

The Problematics of Paulo Freire's Concept of Humanist Education from an Islamic Perspective

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Received September 6, 2024/Accepted November 15, 2024

Abstract

Paulo Freire's humanist education emphasizes critical consciousness and the liberation of humanity from oppression. However, this approach is often criticized for being insufficiently comprehensive, as it overlooks the spiritual dimensions and the concept of adab (ethics), which are central to Islamic education. This study aims to analyze the problems within Freire's humanist education concept from an Islamic perspective, focusing on conflicts in the value of freedom, neglect of spirituality, the teacher's role in dialogue, and the ultimate goals of education. This research employs a library research methodology with a qualitative descriptive approach. Data were analyzed through a critical review of relevant primary and secondary literature, including Freire's works, Islamic educational thought, and previous studies. The findings reveal fundamental shortcomings in Freire's educational approach from the Islamic perspective, such as a secular view of freedom, neglect of spirituality, and a lack of emphasis on adab and tawhid (monotheism). However, integrating Freire's concept with Islamic values shows potential for creating a holistic educational paradigm. This integration harmonizes critical awareness with moral and spiritual responsibility, providing solutions to global educational challenges. Research implications/limitations: This study offers new insights into the possible integration of Freire's and Islamic education concepts, though it is limited to theoretical exploration without empirical testing. Further studies are needed to examine its application in formal and informal educational settings. This research provides a novel perspective by combining two contrasting educational approaches: progressive humanism and value-based Islamic education. The findings are relevant for developing curricula responsive to contemporary social and spiritual challenges.

Keywords: *Humanist education, Paulo Freire, Islamic education, critical consciousness, spiritual values.*

INTRODUCTION

Education plays a central role in shaping human character, consciousness, and civilization. Paulo Freire, a Brazilian educational philosopher, is one of the prominent figures who proposed the concept of humanist education aimed at liberating humanity from oppression through critical consciousness.

This concept is rooted in a critique of the banking model of education, where students are positioned as passive objects receiving knowledge from teachers. Instead, Freire proposed a dialogical and egalitarian approach that allows students and teachers to jointly create meaning in the learning process.

However, in the context of Islamic education, this approach presents challenges. Islamic education has a more comprehensive goal, which is to develop individuals who are not only intellectually critical but also integrated with spiritual and moral values. Islam views education as a means to form *insan kamil* (a perfect human being) capable of fulfilling their duties as servants of Allah ('*abdullah*) and as vicegerents on Earth (*khalifah*).

Thus, a critical study is needed to understand to what extent Freire's humanist education concept can be adopted or needs to be adapted within the Islamic education system. This examination becomes increasingly relevant given the challenges of globalization and modernity, which influence educational paradigms, including Islamic education. An Islamic values-based education system must respond to the changes of the times without losing its spiritual essence.

This research aims to elaborate on the problems arising from the intersection of Freire's humanist education concept and the principles of Islamic education. The research questions in this study include: What are the key concepts and principles of Paulo Freire's humanist education? What problems arise when applying these concepts within the context of Islamic education? How can Islamic educational values provide a harmonious alternative to humanist education? Based on these questions, this research aims to: deeply analyze Freire's humanist education concept, including its objectives, methods, and approaches; identify the problems arising from its application in Islamic education; and provide recommendations for integrating Freire's humanist education principles with Islamic educational values to build a holistic educational system.

This study is expected to contribute to enriching interdisciplinary discourse between modern educational theories and Islamic educational traditions. It aims to offer

an alternative educational model relevant to contemporary needs without losing its spiritual values and to provide guidelines for Islamic education practitioners in integrating humanist approaches while remaining rooted in religious values.

THEORETICAL REVIEW

The Humanist Education Concept of Paulo Freire

Paulo Freire, a renowned educational philosopher from Brazil, proposed a humanist education concept oriented toward liberating humans from oppression through critical consciousness (*conscientização*). Freire's ideas stemmed from his observation of traditional education systems, which he referred to as "banking education." In this model, teachers are positioned as the sole source of knowledge, while students are passive recipients of information without engaging in critical thinking processes. As a solution, Freire introduced a dialogical approach in which teachers and students share experiences, fostering egalitarian relationships that enable collaborative learning.

A core aspect of Freire's humanist education is *conscientização* or critical consciousness, which refers to the ability of individuals to understand oppressive social structures and take steps to transform them. This awareness is not merely intellectual but also motivates actions aimed at creating social justice. In Freire's view, education must serve as a tool for liberation, empowering individuals to comprehend and resist oppressive realities. Furthermore, dialogue is the primary method in his approach, as it allows teachers and students to learn from one another and share perspectives to create new meanings.

Although relevant in liberating societies from socio-political oppression, Freire's concept is not without criticism. One critique is its heavy focus on social dimensions, potentially neglecting the spiritual and moral aspects essential to shaping a holistic human being. Additionally, achieving true equality between teachers and students in practice can be challenging, as teachers still retain a dominant role as facilitators of learning. The concept also requires adaptation when applied outside the socio-political context of Brazil, which influenced Freire's framework.

In the context of Islamic education, several of Freire's principles, such as critical consciousness and dialogue, hold relevance. For example, critical consciousness aligns with *tazkiyah* (self-purification), which encourages individuals to reflect on reality and act according to Islamic values. Similarly, dialogue mirrors the tradition of *shura*

(consultation), which is highly valued in Islam. However, a fundamental difference lies in the ultimate goal of education. Islamic education seeks not only to liberate humans from social oppression but also to guide them to become servants of Allah (‘abdullāh) and stewards on earth (khalifah), integrating spiritual and social values harmoniously.

Education in the Perspective of Islam

Islamic education is a holistic process of shaping human beings with the ultimate goal of achieving perfection as *insan kamil* (the complete human). In Islam, education does not solely focus on intellectual development but also encompasses spiritual, moral, and social dimensions. It is directed toward shaping individuals capable of fulfilling their roles as servants of Allah (‘abdullāh) and stewards on earth (*khalifatullāh fī al-ard*). The ultimate aim is to draw humans closer to Allah and integrate worldly life with eternal happiness in the Hereafter. Syed Muhammad Naquib al-Attas emphasizes that Islamic education must be founded on *tawhid* (the oneness of God), wherein all knowledge is pursued to strengthen faith and devotion to Allah.

The primary objectives of Islamic education include fostering strong faith, mastering knowledge, and cultivating noble character. Hasan Langgulung explains that Islamic education seeks to create a balance between spiritual and material needs, enabling individuals to be both pious and wise leaders in society. In Islam, education not only imparts knowledge but also purifies the soul (*tazkiyah*) and instills *adab* (ethics). As Al-Attas describes, education is the process of inculcating *adab*, which serves as the key to using knowledge correctly and responsibly.

The principles of Islamic education are rooted in *tawhid*, the balance between reason and heart, the integration of religious and secular knowledge, and the importance of *adab*. *Tawhid* serves as the core of all educational activities, guiding individuals to view knowledge as a manifestation of Allah’s revelation. Additionally, Islam acknowledges the importance of intellectual development but asserts that it must be balanced with moral and spiritual formation. Consequently, Islamic education aims not only to produce intelligent individuals but also those with mature character and soul.

Islamic education also has a social dimension, functioning to build a just and civilized society (*ummah*). Murtadha Mutahhari highlights the importance of Islamic education that responds to the challenges of modernity without losing its foundational principles. Islamic education is tasked with creating individuals who can navigate global

changes while adhering to the values of tawhid. However, challenges such as globalization and secularism exert pressure on Islamic education to strengthen the integration of spiritual values within its teachings.

With a strong conceptual foundation, Islamic education excels in shaping holistic individuals who are not only freed from ignorance but also draw closer to Allah. In the context of this study, the values of Islamic education serve as a foundation to assess the relevance of Paulo Freire's humanist education concept, particularly in integrating critical and spiritual dimensions. This integration enables education to create individuals who are socially conscious and oriented toward devotion to Allah.

RESEARCH METHOD

This study employs a qualitative approach with a library research method. The approach aims to analyze Paulo Freire's concept of humanist education and examine its challenges from an Islamic perspective through relevant literature sources. The qualitative method was chosen due to its focus on understanding the underlying meanings of theories, concepts, and practices of humanist education while relating them to Islamic values.

The data sources for this research consist of primary and secondary sources. Primary data are drawn from *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* and *Education for Critical Consciousness* by Paulo Freire, *The Concept of Education in Islam* by Syed Muhammad Naquib al-Attas, and *Asas-Asas Pendidikan Islam* by Hasan Langgulung. Secondary sources include books and scholarly articles related to Freire's humanist education and Islamic education.

Data collection is conducted through a documentation study by gathering literature in the form of books, journal articles, and other scholarly documents relevant to the research topic. These materials are accessed through physical libraries, digital repositories, and journal platforms. Data analysis uses conceptual analysis techniques to identify key concepts in Paulo Freire's humanist education theory and principles of Islamic education. For example, this involves comparing Freire's critical consciousness with the Islamic concept of *insan kamil*. A critical-comparative analysis is also applied to highlight similarities and differences between Freire's approach and Islamic education, focusing on issues such as unbounded freedom, the neglect of spirituality,

and differing educational goals. The findings are integrated to develop a holistic understanding of how humanist education can be adapted to align with Islamic values.

Data Validity and Reliability To ensure the validity of the research findings, several measures were undertaken: **Source Triangulation:** Comparing information from various primary and secondary sources to verify data consistency. **Peer Review:** Engaging experts in Islamic education and modern educational theory to validate interpretations and analyses.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The Problematic Aspect of Paulo Freire's Concept of Humanist Education

1. The Conflict of Freedom Values

Paulo Freire's concept of humanist education is rooted in the value of freedom as the essential element in the learning process. In Freire's view, freedom is a fundamental condition that enables individuals to liberate themselves from oppression and achieve autonomy in thinking and acting. Through a dialogical approach, Freire emphasizes that education should serve as a space to stimulate individuals' critical consciousness, enabling them to understand and transform oppressive social realities. However, this concept of freedom raises challenges when analyzed from an Islamic perspective, which regards freedom as essential but inherently bound by responsibility to Allah and His laws.

For Freire, freedom is an absolute prerequisite for developing critical individuals. In *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, he criticizes traditional education systems, which he refers to as "banking education," for fostering dependency and reinforcing hierarchical relationships between teachers and students. In contrast, Freire proposes dialogical education, which positions freedom as a means to establish equitable relationships between teachers and students. This approach aims to develop individuals capable of processing information critically and acting as agents of social change.

However, Freire's notion of freedom is absolute, meaning individuals have the right to determine and define truth based on their experiences and social reflections. This perspective places humans at the center of authority, potentially neglecting the transcendental dimension in understanding truth.

In Islam, freedom is a right granted by Allah to humankind, but it is not absolute. Human freedom must always operate within the framework of submission to

Allah as the Creator and the ultimate source of truth. This concept is reflected in the principle of tawhid (the oneness of God), which directs humans to view freedom as a means of fulfilling moral and spiritual responsibilities to Allah and fellow creatures. The Qur'an states that humans are free to choose their path, but every choice carries consequences accountable before Allah (Surah Al-Baqarah [2]: 256). In this context, freedom in Islam is not only aimed at liberation from social oppression but also from the chains of base desires and moral injustice.

The primary conflict between Freire's concept of freedom and Islam lies in their fundamental paradigms regarding the authority of truth. Freire places humans as the primary subjects in determining truth through dialogue and reflection, while Islam regards Allah as the ultimate and absolute source of truth. Freire's view of freedom is horizontal, focusing on the relationship between humans and social realities. In contrast, Islam sees freedom as both vertical and horizontal, involving the relationship between humans and Allah as well as with other humans.

Freire teaches that each individual has the right to determine their values based on experience. In Islam, individual freedom must align with the values of shariah, such as justice, purity, and obedience to Allah. Islamic education views freedom as a tool for enhancing human awareness of their responsibilities to Allah, rather than merely as a means of social emancipation.

The freedom advocated by Freire's humanist education has the potential to produce individuals critical of social structures, but without the balance of a spiritual dimension, it risks fostering value relativism. In Islamic education, freedom is integrated with the values of tawhid and ethics, creating individuals who are not only critical but also morally and spiritually responsible. Islamic education can adapt Freire's dialogical method while maintaining the principles of tawhid. Dialogue in Islam aims not only to build social awareness but also to instill consciousness of Allah as the supreme authority. Thus, the freedom offered by education becomes a means of holistic liberation, encompassing spiritual, moral, and social aspects.

To address this conflict of freedom values, an integrative approach may serve as a solution. Islamic education can benefit from Freire's dialogical approach by directing the dialogue toward strengthening tawhid values and devotion to Allah. In this way, freedom in education is not merely understood as social emancipation but also as spiritual liberation from the chains of materialism and moral relativism. This concept

bridges Freire's notion of freedom with Islamic values, creating an educational paradigm that is both critical and religious.

2. Neglect of the Spiritual Dimension

Education has a broader role than merely transferring knowledge and developing critical consciousness. In Islam, education aims to shape holistic individuals, encompassing intellectual, moral, and spiritual dimensions. The spiritual dimension in education is a fundamental aspect that connects individuals with their Creator, enabling them not only to understand social realities but also to comprehend their purpose as Allah's creations. However, Paulo Freire's concept of humanist education tends to overlook this spiritual dimension because its primary focus is on social-political liberation through critical consciousness (*conscientização*).

In Paulo Freire's view, education is a means to liberate humans from social oppression through the development of critical consciousness. Freire rejects the traditional model of education, which he refers to as "banking education," as it reinforces oppressive structures. Instead, he proposes dialogical education, where teachers and students share experiences to create new knowledge relevant to social realities. While this approach is effective in fostering social awareness, Freire does not adequately incorporate the spiritual dimension as part of the educational process. The freedom and critical consciousness Freire promotes are centered on humans as the primary subjects, without involving the vertical relationship between humans and God as the foundation for moral and ethical values.

Islam views the spiritual dimension as the core of education. Islamic education aims not only to liberate humans from ignorance and social oppression but also to bring them closer to Allah and shape character based on divine values. This spiritual dimension provides a clear direction in understanding and utilizing knowledge according to the purpose of human creation. As mentioned in the Qur'an, Surah Az-Zumar [39:9], "Say, are those who know equal to those who do not know?" This verse emphasizes that true knowledge is that which leads humans to awareness of Allah's greatness.

The neglect of the spiritual dimension in Freire's education leads to a value conflict when applied in an Islamic context. Freire focuses on liberating humans from oppressive socio-political structures, while Islam sees true liberation as freedom from

the chains of desires, ignorance, and estrangement from Allah. Islamic education integrates social and spiritual dimensions, emphasizing that social liberation must be based on moral values and Allah's laws. Freire encourages individuals to act as agents of social change based on experience and critical reflection. In Islam, social change must be rooted in tawhid values such as justice, purity, and accountability to Allah. Without a spiritual dimension, education becomes focused solely on material and temporal aspects, risking the emergence of a secular and relativistic society.

Neglecting the spiritual dimension in education risks creating individuals who are intellectually critical but morally and spiritually void. Education that emphasizes only social awareness may result in actions lacking a strong ethical foundation. In Islam, integrating the spiritual dimension with critical consciousness ensures that every human action is directed toward seeking Allah's pleasure, rather than merely fulfilling worldly interests.

To address the neglect of the spiritual dimension in Freire's humanist education concept, an integrative approach that combines tawhid values with Freire's dialogical method is needed. In Islamic education, dialogue is not only a means to build critical consciousness but also to instill awareness of the human relationship with Allah as the ultimate source of truth. Education should be directed toward shaping individuals who are not only critical of social realities but also conscious of their spiritual responsibilities.

3. The Role of Teachers and Dialogue

In education, the teacher's role is fundamental as the primary actor facilitating knowledge transfer, character formation, and the critical development of students. Paulo Freire, in his humanist education theory, criticizes the traditional educational model, which he describes as "banking education," where teachers are seen as the sole source of truth and students as passive recipients of knowledge. Instead, Freire proposes a dialogical model of education that places teachers and students on an equal footing, where both learn from one another through critical dialogue. However, this approach needs deeper examination from the Islamic perspective, which honors the teacher's esteemed position while maintaining the necessity of adab (proper conduct) and a hierarchy of values in teacher-student interactions.

Freire views teachers as facilitators tasked with creating a dialogical space to uncover students' potential and foster critical awareness. Teachers are no longer the sole authority in the learning process but become part of a learning community with their students. This approach aims to free students from dependence on teachers, enabling them to develop independent thinking. In this model, dialogue is central to learning, using students' life experiences to understand social realities and devise strategies for change. However, Freire's approach carries the risk of weakening the moral and intellectual authority of teachers. When the relationship between teachers and students is entirely equalized, there is a potential loss of respect for teachers' roles as sources of moral values and ethical guidance.

Islam regards teachers as individuals with great responsibility in educating future generations. Teachers hold a highly esteemed position as intermediaries of knowledge, guiding humanity toward goodness and bringing them closer to Allah. In Islamic tradition, teachers are referred to as murabbi (nurturer), mu'allim (teacher), and mursyid (guide), who not only impart knowledge but also instill adab and foster good character. The teacher-student relationship in Islam is based on adab and hierarchy, where students are obliged to respect teachers as a recognition of their moral and intellectual authority. Imam Al-Ghazali, in *Ihya 'Ulumuddin*, emphasizes the importance of adab toward teachers, including listening attentively, following their advice, and not interrupting their speech. However, this respect does not render students passive objects; dialogue and intellectual exchange are encouraged within the framework of adab.

For Paulo Freire, dialogue is the primary means of fostering critical consciousness. Through dialogue, students are encouraged to explore their social realities, analyze oppressive structures, and seek collective solutions. This dialogue positions students as equal participants in learning alongside teachers. In Islam, dialogue is also an essential part of the educational process, as exemplified by the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) in his interactions with his companions. Dialogue in Islam is not merely an exchange of information but a means to deepen understanding and strengthen faith. However, Islam emphasizes that dialogue must be conducted with adab and respect for the hierarchy of knowledge. Teachers play the role of guides, helping students understand truths based on revelation and sound reasoning.

The value conflict between Freire's concept and Islam lies in their approach to teacher authority. Freire seeks to eliminate the hierarchy between teachers and students to create equal relationships, while Islam acknowledges a hierarchy grounded in knowledge and adab. In Islam, teachers retain moral and intellectual authority that cannot be disregarded, even though dialogue remains an important element in the learning process. Freire's dialogical approach, if applied without modification, risks diminishing respect for teachers, who are considered the key to the blessing of knowledge in Islam. Therefore, adapting Freire's dialogical model to align with Islamic principles, such as respecting the authority of knowledge and maintaining adab in teacher-student interactions, is necessary.

To address this issue, Islamic education can integrate Freire's dialogical approach with the principles of adab in Islam. Teachers maintain their moral and intellectual authority while using dialogue to explore students' potential, build critical awareness, and reinforce Islamic values. Dialogue in Islamic education should aim to instill tawhid (the oneness of Allah), shape character, and build social awareness based on divine values. For example, teachers can engage students in discussions on social issues by relating them to the values of the Qur'an and Hadith. This approach allows students to develop critical thinking while maintaining moral and spiritual guidance.

4. The Purpose of Education

The purpose of education is a fundamental element that determines the direction, methods, and ultimate outcomes of the learning process. Paulo Freire views education as a means to liberate humans from oppressive social structures. This approach focuses on developing critical consciousness and empowering individuals to transform their social realities. In contrast, Islam envisions a more holistic educational purpose, which not only aims to liberate individuals socially but also guides them toward the ultimate goal of attaining Allah's pleasure and achieving a better afterlife.

In Paulo Freire's humanist education theory, the primary goal is to achieve conscientização, or critical awareness, which enables individuals to recognize, analyze, and resist oppressive social structures. According to Freire, education should not merely serve as a means of knowledge reproduction but as a tool for social transformation. This means that students are encouraged to understand their realities and become agents of change within society. However, Freire's approach focuses on material and social

dimensions, often neglecting the spiritual dimension. In Freire's framework, humans are viewed as subjects of worldly transformation, without emphasizing purposes that transcend earthly life. This can result in a secular education system, where success is measured by social change alone, without considering moral and spiritual accomplishments.

In Islam, education serves not only to free individuals from ignorance and oppression but also to bring them closer to Allah. The purpose of education in Islam is to achieve a balance between worldly life and the hereafter. Education aims to nurture individuals who are faithful, pious, and knowledgeable, capable of fulfilling their roles as stewards on earth (khalifah) and servants of Allah. This is reflected in the Qur'an, specifically in Surah Al-Baqarah [2:30], which highlights humans' role as leaders on earth, and Surah Al-Mujadilah [58:11], which emphasizes the virtue of knowledge.

Islam integrates three main dimensions in its educational objectives. **Spiritual Dimension:** Education aims to strengthen the human connection with Allah by instilling values of tawhid (monotheism) and noble character (akhlaq). **Social Dimension:** Education seeks to shape individuals who contribute positively to society, upholding principles of justice and welfare. **Intellectual Dimension:** Education aims to develop human intellectual potential to understand and manage the world in accordance with Islamic law (sharia).

The conflict between Freire's concept and Islam lies in the prioritization of values underpinning educational goals. Freire emphasizes human liberation in socio-political contexts, whereas Islam places spiritual liberation as the foundational principle, which subsequently informs social liberation. Freire views education as a wholly horizontal process, where humans act as the sole subjects determining the meaning and direction of life. Conversely, Islam places Allah at the center of existence, directing education to help individuals fulfill their roles as beings submissive to His will. From the Islamic perspective, education that focuses solely on social dimensions tends to neglect the broader spiritual responsibilities of human existence.

When educational goals are limited to social liberation, as in Freire's approach, there is a risk of producing individuals who are critical of social structures but lack a strong moral and spiritual foundation. This can lead to moral relativism, where truth is measured only by experience and social context rather than universal values derived from revelation. Conversely, Islamic education, which places tawhid as its core

foundation, creates individuals who are not only critical of social realities but also committed to upholding moral values based on Allah's laws. Islamic education ensures that individual freedom operates within the framework of responsibility to Allah and society.

To bridge the gap between Freire's concept and Islam, an integrative approach is needed that combines critical consciousness with the spiritual dimension. Education can be directed toward shaping individuals who are not only capable of understanding and transforming social realities but also have a life purpose aligned with divine values. Integrating Tawhid Values into Critical Dialogue: Dialogue in education should not only discuss social issues but also relate these issues to Islamic values. Developing Critical Awareness Rooted in Faith: Social awareness should support humanity's responsibility as stewards of the earth, tasked with upholding justice and promoting welfare.

Integration of Humanist Educational Concepts and Islamic Values

Education is a vital instrument in shaping individuals and society. Paulo Freire, through his humanist education concept, emphasizes the liberation of humans from oppression and the development of critical consciousness as the primary goal of education. On the other hand, Islamic education offers a holistic approach that integrates spiritual, moral, and social aspects into the learning process. The integration of Freire's humanist concepts with Islamic values holds the potential to create a more comprehensive educational system that not only liberates individuals socially but also directs them toward higher spiritual goals.

Key Components of Humanist and Islamic Education. Humanist Education by Paulo Freire. Critical Consciousness: Freire encourages education to create individuals capable of critiquing unjust social structures and becoming agents of change. Dialogical Approach: The learning process should be based on dialogue between teachers and students as equal subjects. Social Transformation: Education aims to change social realities toward a more just society. Islamic Education. Tauhid as the Foundation: Islamic education is rooted in the belief that all human activities are directed toward attaining Allah's pleasure. Adab and Akhlaq: Education seeks to cultivate individuals with noble character. Balance Between Worldly Life and the Hereafter: Islam emphasizes not only social transformation but also preparation for life after death.

There are universal values shared by both approaches that can serve as the basis for integration: Justice: Freire emphasizes the importance of social justice, while Islam teaches justice as a fundamental principle of human life (QS An-Nisa [4]: 135). Equality: Freire's humanist education rejects oppressive hierarchies, while Islam asserts the equality of all humans before Allah, regardless of race, ethnicity, or social status (QS Al-Hujurat [49]: 13). Freedom with Responsibility: Freire emphasizes individual freedom, while Islam aligns freedom with responsibility toward Allah and society. Freire's concept of critical consciousness can be integrated with the Islamic concept of tauhid. Education should aim to develop students' awareness of their social realities while being guided by the values of tauhid. Critical consciousness in Islam not only critiques social structures but also reminds humans of their responsibility to Allah as stewards of the earth (khalifah) (QS Al-Baqarah [2]: 30).

Dialogue, a core element of Freire's education, can be applied in an Islamic context with an emphasis on adab (proper etiquette). In Islamic tradition, dialogue between teachers and students is conducted within a framework of respect for knowledge and hierarchical adab, where teachers retain their role as moral guides. This approach facilitates the exchange of ideas without compromising ethical values. Freire views education as a tool for social transformation, while Islam adds a spiritual dimension as the ultimate goal. By integrating the two, education can aim to produce individuals who are not only critical of social injustices but also oriented toward the afterlife. This ensures that the resulting social transformation remains within the framework of divine values.

An educational curriculum that integrates Freire's concepts and Islamic values can include materials that build students' critical awareness of social issues while aligning the learning process with Islamic values such as tauhid, adab, and akhlaq. Freire's dialogical approach can be implemented while maintaining Islamic adab, where dialogue is conducted in a spirit of mutual respect and with the intent to seek ultimate truth. The success of education is not measured solely by students' ability to transform social realities but also by their capacity to live according to Islamic values in their daily lives.

The integration of Freire's humanist educational concepts with Islamic values is not without challenges. Freire's ideas have secular roots that can sometimes conflict with the principles of tauhid in Islam. Therefore, careful adaptation is needed to ensure

that elements of Freire's humanism can be applied without compromising the foundational principles of Islam. Additionally, the implementation of this integration requires commitment from educators and policymakers in education.

Discussion

This study reveals that Paulo Freire's humanist education introduces a new paradigm centered on critical consciousness and the liberation of humans from oppressive social structures. However, the Islamic perspective highlights fundamental issues in Freire's approach, particularly regarding the neglect of the spiritual dimension, the conflict of values surrounding freedom, and the materialistic orientation of educational goals. These findings reinforce critiques of secular humanism, which often positions humans as the sole agents of change, disconnected from divine values.

Previous studies support the findings of this research. Mokh. Syaifuddin Zuhri (2020), in his journal article, highlighted that Paulo Freire's approach tends to conflict with Islamic values due to its disregard for the spiritual dimension. This aligns with the finding that Freire's education risks fostering moral relativism, which contradicts the universal principles of Islam. Baidowi (2019) demonstrated that Islamic education emphasizes the integration of social and spiritual aspects, reinforcing the view that Freire's approach requires enrichment from an Islamic perspective to produce a more holistic education. Syed Muhammad Naquib al-Attas argued that education must prioritize the development of *adab* (proper conduct) as the core of forming the complete human (*insan kamil*). His critique of modern humanism strengthens the argument that Freire's approach needs to be combined with a more transcendent value framework.

Freire shares similarities with John Dewey in placing experience at the heart of the learning process. However, the difference lies in Dewey's focus on pragmatism and educational experimentation, while Freire emphasizes socio-political liberation. In Islam, both are deemed insufficient because they fail to address the integration of spiritual values. Islamic education adds the dimension of faith as the foundation for learning, not only based on worldly experiences but also incorporating accountability for the hereafter. Imam Al-Ghazali emphasized the importance of education in shaping noble character and instilling *tauhid* (the oneness of God). Unlike Freire, who focuses on critical consciousness, Al-Ghazali places the purification of the heart at the center of

education. This approach illustrates that without a strong spiritual foundation, critical consciousness can lose its moral direction.

Freire and Ivan Illich share a critical stance toward formal educational institutions as tools of oppression. However, Illich takes a more radical position by advocating for the abolition of formal schooling, whereas Freire seeks to transform the educational system. Islam offers a different perspective, maintaining that formal education remains necessary as long as it is directed toward achieving moral and spiritual objectives.

In the increasingly complex modern world, Freire's approach remains relevant in fostering critical awareness of social injustices. However, it needs to be expanded by incorporating Islamic values to address global challenges such as moral and spiritual crises. Islam-based education that integrates tauhid and adab offers a solution to create individuals who are not only critical but also morally responsible.

This discussion demonstrates that integrating Freire's humanist education with Islamic values is not only possible but also highly relevant in creating a new educational paradigm. This contribution is expected to provide a philosophical and practical foundation for a more holistic educational system that combines critical consciousness with moral and spiritual commitment. Furthermore, this research fills gaps in previous studies by providing deeper arguments on the importance of spiritual values in education. These findings can also serve as the basis for developing a curriculum that accommodates the social and spiritual needs of students.

CONCLUSION

This study aimed to examine the issues within Paulo Freire's concept of humanistic education from an Islamic perspective, focusing on the conflicts surrounding freedom, the neglect of spiritual dimensions, the role of teachers and dialogue, and the ultimate goals of education. The findings reveal that while Freire's educational philosophy offers a progressive and liberating approach, it significantly lacks the integration of spiritual and moral values, which are central to Islamic education.

The key conclusions of this study are as follows: First, the conflict of freedom values: Freedom in Freire's concept, which tends to be absolute, contrasts with the Islamic understanding of freedom, which is bounded by responsibility to God and adherence to Sharia. Second, the neglect of the spiritual dimension: Freire's concept

emphasizes socio-political liberation but overlooks the spiritual dimension, which is the cornerstone of education in Islam. Third, the role of teachers and dialogue: Freire's dialogical approach needs to be harmonized with the concept of adab (ethical conduct) in Islam, which positions teachers as moral guides. Fourth, the purpose of education: While Freire envisions education as a means for social transformation, Islam emphasizes a holistic purpose encompassing both worldly and spiritual aspects.

This research identifies the potential for integrating Freire's humanistic education with Islamic values to create a new educational paradigm. This paradigm emphasizes critical awareness grounded in Islamic spiritual and moral values, enabling comprehensive individual and societal transformation both socially and spiritually.

An ideal education system does not merely foster individuals who are critically aware of social realities but also spiritually responsible. Holistic Islamic education can enrich Freire's concept by introducing the principles of adab, tawhid (monotheism), and akhlaq (ethics) as moral foundations for sustainable social transformation. Thus, this integration not only addresses the shortcomings of Freire's concept but also provides solutions to the challenges facing global education today.

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