire's Concepts of Praxis, Democracy and Critical Consciousness in Islamic Education

The concepts of praxis, democracy, and critical consciousness in Islamic education have significant potential to enhance the quality of education and foster an inclusive, critical, and just learning environment. Praxis emphasizes the importance of integrating theory with practice, so that students can link conceptual understanding with real experiences in their daily lives. In the context of Islamic education, praxis can mean linking religious teachings with the social realities faced by students. Freire believed that achieving a balance between theory and practice allows students to take informed actions (Gibson et al., 2023, p. 389). This approach can then be reflected upon and assessed for their impact at various levels, from the individual to the community and broader society. This ongoing interaction between reflection and action, which Freire described as praxis, aims to facilitate individual and community transformation (Wallerstein et al., 2005, p. 221).

Al-Ghazali highlighted the role of educators in Islamic education as guiding, improving, refining, and perfecting students. Al-Ghazali's views on science and education emphasize the need for a curriculum that aligns with Islamic principles and values, focusing on the spiritual and moral development of students (Suhaimi, 2019, p. 359). In contemporary discussions, the concept of praxis in Islamic education is also explored within the context of Islamic liberation theology. This theological perspective aims to liberate individuals and societies from oppression and injustice, emphasizing the role of education in fostering spiritual and social transformation.

Fethullah Gülen's views on praxis in Islamic education emphasize the integration of theoretical and practical aspects, focusing on the development of both spiritual and secular skills. Gülen's teachings and practices focus on the development of responsible and creative individuals who can apply Islamic values in their daily lives. He emphasizes the importance of teaching Islamic values and fostering a sense of responsibility among students (Fauzi & Hamami, 2022, p. 41).

Azyumardi Azra's views on praxis in Islamic education emphasize the integration of theoretical and practical aspects to ensure that education is both spiritually enriching and relevant to contemporary challenges. Azra advocates for modernizing Islamic education to align with the demands of the 21st century. He believes that Islamic education must incorporate modern educational methods and curricula to remain competitive and relevant. This includes integrating science and technology into the curriculum to foster both religious values and practical skills (Huda, 2019, p. 269). Azra's views on modernizing Islamic education are relevant to contemporary Islamic education. He emphasizes the need for Islamic education to adapt to current developments to remain effective in educating the younger generation. This includes renewing madrasas and universities and improving the quality of education.

The views of Al-Ghazali, Fethullah Gülen, and Azyumardi Azra regarding praxis in Islamic education show similarities in the

emphasis on integration between theory and practice, the development of moral character, and the importance of education as a tool for social and spiritual transformation. Although their contexts and methods differ, all three thinkers emphasize that meaningful Islamic education must produce individuals who are not only intellectually intelligent but also moral and spiritual in their daily actions.

In the era of globalization, Islamic education is faced with the challenge of remaining relevant and adaptive to rapid changes in global society. There is debate about how Islamic education can prepare students to become competent world citizens, maintain their Islamic identity, and understand global challenges such as technology, peace, and the environment. Some advocates of Islamic education propose an open and inclusive approach to facilitating intercultural and interreligious dialogue, while others place greater emphasis on the continuation of traditional Islamic values in a modern context. There is also an important debate regarding how best to integrate modern science and technology with Islamic values in the educational curriculum. Supporters of this integration, like Fethullah Gülen (2020, pp. 205–206), argue that education must prepare students to face global challenges by understanding and applying Islamic principles in everyday life. However, there are also those, like Ismail Raji' al-Faruqi (1997, pp. 13–14), who worry that this integration could lead to secularization or the loss of a strong Islamic identity. Therefore, an appropriate and balanced approach in integrating science with Islamic values remains an important focus. Gülen (2016b, p. 12) believes that there is no doubt that we need science and technology from the West. Meanwhile, al-Faruqi contributed to developing the concept of Islamization of knowledge, which aims to integrate Islamic principles with contemporary scientific disciplines. Al-Faruqi (1997, pp. 13–14) believes that modern science must be based on Islamic values to avoid secularization and moral disintegration. Al-Faruqi emphasized the importance of Islamic principles in education, politics and ethics. However, Gülen (2016a, p. 128) argues that science and technology

serve humanity and there is no serious reason to fear them. The danger is not in science and in building the world according to science; The dangers are ignorance, unawareness and avoiding responsibility.

To overcome challenges in the era of globalization, Islamic education needs to develop a balanced approach between maintaining traditional Islamic values and preparing students to face the complex modern world. This can be achieved by integrating modern science and technology in the educational curriculum, but by ensuring that such integration is carried out in the context of strong Islamic values such as justice, equality and ethics. Education must also emphasize the development of critical thinking skills, creativity, and social skills necessary to participate constructively in global society. Collaboration with educational experts, clerics, and local communities can help manage this integration in a way that enriches students' understanding of their Islamic identity while preparing them for global challenges such as technology, peace, and environmental sustainability. With this approach, Islamic education can remain relevant and empower students to become competent and ethical world citizens in an ever-changing global context.

Democracy in Islamic education refers to respect for freedom of opinion, active participation, and shared decision making in the learning environment. Freire's dialogic approach includes egalitarian, plural and democratic organizations that involve participants in all decision-making processes (Ruiz-Eugenio et al., 2023, p. 51). The implementation of democracy in Islamic education allows students to have a voice in the learning process, contribute to discussions, and develop an inclusive understanding of their religion and life. This helps create a fair environment, where every individual has the right to be respected and heard.

M. Athiyah al-Abrasyi states that Islamic education closely adheres to the ideals of freedom and democracy. Islam advocates for equal learning opportunities for all individuals, irrespective of their socioeconomic status or gender (Arwinsyah et al., 2022, pp. 364–365). This democratic approach ensures that education is freely

accessible, without any financial barriers, time constraints, requirements for diplomas or grades, or restrictive admission regulations.

The problem of democracy in Islamic education includes various aspects that need to be considered and addressed with strategic steps. One of the main problems is the gap in access to education caused by socio-economic inequality. Many children from low-income families lack access to quality education because of limited resources like schools, books, and technology, especially in remote or impoverished areas (Mashuri et al., 2023, p. 363). The solution is to increase investment in educational infrastructure, provide scholarships and financial assistance, and expand access to educational technology.

In addition, lack of teacher skills is also a significant problem. Many teachers do not have adequate training to implement participatory and democratic teaching methods. The solution that can be implemented is to provide continuous training programs for teachers and hold workshops, seminars and online courses to improve teacher competence in various aspects of education. Another method of implementing democracy in education is by fostering openness and open dialogue between teachers and students. The dialogic learning approach encourages active student participation, allowing them to develop critical skills. This approach forms the foundation of critical pedagogy (Nkealah & Simango, 2023, p. 73). Through constructive dialogue, students can develop a better understanding of Islamic teachings and relate them to contemporary issues. As Freire consistently reconsidered, broadened, and radicalized his educational approach throughout his life (Muraca, 2023, p. 36).

The concept of critical consciousness in Islamic education refers to students' ability to question, analyze and explore a deeper understanding of religious teachings and their socio-religious context. Implementing critical consciousness in Islamic education involves developing critical understanding of religious sources, contextual understanding, and deep reflection on social reality. This

helps students develop a broader, critical, and inclusive perspective on Islam and religious practices.

Current problems in critical consciousness in Islamic education include a lack of in-depth understanding of religious teachings, which is often caused by teaching methods that still focus on memorization rather than analytical thinking (BinTaleb, 2024, p. 17). In addition, there are challenges in integrating Islamic teachings with modern science and contemporary life, which makes it difficult for many students to apply Islamic values in a modern context (Maruf et al., 2024, p. 51). Dogmatism and fanaticism are also problems, where a lack of dialogue and critical understanding can trigger intolerance and conflict between religious communities (Agbaria, 2024, p. 1). A curriculum that is not flexible enough and does not support the development of critical thinking skills is also a big obstacle. In addition, many teachers have not been trained in teaching methods that encourage critical awareness, so learning is often monotonous and does not challenge students' thinking.

The solution includes overhauling teaching methods to place more emphasis on discussions, debates and case studies that encourage students to think critically and reflectively. The curriculum needs to be redesigned to support the development of critical awareness, with relevant and contextual material. Training for teachers is very important to improve their ability to teach critical and analytical thinking. Integrating Islamic teachings with modern science also needs to be emphasized, to help students understand the relevance of religious teachings in everyday life. This interdisciplinary approach can enrich their understanding and promote an objective scientific attitude. Dialogue and tolerance efforts must continue to be encouraged to overcome dogmatism and fanaticism, with education that emphasizes the values of pluralism and peace.

Implementation of the concepts of praxis, democracy, and critical consciousness in Islamic education provides opportunities for students to integrate religious teachings with their life experiences, understand the social and historical context of their

religion, and develop a critical and inclusive understanding of Islam. In Islamic education's context, this can be achieved through a collaborative learning approach, open dialogue, and active student participation. For Freire, education is communication, education is dialogue, education is a meeting of interlocutor subjects who seek meaning from meaning (Muraro, 2022, p. 158).

For Freire, education aims to improve the human condition (Melo, 2022, p. 176). In the realm of Islamic education, Islamic education that applies the concepts of praxis, democracy and critical consciousness can have a positive impact on students. They will become active actors in the learning process, building critical, reflective and analytical thinking skills, and understanding Islam as a religion that is relevant and inclusive in the contemporary social context.

Freire's concepts also provide opportunities to empower students in Islamic education. Through active student participation, developing critical understanding, and providing freedom of opinion, students can become active and responsible agents of change. Collaboration and open dialogue between teachers and students also need to be increased to help develop a deeper understanding of Islam and strengthen stronger relationships between teachers and students. Freire's educational thought states that we are part of a community and only with critical thinking can we improve it (Freitas, 2022, p. 164).

CONCLUSION

This research aims to explore the integration of the concepts of praxis, democracy and critical consciousness according to Paulo Freire in the context of Islamic education. The research problem centres on the incompatibility between traditional pedagogical approaches and the transformative educational practices advocated by Paulo Freire. Our main aim is to investigate how Freirean pedagogy can be aligned with the principles of Islamic education, identify the potential benefits of such integration in fostering

democratic values and critical consciousness among students, and provide practical recommendations for educators.

Findings from our research indicate that there is significant compatibility between Freire's pedagogical principles and core values in Islamic education. Freire's emphasis on dialogue, critical reflection, and action is closely aligned with Islamic teachings that encourage knowledge, justice, and community involvement. By integrating Freirean praxis, Islamic educational institutions can transform from traditional didactic models into dynamic spaces where students actively participate in the learning process, engage critically with their socio-cultural context, and develop a deep sense of agency and responsibility.

Our research also reveals that creating a democratic environment in Islamic education strengthens students' critical consciousness. This transformation allows students to question and challenge oppressive structures and ideologies, thereby aligning with Islamic principles to call for goodness and prevent evil. Additionally, the application of Freire's dialogic method encourages mutual respect, collaborative learning, and a deeper understanding of diverse perspectives, all of which are critical to cultivating a just and equal society.

To address the research problem, we propose that Islamic educational institutions adopt a more critical and reflective pedagogical approach. Educators must be trained in Freirean methods to create learning environments where critical thinking and dialogue are central. Additionally, curriculum development should integrate opportunities for students to engage in social action projects that reflect Freirean and Islamic educational goals.

In conclusion, the integration of Freire's praxis with Islamic education offers a promising pathway to foster critical consciousness and democratic values among students. This research emphasizes the importance of revising Islamic educational practices to better prepare students to face the complexities of contemporary life while remaining faithful to their religious and cultural heritage. By adopting Freirean principles, Islamic education can become a

powerful vehicle for social transformation, empowering students to make meaningful contributions to their communities and society at large.

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