
	<p>Solo Universal Journal of Islamic Education and Multiculturalism E-ISSN: 2988-3520 Vol.3, No.3, 2025, pp. 411-426 DOI: https://doi.org/10.61455/sujjem.v3i03.509</p>	
<p>Received June 16, 2025</p>	<p>Revised November 03, 2025</p>	<p>Accepted December 02, 2025</p>

Islamic Education and Freirean Critical Pedagogy: Reconstructing Justice and Liberation in Multicultural Contexts

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Abstract

Objective: This study seeks to examine how Paulo Freire’s theory of critical pedagogy can be reinterpreted through the lens of Islamic educational philosophy in order to promote justice, emancipation, and transformative learning in modern education. Specifically, it explores the alignment between Freirean concepts of dialogue, conscientization, and the rejection of the “banking model” of education and key Islamic educational values such as tarbiyah, ‘adl, and shura. **Theoretical framework:** The study is grounded in Paulo Freire’s critical pedagogy and Islamic educational philosophy. Freire’s framework emphasizes education as a practice of freedom aimed at raising critical consciousness and challenging oppression, while Islamic educational philosophy stresses moral formation, social justice, community responsibility, and spiritual development. **Literature review:** Existing scholarship on critical pedagogy highlights Freire’s influence on emancipatory education, social justice, and resistance to hegemonic power structures. Meanwhile, literature on Islamic education emphasizes holistic human development, ethical responsibility, and communal well-being. **Method:** This study employs a qualitative methodology based on literature review and textual analysis. Key writings by Paulo Freire are compared with classical and contemporary Islamic educational texts to identify convergences and divergences in their philosophical foundations, pedagogical aims, and approaches to justice and emancipation. **Results:** The findings indicate that Islamic educational philosophy offers a liberatory framework that complements and deepens Freire’s critical pedagogy. Islamic concepts provide a spiritual and ethical foundation that reinforces Freire’s emphasis on dialogue, critical awareness, and social transformation, while also addressing moral formation and communal responsibility. **Implications:** The study underscores the potential of integrating Islamic educational philosophy with Freirean pedagogy to enhance critical consciousness, promote justice, and foster community empowerment. Such integration can support educators in developing transformative educational practices rooted in ethics, spirituality, and social responsibility. **Novelty:** The novelty of this study lies in its interdisciplinary synthesis of critical pedagogy and Islamic educational philosophy, offering an alternative model of transformative education that unites emancipation, ethical grounding, and collective empowerment.

Keywords: critical pedagogy, islamic educational philosophy, transformative education, justice, liberation.

INTRODUCTION

The foundation of human civilisation has always been education, which serves as a tool for empowering communities, promoting social justice, and forming values in addition to imparting knowledge. However, education has frequently been reduced to a mechanical process throughout the world, which Paulo Freire famously referred to as the "banking model of education." Teachers take on the role of knowledge depositors in this model, while students are viewed as passive information consumers [1]. This kind of approach undercuts education's revolutionary potential by not giving students the tools they need to critically examine and alter their social reality. In this context, Freire's critical pedagogy theory, which prioritizes discourse, critical consciousness (conscientizes), and the quest for freedom from repressive systems, emerged as a radical alternative [2].

A comprehensive process of *tarbiyah* (holistic nurturing), *ta'dīb* (ethical formation), and *ta'līm* (knowledge transmission), Islamic educational philosophy, which has its roots in the Qur'an, Sunnah, and the intellectual heritage of Muslim scholars, has long envisioned education as more than just an intellectual exercise. Islamic education seeks to develop students who will not only be knowledgeable but also just, moral, and spiritually aware, so strengthening society's moral and social cohesion [3]. Islamic thought is based on ideas like 'adl (justice), *shūrā* (consultation), and *tafakkur* (critical reflection), all of which strongly relate to Freire's ideas of discussion, problem-posing education, and the rejection of dominance [4].

The integration of Freirean pedagogy with religious and cultural traditions has drawn more and more attention from academics in the domains of education, philosophy, and Islamic studies. More recent research has looked at the use of critical pedagogy in postcolonial and multicultural situations, while McLaren and Giroux extended Freire's paradigm into more extensive cultural and political contexts [5]. Scholars, including Halstead, Hashim, and Sahin, have investigated the tenets of Islamic education in the Muslim world, highlighting the moral and spiritual aspects that set it apart from secular approaches. Nonetheless, there is still a clear lack of research that specifically looks at how Islamic educational philosophy might methodically reinterpret Freire's theory of critical pedagogy [6].

Few studies have attempted to provide a cogent theoretical framework that synthesises both religions, even though certain comparative works have recognised surface-level similarities between Islam and Freirean thinking, such as the need for conversation or the stress on justice [7]. By providing an organised analysis that places the Islamic ideas of *tarbiyah*, 'adl, and *shūrā* alongside Freire's ideas of dialogue, conscientization, and emancipation, this study seeks to close that gap. By doing this, it enhances the existing discussions about modernity, justice, and social change in Islamic education, in addition to adding to the scholarly conversation on critical pedagogy [8].

This work is important because it can meet two urgent needs. First, it offers a new intellectual exchange between Islamic educational philosophy and Western critical pedagogy, showing how much Islamic thought can add to discussions about justice and emancipation in education around the world [9]. Second, it provides a liberating framework for Muslim communities and educators who want to oppose the authoritarian, colonial, and neoliberal trends in modern education. The ethical and spiritual aspects of Islam serve as the foundation for Freire's emancipatory goals, and this research opens the door to a revolutionary educational model that is both universally applicable and contextually relevant [10].

In the end, this research makes two contributions: it engages with non-Western intellectual traditions to enhance the theoretical discussion of critical pedagogy, and it offers useful advice for teachers in Muslim contexts who wish to develop critical, just, and ethically grounded. The study shows that education can be a route to spiritual and moral flourishing as well as a way to be freed from oppression in the material world by reinventing Freire through the lens of Islam [11].

To create educational models that are contextually appropriate for cultures with a majority of Muslims while simultaneously participating in international discussions on justice and liberation, the conversation between Freirean pedagogy and Islamic educational thinking is not just a theoretical exercise. According to Freire, teaching must always be rooted in students' lived realities, which should represent their past experiences, challenges, and goals [12]. These facts are profoundly influenced by cultural customs and religious ideals in Muslim societies. Incorporating Islamic ideas like hikmah (knowledge), *maslahah* (public good), and *ihsan* (excellence) into Freire's framework enables an educational paradigm that not only frees people from oppression but also firmly establishes them in a moral and spiritual vision for human flourishing [13].

Given the difficulties that contemporary Muslim cultures face, it is clear how urgent it is to rethink education using this integrated paradigm. There is an urgent need for an alternative paradigm because of the decline of moral principles under neoliberal systems, the exclusion of religious viewpoints in secularised education, and the continued use of authoritarian teaching methods that stifle student opinions [14]. By encouraging discourse, moral reasoning, and community involvement, Freire's pedagogy, which is enhanced by Islamic philosophy, offers a means of defying these tendencies. This method seeks to develop socially conscious and spiritually oriented people who can change their societies toward justice and compassion rather than just academic success [15].

The study adds to local and international discussions on education by placing it at the nexus of Islamic philosophy and critical pedagogy. By proving the feasibility of alternative, religiously informed frameworks that are as dedicated to justice and liberation, it challenges the supremacy of secular and Western-centric paradigms on a global scale. At the local level, it gives Muslim teachers useful information to create curricula and teaching methods that complement Islamic principles and Freirean ideals. As a result, the research bridges cultural divides by providing a comprehensive understanding of education that empowers students on an intellectual, moral, and spiritual level [15].

The implications of this study extend beyond theoretical discourse and offer practical contributions to contemporary educational practice, particularly within Muslim-majority and multicultural contexts. First, the integration of Islamic educational philosophy with Freirean critical pedagogy provides educators with a holistic framework that balances intellectual development with ethical and spiritual formation. This synthesis enables teachers to move beyond purely cognitive models of instruction and adopt dialogical, participatory approaches that nurture students' moral consciousness and social responsibility. In this regard, the classroom becomes not only a site of knowledge transmission but also a transformative space for character building and community engagement [16].

Second, this integrated model has significant implications for curriculum development. Educational institutions can incorporate values such as justice (*'adl*), consultation (*shūrā*), and public welfare (*maslahah*) into learning materials and pedagogical strategies. By doing so, curricula can better reflect the lived realities and cultural identities of Muslim learners while remaining open to critical inquiry and global perspectives. This approach also supports the decolonization of education by challenging dominant Western-centric paradigms and validating indigenous and religious knowledge systems as legitimate sources of educational philosophy. Third, the study highlights the role of educators as transformative agents. Teachers are encouraged to embody the principles of both Freirean and Islamic pedagogy by fostering dialogue, encouraging critical reflection, and promoting ethical action. This requires a shift in teacher training programs to include not only pedagogical skills but also philosophical and ethical grounding. As a result, educators can guide students toward becoming critically aware individuals who are capable of addressing social injustices while remaining rooted in their moral and spiritual values [17].

Furthermore, the integration proposed in this study contributes to social cohesion and community empowerment. By aligning education with values of compassion, justice, and collective responsibility, this model prepares learners to actively participate in building equitable and inclusive societies. It also bridges the gap between religious and secular forms of knowledge, demonstrating that faith-based perspectives can coexist with critical and emancipatory educational practices. In terms of novelty, this study offers a distinctive interdisciplinary contribution by systematically synthesizing Freire's critical pedagogy with Islamic educational philosophy in a structured and coherent framework. Unlike previous studies that merely identify superficial parallels, this research provides a deeper analytical comparison of core concepts, pedagogical aims, and philosophical foundations. It introduces a comprehensive model that unites emancipation with ethical and spiritual grounding, thereby expanding the scope of critical pedagogy beyond its traditional secular orientation [17].

Additionally, the study contributes to the growing body of scholarship that seeks to diversify global educational theory by incorporating non-Western perspectives. It positions Islamic educational thought as an active and relevant participant in contemporary debates on justice, liberation, and transformative learning. This not only enriches academic discourse but also offers practical solutions for educators seeking contextually relevant and culturally responsive pedagogies. Ultimately, the novelty lies in presenting an alternative vision of education that is integrative, value-driven, and transformative—one that empowers individuals intellectually, morally, and spiritually while contributing to broader societal change.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Paulo Freire's critical pedagogy has been extensively debated as a revolutionary approach to education that redefines the connection between educators, students, and society while challenging oppressive structures. Freire criticizes the "banking model" of education in *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, contending that it perpetuates dominance by viewing students as passive consumers of information rather than active beings with the capacity for introspection and action [18]. His idea is around dialogue, problem-posing education, and conscientization, which help students become change agents and gain a critical knowledge of social reality. By placing critical pedagogy within larger criticisms of neoliberalism, cultural hegemony, and political power, later scholars like McLaren and Giroux extended Freire's work and strengthened education's function as a place of social change and resistance [19].

Freirean pedagogy has been criticized for its mostly secular orientation and scant attention to the spiritual and moral aspects of education, despite its widespread popularity. Although Freire places a major emphasis on ethics, love, and humanization, scholars have pointed out that his framework does not specifically address religious worldviews, which have a significant influence on educational values in many nations [20]. This constraint has prompted scholars to investigate the contextualization of critical pedagogy in non-Western and religious traditions, especially in postcolonial contexts where education is still entwined with community life, religion, and cultural identity [21].

Islamic educational philosophy offers a thorough and morally grounded understanding of education that is based on the Qur'an, Sunnah, and the scholarly works of classical Muslims like Al-Ghazālī, Ibn Khaldūn, and Al-Fārābī. Islam views education as an integrated process of ta'līm (knowledge transmission), ta'dīb (ethical development), and tarbiyah (holistic nurture), to create morally pure, socially sensitive, and spiritually aware people [22]. Islamic education is fundamentally concerned with justice ('adl), consultation (shūrā), and critical reflection (tafakkur), rejecting authoritarian pedagogies and fostering participatory and ethical learning environments, according to contemporary thinkers including Halstead, Hashim, and Sahin [23].

Numerous studies have drawn attention to conceptual similarities between Islamic educational theory and Freire's critical pedagogy. Both traditions emphasize communication, oppose dominance, and see education as a tool for social justice and human emancipation. While conscientization finds parallels in tafakkur and tadabbur, which promote in-depth contemplation of social conditions and moral responsibility, Freire's dialogical method connects with the Islamic tenet of shūrā, which prioritizes collective discourse and shared decision-making. These parallels imply that Islamic educational philosophy can offer a framework for implementing critical pedagogy in Muslim contexts that is culturally relevant [24].

Nevertheless, current comparative research frequently stays descriptive and lacks a cogent theoretical synthesis. A few of them carefully investigate how Islamic principles may reinterpret or expand Freire's pedagogical presumptions, even though they recognize common values like justice and discourse [25]. Particularly, less focus has been placed on how Islamic spirituality and ethics could strengthen Freire's emancipatory vision by establishing moral duty and collective responsibility as the foundation for critical awareness. This disparity highlights the need for a more comprehensive framework that goes beyond cursory comparisons [26].

The current paper fills this gap by providing an organized view of Freire's critical pedagogy through Islamic educational philosophy. This work adds to larger discussions on transformational education, justice, and emancipation by analytically associating tarbiyah, 'adl, and shūrā with discourse, conscientization, and emancipation. Additionally, it addresses calls for pedagogical methods rooted in culture and religion that address social injustice and moral development in modern educational settings [27].

Table 1. Literature Review

Author(s) & Year	Focus of Study	Key Concepts	Main Findings	Relevance to This Study
Freire (1970)	Critical pedagogy and liberation	Banking model, dialogue, conscientization, emancipation	Education should be dialogical and problem-posing to raise critical consciousness and resist oppression	Provides the foundational framework for emancipatory education used in this study
McLaren (1997)	Critical pedagogy and culture	Power, ideology, resistance, social justice	Education is a political act shaped by cultural and economic forces	Extends Freire's ideas into broader sociopolitical contexts relevant to justice-oriented education
Giroux (2009)	Education and neoliberalism	Critical citizenship, democracy, cultural politics	Neoliberal education undermines critical thinking and democratic values	Highlights the need for alternative, justice-centered pedagogies
Al-Ghazālī (Classical)	Islamic philosophy of education	Tarbiyah, ta'dīb, moral formation	Education aims at ethical character, spiritual awareness, and social	Grounds the study in classical Islamic educational thought

			responsibility.	
Ibn Khaldūn (Classical)	Learning and society	Critical reasoning, gradual learning, and social context	Authoritarian teaching harms intellectual and moral development	Supports Islamic critiques of rote and oppressive pedagogy
Halstead (2004)	Contemporary Islamic education	Values-based education, justice, and moral development	Islamic education integrates ethics, spirituality, and social responsibility	Demonstrates the normative and ethical nature of Islamic pedagogy
Hashim (2012)	Philosophy of Islamic education	Knowledge integration, faith, reason	Islamic education balances intellectual, moral, and spiritual growth	Reinforces the holistic dimension of tarbiyah
Sahin (2018)	Islamic pedagogy and ethics	Moral agency, critical reflection, community	Education should cultivate ethical and critically reflective individuals	Aligns Islamic pedagogy with Freirean critical consciousness
Comparative Studies (Various)	Islam and critical pedagogy	Dialogue, justice, liberation	Identifies conceptual overlaps but lacks theoretical integration	Reveals the research gap this study addresses

METHODOLOGY

A qualitative approach in the form of a literature review was employed in this study. Scholars reviewed a variety of works about Islamic educational philosophy and Paulo Freire's theory of critical pedagogy. To collect data for this study, a library study methodology was employed. Research that is solely dependent on written works is known as library research or literary study. The information required for this study came from library and document sources, including books, journal articles, dissertations, and earlier studies that were pertinent to the subject [28].

Cooper and Taylor in Zamrotul Faiqoh (2010) define library research as any study that analyses or critically evaluates information, concepts, or discoveries that are pertinent to the subject of the study. The secondary data used in this study came from literature that addressed Islamic educational values like tarbiyah (holistic nurturing), 'adl (justice), and shura (consultation), as well as Freire's educational ideas like dialogue, conscientization, and rejecting the "banking model." A paradigm that reimagines critical pedagogy through the lens of Islamic philosophy was then created by critically comparing and synthesising the facts [29].

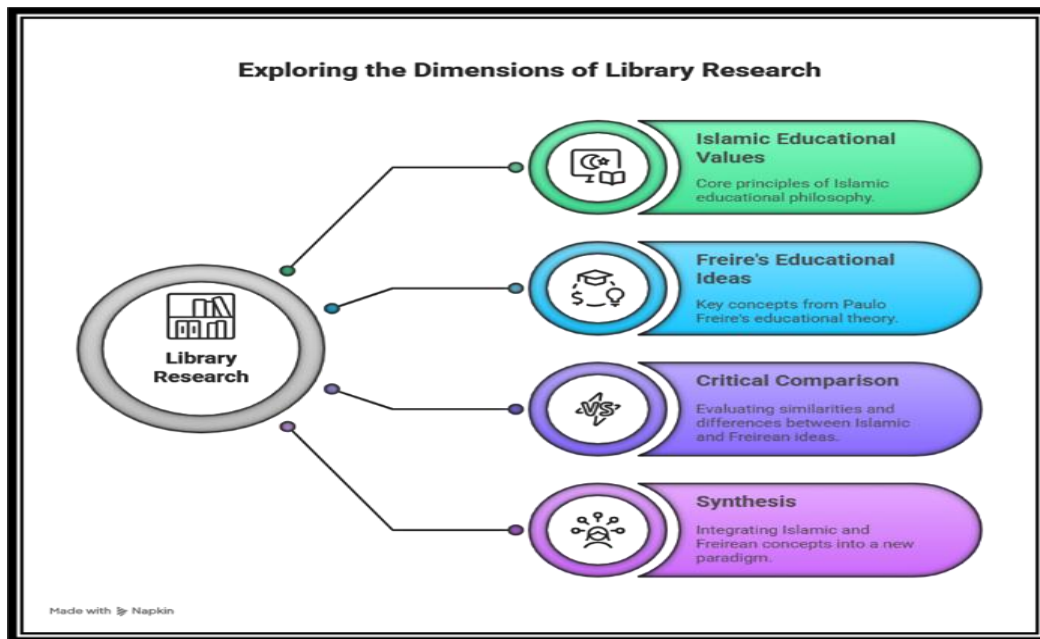


Figure 1. Exploring the Dimensions of Library Research

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Rejecting the Banking Model vs. Islamic Tarbiyah

Paulo Freire exposes a system where knowledge is simply passed from instructor to student without discussion or critical involvement in his scathing critique of the "banking model of education." This model maintains authoritarian systems and inhibits critical thinking by treating pupils as passive vessels into which knowledge is placed. According to Freire, this method undermines education's capacity to be a revolutionary force by depriving students of their agency and turning it into a robotic exercise [30].

Such a reductionist vision of education is likewise resisted by Islamic educational philosophy, especially through the idea of tarbiyah. The term "tarbiyah" refers to the holistic growth of a learner's intellectual, moral, and spiritual aspects and means "nurturing, raising, and cultivating." According to this concept, education aims to develop wisdom (hikmah), ethical responsibility, and the capacity for critical reflection on the world rather than rote memorization or passive intake of knowledge. Tarbiyah aims to empower students as active participants who develop their conscience and character, in contrast to the banking model [31].

Additionally, tarbiyah places the student in a spiritual and community framework. Knowledge is sought for the benefit of society and in the service of God, not just for personal growth. Freire's contention that education shouldn't be divorced from social reality but rather should prepare students to confront oppression, confront injustices, and help create a more compassionate and just world is reflected in this relational component [32].

Therefore, the rejection of passive educational models and the common emphasis on developing people who are capable of critical thought, moral agency, and transformational action are where Freire's pedagogy and Islamic tarbiyah converge.

Table 2. Freire’s Critique of Banking Model vs. the Islamic Concept of Tarbiyah

Aspect	Banking Model (Freire’s Critique)	Islamic Tarbiyah (Holistic Nurturing)
View of Students	Passive containers of information	Active participants, moral and spiritual beings
Role of the Teacher	Depositor of knowledge, authority figure	Guide, nurturer, facilitator of holistic growth
Nature of Knowledge	Static, transferred without critical engagement	Dynamic, integrated with ethics, spirituality, and reflection
Purpose of Education	Maintain control, reinforce structures of domination	Develop intellect, morality, and responsibility to God & society
Outcome	Learners remain uncritical, dependent, and disempowered	Learners become reflective, ethical, and socially responsible
Underlying Philosophy	Mechanistic and authoritarian	Transformative, spiritual, and justice-oriented

Dialogue and Shūrā (Consultation)

The core of education, according to Freirean pedagogy, is discourse. According to Freire, dialogue is a transforming process of co-creating knowledge rather than just a way to exchange ideas. It breaks down inflexible teacher-student hierarchies and positions both as learners who participate in the search for truth. Students' lived experiences are recognized through discourse, and their opinions take center stage in the learning process. In addition to encouraging intellectual participation, this strategy promotes dignity, self-determination, and unity in the fight against repressive systems. A similar dedication to openness and involvement may be seen in Islamic philosophy through the notion of shūrā (consultation). Shūrā emphasizes the value of group discussion in decision-making, drawing on Qur'anic verses like "...and those who have responded to their master and established prayer, and whose affair is [determined] by consultation among themselves" (Qur'an 42:38). Although it has historically been linked to community leadership and government, its ideas also apply to education. In order to ensure that the pursuit of knowledge is based on justice and inclusivity, educators are urged to listen, consult, and have meaningful conversations with students [33].

Freire's focus on discussion and Islam's shūrā concept come together in potent ways when viewed side by side. Both understand that polite interaction and reciprocal acknowledgment are the only ways that true learning may occur, rather than through dictatorial imposition. By including these viewpoints, the classroom is reframed as a moral arena where inclusion and authority coexist, fostering respect for one another, critical thinking, and shared accountability. In this sense, discussion and shūrā become moral requirements for fostering equitable and free societies as well as educational instruments [34].

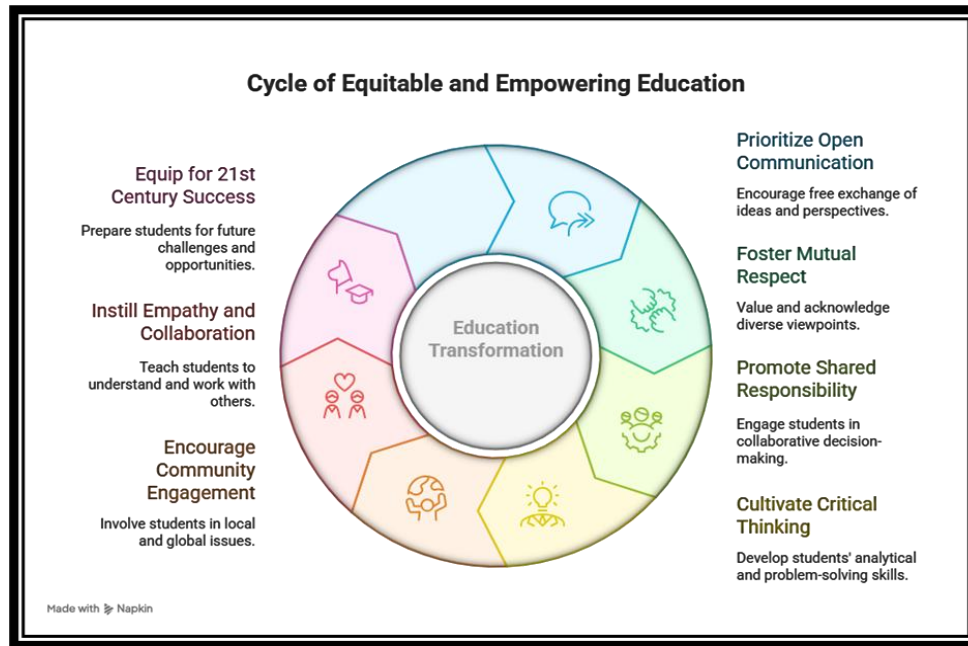


Figure 2. Cycle of Equitable and Empowering Education

Conscientization and 'Adl (Justice)

Conscientization, or the emergence of critical consciousness that empowers students to recognize, challenge, and resist oppressive structures, is at the heart of Freire's teaching methodology. According to Freire, education should prepare people to examine the power systems that influence their lives rather than just imparting knowledge or skills. Students who go through this process develop into change agents who are able to oppose injustice and actively take part in changing their communities. Thus, praxis, the unification of thought and action, is the foundation of conscientization, which is both an intellectual and moral awakening [35].

The Islamic value of 'adl (justice), which is both a social precept and a heavenly mandate, is strongly reflected in this. The significance of justice is emphasized throughout the Qur'an: "In fact, Allah forbids immorality, bad behavior, and oppression and commands justice ('adl), excellence (ihsan), and giving to relatives" (Qur'an 16:90). According to Islam, justice necessitates equity, responsibility, and balance in all spheres of life, from individual behavior to public policy and interpersonal relationships. Crucially, justice is linked to spiritual accountability before God and is not just a legal or political ideal. In addition to hurting other people, acting unfairly is a betrayal of one's bond with the Creator [36].

The convergence is evident when Freire's conscientization and the Islamic idea of "adl" are discussed. Both advocate for education that develops people who can identify injustice, challenge authority, and work toward equity. However, by establishing the fight for justice in moral and spiritual dimensions, Islamic education enhances this framework and serves as a reminder to students that emancipation is both a social need and a sacred obligation [37].

In actuality, this entails raising morally grounded and critically aware students who possess the bravery to oppose oppression while simultaneously exhibiting compassion, humility, and integrity. These students represent a comprehensive understanding of justice that combines social responsibility, spiritual accountability, and critical awareness to guarantee that the quest for freedom is grounded in both human dignity and divine direction [38].

Table 3. Conscientization and ‘Adl (Justice)

Freire’s Conscientization	Islamic Concept of ‘Adl (Justice)	Convergence / Integration
Awakening of critical awareness to recognize and challenge oppression.	Justice is a divine command that ensures fairness, accountability, and balance in all aspects of life.	Both demand an education that empowers learners to identify and resist injustice.
Focuses on praxis— reflection combined with transformative action.	Justice is rooted in both social ethics and spiritual accountability before God.	Liberation is not only social but also moral and spiritual.
Education equips learners to question structures of power and inequality.	Emphasizes fairness in personal conduct, governance, and community relations.	Learners develop critical consciousness while embodying compassion and integrity.
Conscientization leads to agency and social transformation.	‘Adl safeguards human dignity and aligns with divine guidance.	Education fosters individuals who unite critical awareness with moral responsibility.

Ethics, Spirituality, and Emancipation

The ethical-spiritual basis of Islamic philosophy, which enriches and broadens Paulo Freire's emancipatory objectives, is one of its unique contributions to educational thought. In order to challenge systems of dominance and injustice, Freire emphasized that students must become change agents by framing education as a socio-political act. Islamic viewpoints, on the other hand, expand this framework by placing education inside a metaphysical, moral, and spiritual framework that guarantees human growth is holistic rather than just political [39].

Ideas like ta’dīb (ethical formation) and ihsān (excellence in thinking, conduct, and character) are essential to this perspective. These ideas shift the focus of education from intellectual liberation to the development of qualities that lead students to moral rectitude, empathy, and responsibility to God. In this sense, emancipation encompasses not only freedom from repressive systems but also freedom from ignorance, spiritual estrangement, and moral corruption [40].

Islamic education maintains that knowledge devoid of ethics is insufficient and even harmful since it can be used to uphold injustice rather than eliminate it. The Islamic emphasis on inner transformation adds depth to Freire's demand for emancipation, making sure that students not only examine the outside world but also work on improving themselves [41].

This integrated approach views education as a path of intellectual, moral, social, and spiritual transformation for the full individual. As a result, the fusion of Islamic philosophy and Freirean pedagogy results in an emancipatory vision in which social justice is inextricably linked to spiritual accountability and education's purpose is to develop individuals who are the embodiment of excellence (ihsān), justice (‘adl), and compassion (rahmah) in all facets of life [42].

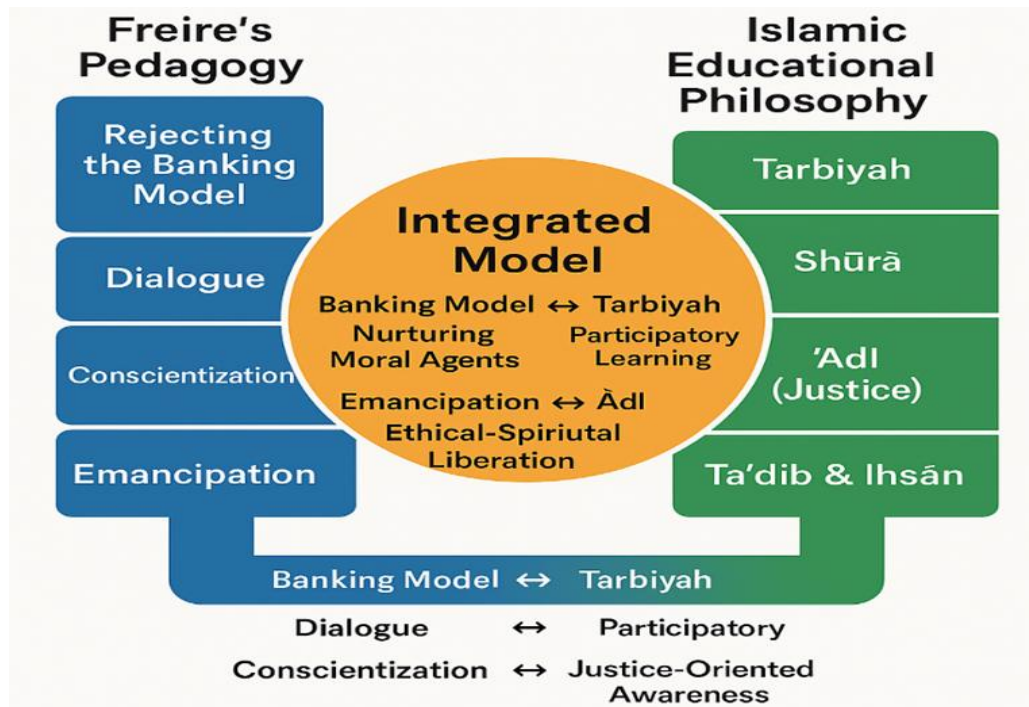


Figure 3. Conceptual Framework: Integrating Freirean Critical Pedagogy with Islamic Educational Philosophy

Toward a Contextualized Transformative Education

The integration of Islamic philosophy and Freirean pedagogy suggests a comprehensive approach to transformative education that is both universal and contextual, ethical and critical. This kind of approach places education within larger moral, spiritual, and sociopolitical boundaries rather than reducing it to a solely technical or instrumental role. This approach provides a vital and timely alternative in modern Muslim cultures where authoritarian teaching practices, secularized curricula, and neoliberal influences are common [43].

This model envisions education as a process of developing critically aware, morally grounded, and socially responsible individuals by fusing Freire's dedication to dialogue, conscientization, and liberation with the Islamic imperatives of wisdom (*ḥikmah*), justice (*ʿadl*), and ethical-spiritual formation (*taʿdīb*). Education is today seen as an act of intellectual empowerment, moral improvement, and social reform rather than as a neutral dissemination of knowledge. In addition to being inspired to challenge systems of dominance and injustice, learners are also given the moral obligation to rebuild their societies on the foundation of justice, compassion, and the welfare of everyone [44].

This integrated worldview strives for positive transformation rather than just opposition. Students who are raised with both intellectual and spiritual integrity are better equipped to oppose oppressive structures and to imagine and carry out alternative futures based on justice and human dignity. In this way, transformative education turns into a liberation praxis that is firmly grounded in moral obligation, reason, and faith [45].

Table 4. A Contextualized Model of Transformative Education: Integrating Freirean Pedagogy and Islamic Philosophy

Dimension	Freirean Pedagogy	Islamic Educational Philosophy	Integrated Transformative Outcome
Purpose of Education	Humanization and liberation from oppression	Holistic development (<i>tarbiyah</i>) and ethical formation (<i>ta'dīb</i>)	Development of critically aware, morally grounded individuals
View of the Learner	Active subject and agent of social change	Moral and spiritual being accountable to God and society	Learners as ethical change agents rooted in faith and justice
Role of the Teacher	Facilitator of dialogue and critical inquiry	Moral guide and mentor (<i>murabbi</i>)	Dialogical mentor fostering critical and ethical consciousness
Pedagogical Method	Dialogue, problem-posing education	Consultation (<i>shūrā</i>), reflection (<i>tafakkur</i>)	Participatory, reflective, and justice-oriented learning
Knowledge Orientation	Knowledge is socially constructed and political	Knowledge is integrated with ethics and spirituality	Knowledge as a tool for liberation, moral growth, and social reform
Ethical Foundation	Human dignity, justice, solidarity	Justice (<i>'adl</i>), wisdom (<i>ḥikmah</i>), excellence (<i>ihsān</i>)	Education grounded in ethical, spiritual, and social responsibility
Social Aim	Transformation of unjust structures	Promotion of communal welfare (<i>maṣlahah</i>)	Rebuilding society based on justice, compassion, and dignity
Educational Outcome	Critical consciousness and resistance	Moral integrity and social accountability	Contextualized transformative education rooted in faith and action

Analysis

The integration of Islamic educational philosophy with Freirean critical pedagogy presented in this study offers a robust analytical framework for understanding education as a transformative, justice-oriented, and ethically grounded practice. At the analytical level, the synthesis demonstrates that Freire's core critiques—particularly his rejection of the banking model, emphasis on dialogue, and insistence on conscientization—find strong philosophical resonance within Islamic concepts such as *tarbiyah*, *shūrā*, and *'adl*. This convergence is not merely conceptual but normative, as both traditions view education as a moral enterprise aimed at humanization and social responsibility. From an analytical perspective, *tarbiyah* challenges mechanistic and instrumental views of education by foregrounding holistic human development. When examined alongside Freire's critique of passive learning, *tarbiyah* reinforces the idea that learners must be treated as active moral agents rather than repositories of information. This alignment strengthens Freire's argument by embedding critical consciousness within a spiritual and ethical worldview, thereby expanding its relevance in religious and multicultural contexts.

Dialogue, a central pillar of Freirean pedagogy, gains additional depth when analyzed through the Islamic principle of *shūrā*. Analytically, both frameworks reject authoritarian knowledge transmission and advocate participatory, inclusive learning processes. However, *shūrā* introduces a moral imperative to dialogue, framing it not only as a pedagogical strategy but also as an ethical obligation rooted in justice and collective accountability. This reframing addresses critiques of Freire's pedagogy as overly secular by providing a value-based foundation for dialogical engagement. The concept of conscientization, when analyzed in relation to *'adl* (justice), further illustrates the strength of this synthesis. Freire's emphasis

on critical awareness and praxis aligns with Islam's insistence on justice as both a social and divine command. Analytically, this connection situates liberation within a dual responsibility: accountability to society and accountability to God. Such a framework ensures that emancipatory education does not devolve into ideological resistance alone, but remains anchored in ethical integrity, compassion, and moral self-regulation.

Moreover, the study's analysis highlights how Islamic ethics and spirituality address a limitation often identified in critical pedagogy—its relative neglect of inner moral formation. By integrating *ta'dīb* and values such as *ihsān* and *rahmah*, the model emphasizes that true liberation requires both structural change and personal moral transformation. This dual focus strengthens the emancipatory project by preventing the instrumentalization of knowledge for unjust ends. Overall, the analytical synthesis demonstrates that the integration of Freirean pedagogy and Islamic educational philosophy produces a contextualized yet universally relevant model of transformative education. It responds effectively to contemporary challenges such as neoliberalism, authoritarianism, and moral dislocation by uniting critical awareness, ethical grounding, and spiritual purpose within a coherent educational vision.

CONCLUSION

This study concludes that the integration of Islamic educational philosophy with Paulo Freire's critical pedagogy offers a coherent and compelling framework for reconstructing justice and liberation in multicultural educational contexts. By reinterpreting Freire's emancipatory vision through Islamic values such as *tarbiyah* (holistic nurturing), *shūrā* (consultation), and *'adl* (justice), the study demonstrates that education can function simultaneously as a means of critical empowerment, moral formation, and spiritual development. This synthesis confirms that Islamic education is not inherently opposed to critical pedagogy; rather, it provides a rich ethical and spiritual foundation that deepens and strengthens Freire's transformative aims. The alignment between Freire's rejection of the banking model and the Islamic emphasis on holistic human development highlights a shared critique of authoritarian and instrumentalist education. Both traditions view learners as active subjects capable of reflection, dialogue, and social transformation. Through *tarbiyah*, education is understood as a continuous process of nurturing intellect, character, and spirituality, reinforcing Freire's insistence that education must humanize rather than domesticate. In this sense, liberation is not limited to political consciousness but extends to moral responsibility and inner transformation. Moreover, the convergence between Freirean dialogue and the Islamic principle of *shūrā* reframes participatory education as both a pedagogical necessity and an ethical obligation. Dialogue becomes a space for mutual recognition, shared authority, and collective responsibility, countering hierarchical and exclusionary practices prevalent in many contemporary educational systems. Likewise, the relationship between conscientization and *'adl* situates critical awareness within a broader moral horizon, where the struggle against oppression is inseparable from commitments to fairness, accountability, and compassion. This integrated framework also addresses a key limitation often attributed to secular critical pedagogy—its limited engagement with spirituality and moral formation. By incorporating concepts such as *ta'dīb*, *ḥikmah*, *rahmah*, and *ihsān*, the study affirms that emancipation requires not only structural change but also ethical self-discipline and spiritual awareness. Education, therefore, becomes a pathway to comprehensive human flourishing that balances social critique with moral integrity. In conclusion, the fusion of Islamic educational philosophy and Freirean critical pedagogy enriches global educational discourse by offering an alternative paradigm grounded in human dignity, justice, dialogue, and ethical accountability. For Muslim societies in particular, this framework provides both conceptual clarity and practical guidance to reimagine curricula, pedagogy, and educational goals in ways that are culturally rooted yet universally oriented toward justice and liberation.

Acknowledgments

The authors express sincere gratitude to colleagues, institutional leaders, and reviewers whose insights strengthened this study. Appreciation is extended to both affiliated institutions for academic support, research facilities, and an encouraging scholarly environment that enabled collaboration, reflection, and completion of this work worldwide, interdisciplinary, engagement.

Author Contribution

Alwy Ahmed Mohamed conceptualized the study, conducted field analysis, and led manuscript drafting. Aya Ragab contributed to theoretical framing, educational perspectives, data interpretation, and critical revision. Both authors collaboratively discussed findings, approved the final version, and take full responsibility for the content integrity, accuracy, transparency.

Conflicts of Interest

The authors declare no conflicts of interest regarding the research, authorship, or publication of this article. The study was conducted independently, without financial, institutional, or personal relationships that could inappropriately influence the interpretation of data, arguments, or conclusions presented herein to ensure objectivity, neutrality, credibility.

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