INVESTIGATING CRITICAL PEDAGOGY IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE PESANTREN EDUCATION SYSTEM

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ABSTRACT

Critical pedagogy perspectives are currently being promoted in educational technology to advocate inclusion and social justice. However, little has been considered about the prospects of implementing it in the pesantren (Islamic boarding schools) education system. This research investigates the contribution of Paulo Freire's ideas in developing the pesantren as an indigenous Indonesian educational institution that has experienced marginalization. The study used a semi-systematic or narrative review to examine various theoretical literature and empirical research, then analyzed all source materials using content analysis techniques. The findings reveal that pesantren has developed Freirean critical pedagogy in adult education training to increase critical awareness, encourage civil society participation, break the culture of silence, and communicate people's aspirations through various media and technologies. The study identifies gaps between critical pedagogy and educational technology in general. Still, it gives justifications about prospects to encourage further research and development in Islamic pesantren education settings in Indonesia.

Keywords: Critical Pedagogy, Educational Technology, Pesantren, Democracy, Indonesia

INTRODUCTION

As an indigenous Indonesian educational institution, the pesantren education system is constantly evolving according to the ever-changing demands of society (Isbah, 2020). One of the important developments in the world of Islamic boarding schools occurred due to the influence of critical pedagogy(Pohl, 2006; Raihani, 2012), as well as the adoption of various media and technologies in education (Habibi et al., 2021; Hanafi et al., 2021). The infiltration of critical pedagogy and technology into pesantren education is one of the driving factors that contribute significantly to the reform of pesantren through *community development* which has been trending since the 1970s and 1980s. As democratization strengthened in Indonesia in the 1990s, especially the events of the 1998 Reformation, the emphasis of pesantren shifted to support democratic civil society (Pohl, 2006). This fact is proven among others by Pohl (2006), who conducted a case study at the Al-Muayyad Windan Islamic boarding school in Solo. By continuing to stand on the yellow book, Windan Islamic boarding school complements traditional Islamic education to support thinking and praxis in community empowerment activities in the form of peacebuilding, conflict reconciliation, interfaith dialogue, and women's empowerment.

Although critical pedagogy was much pioneered by Giroux (Bradshaw, 2017), he admits that the theory of education was greatly influenced by Paulo Freire, especially with his work pedagogy of the oppressed (Freire, 1970). The critical pedagogical ideas pioneered by Freire eventually spread throughout the world, including being very influential in Indonesia. Interestingly, critical pedagogy is also very developed and contributes to the development of the pesantren education system. Freire's liberation ideas successfully lifted pesantren from a state of marginalization from the time of Dutch colonialism to post-Indonesian independence. Of course, several other efforts were made to modernize the pesantren so that it has survived to this day. However, the trend of developing Islamic boarding schools through community empowerment

programs that have emerged since the 1970s is significant as a means to reform and democratize (Pohl, 2006). It is through these various programs that critical education is shared with the use of media and technology in learning in various adult training (Roqib, 2021). Meanwhile, in that decade, the field of educational technology in Indonesia was only pioneered. Viewed through this perspective, pesantren, which are often identified with conservatism and technology, turned out to be even more sustainable (Hussin et al., 2017).

There has been a lot of literature discussing the development of the pesantren education system, including focusing on the use of technology (Hefner, 2019; Munifah & Purwaningrum, 2022). But among the many studies, there are areas that are ignored regarding the interrelationship of critical pedagogy and the use of technology in the development of the pesantren education system. In Alvesson and Sandberg's terms (Alvesson & Sandberg, 2013), this research gap is called "neglect spotting." So to fill in the gaps in the neglected area, this literature research will investigate the extent of the influence of critical pedagogy on the development of the pesantren education system, including how technology is used in it. This study is very important to support the possibility of conducting further research and development in the field of educational technology in the setting of boarding school education using a critical pedagogical perspective. This perspective is currently being heavily promoted because it recognizes that educational technology has the potential to champion inclusion, fairness, and diversity in the education system (Benson, 2018; Bradshaw, 2017). Not even further, educational technology with this new perspective has the potential to encourage social transformation (Subkhan, 2016), as can be proven through the development of the Islamic boarding school education system in Indonesia.

RESEARCH METHOD

This study aims to investigate some literature relevant to critical education in the development of the pesantren system, especially in the use of technology in it. A semi-systemic or narrative literature review was used as a method (Snyder, 2019). That method is useful for analyzing books, research reports, and documents related to that research topic. The literature was selected with relevancy criteria. The source materials were then analyzed using direct content analysis techniques with reference to Freirean critical pedagogy theory and existing research. Some of the main topics that emerged from that analysis will be presented in the next section.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The results of this literature review investigating critical pedagogy in the development of the pesantren education system can be described in four main topics: a) the influence of critical pedagogy in Indonesia; b) the influence of critical pedagogy on the development of the pesantren education system; c) Adoption of technology along with critical education into the pesantren education system.

The Influence of Critical Pedagogy in Indonesia

Paulo Freire's critical pedagogical ideas had a wide influence around the world in Indonesia. Since its inception by Freire in the late 1970s, the influence of liberation education has extended throughout the world. In his dissertation, Nuryatno (Nuryatno, 2006) specifically examined the influence and reception of Freire's ideas in Indonesia. Nuryatno's dissertation provided a lot of Freire's data on Indonesia, important actors, and networks among activists. At least since. LP3ES Pedagogy of the oppressed. Activists from STF Driyarkara have come to know Freire. Nuryatno's dissertation, in detail, has investigated the reception and dissemination of Paulo Freire's ideas in Indonesia.) he has conducted field studies and interviews of several key

figures and organizations that actively discuss, disseminate, and practice Freire's ideas in their real praxis. The research, in addition to linking Freire to the Indonesian context, also connects Freire with Islam, as religion of majority of the population. Although it emphasizes more on activists and popular education, the findings are important for finding a correlation with Islamic boarding schools. From his tracking, there are at least four groups of organizations that show the dissemination and/or application of the ideas of Freire, Peter Danuwinata, Mansour Fakih and Roem Topatimasang, Noer Fauzi, and Peter Hugo Verest. Nuryatno admitted that Fakih and Topatimasang were the figures who most consistently spread Freire's ideas (Nuryatno, 2006, 2009).

While researching Islamic boarding schools and Islamic education in Indonesia, Steenbrink (2015) also noted that in the 1980s, there was already a Freire influence and liberation theology in Indonesia. Among them is the figure of Dawam Rahardjo, who is an important factor in the research and publishing institute LP3ES. In addition, Steenbrink also informed that there was a tendency to avoid terminology that had links to leftist ideology or communism when the Suharto regime was in power. Therefore, Dawam Raharjo gave rise to the term applied Islamic theology, while the Catholic priest Romo Mangunwijaya used the term Development theology because it was more in line with the terminology used by the New Order regime (Steenbrink, 2015).

The Influence of Critical Pedagogy on the Pesantren Education System

Pesantren is an indigenous educational institution adopted by the Islamic community from previously developed educational models. However, the p.s., which has been marginalized since the time of Dutch colonialism, continued to strive to survive and gain state recognition until after independence (Nurtawab & Wahyudi, 2022). In the 1920s, it was gradually renewed by providing access to education for women, adopting the madrasa system, and modernizing the curriculum and Islamic boarding school institutions (Dhofier, 1980). Until the 1970s, many Islamic boarding schools had established madrasas and schools. In addition to the renewal efforts carried out by the pesantren itself, the provision of skills by the government, several intellectuals, activists, and non-governmental organizations involved in the renewal of pesantren through a number of community empowerment programs, some of which are LP3ES, P3M (Pohl, 2006). From the renewal efforts carried out by NGOs, pesantren then came into contact with critical pedagogical ideas as part of the democratization process in Indonesia.

As an academic figure from pesantren, Abdurrahman Wahid or Gus Dur proposed the concept of looking at subcultures to outside researchers. The article "pesantren as a subculture" was published by LP3ES in 1974 in the anthology pesantren and renewal. It was also republished by LkiS, along with Wahid's writings during the 1970-1980s period, published in a special book. During this period, Wahid wrote extensively on the topic of pesantren and used the word subculture several times. In "pesantren as a subculture," Wahid explains why he needs to propose the term subculture for pesantren. In addition to finding it difficult to find a more appropriate term, he gave the reason that many aspects of community life and boarding school education are indeed very contrasting compared to the lives of the general public outside of it. The identification of student groups with other community groups, such as abangan, for example, has also been carried out by Geertz's anthropological studies (Wahid, 2001).

In later writings, it seems that Wahid has become more determined to use the term, for example, in the paper "Principles of Pesantren Education," which was delivered at a conference in Berlin in 1987. The book from the conference that discussed the role of NGOs in the renewal of pesantren was reviewed in an international journal and said Wahid explained the worldview of the Ulama. In the paper, Wahid elaborated the concept of the pesantren subculture further. In addition to being characterized by a totality learning environment in the form of dormitories, the uniqueness of the pesantren subculture is also based on three elements: the authority of the kyai

as a leader, the classical text believed to be a universal life guideline, and the unique value system practiced by the pesantren community. Based on the three elements of the subculture, each pesantren has independence from outside intervention, designs new educational concepts flexibly, and contributes to society and the state. Wahid's description of the pesantren subculture covers a very broad topic, ranging from a worldview (*weltanschauung*), religious authority, pesantren reform, culture, Islamic ideology and movements, and social transformation to nationalism (Wahid, 2001).

Cooperation between pesantren and NGOs in the 1970s-1980s through a series of community empowerment training had an influence on the development of democratic pesantren. Paper Mansour Fakih, which was also submitted at the conference in Berlin, provides information on how community empowerment is actually an entry point for awareness education, participation, and democratization. The various skills training programs given to the pesantren were mainly aimed at the democratization education process in the pedestrian community, which was mainly on the educational ideas of Paulo Freire and Ivan Illich. The thinking of the two figures, which was later developed by P3M, became a form of adult education. Pohl (2006) also noted that the community development training introduced by NGO activists was drawn on the education ideas of Paulo Freire and Ivan Illich. However, Pohl also added that in the 1990s, the activities of pesantren in community empowerment programs began to shift to support democratic civil society (Pohl, 2006).

The fall of the Suharto regime became an important period for the subsequent development of the pesantren education system, while Wahid was elected president in place of Suharto, albeit only for a few years (Isbah, 2020). Barton, a researcher of Islamic thought who wrote Wahid's biography, said he was surprised. Whereas before, the student group was very synonymous with backwardness in the era of modernity development. Meanwhile, Isbah (2020) observes the emphasis on Islamic boarding schools, which have become more integrated with the national education system since the 1998 reform era. The culmination was the existence of the National Education Law of 2003 (Nurtawab & Wahyudi, 2022). Almost the majority of Islamic boarding schools today have formal education at various levels, ranging from kindergarten to college. Isbah (2020) also argues that research on Islamic boarding schools, which was previously dominated by historical and anthropological approaches, has become increasingly diverse. In addition to the topic of the development of the education system in Indonesia, issues regarding the role of Islamic boarding schools in civil society, democracy, Islamic ideologies and movements, and religious authorities.

Technology Adoption combined with Critical Pedagogy in Pesantren

In addition to the local political situation, the rise of terrorism is increasingly attracting the attention of Indonesian and local researchers. One of them is Pohl (2006) researched Islamic boarding schools in Indonesia. From the available international publications, it is perhaps his research that provides the clearest information regarding the development of critical education in Islamic boarding schools. Pohl also recounted the shifting trends of community empowerment in the 1970s. In the 1990s, the attention of pesantren shifted towards issues of democracy, pluralism, and civil society while remaining based on classical texts as the foundation of praxis. Pohl (2006) also provided evidence through field research to see religious communities such as pesantren as public spaces. He focused his studies on case studies at Pesantren Al-Muayyad Windan, Solo, which from the beginning, was designed as a type of student boarding school with a special orientation on community empowerment. Focusing on their role in the public sphere, Pohl did not give a very detailed description of how the pesantren community used classical texts as the basis for their praxis in the field.

The distribution of Freire's ideas in Indonesia was researched by Nuryatno for his dissertation for McGill University, part of which has been published internationally in the book chapter. In his article, Nuryatno (2009) highlighted the role of INSIST, especially the figures of Mansour Fakih and Roem Topatimasang, who became the main exponents of Freirean critical pedagogy in Indonesia. Nuryatno's research provides a wealth of information about the development of Freirean critical pedagogy that can be found in international databases. As the main exponents of Freire's ideas in Indonesia, Fakih, and Topatimasang. There are at least two works by Fakih and Topatimasang that serve as training materials for the pesantren community for various community empowerment programs with a foundation on critical pedagogy, especially the ideas of Paulo Freire and Ivan Illich. The first book *Learning from Experience: The Adult Education Guide Training Guide for Community Development*, is a *training for trainers* (Topatimasang et al., 1986) manual that is based on the basic framework of adult education approaches and concepts for community development programs commonly used by non-governmental development agencies. While the second book, *Let Us Talk!: Community Development Communication Training Guide*, is a six-module training utilizing a wide variety of technologies, such as photovoice, posters, theater, slides, radio, video, ICT, and journalists (Fakih & Topatimasang, 1988).

The two books published by the Association for the Development of Islamic Boarding Schools and Communities (P3M) seemed to have gone unnoticed by Nuryatno. However, Pohl (2006) proved that the impact of cooperation with activists, non-governmental organizations such as LP3ES and P3M, and cooperation with foreign donor institutions, namely the German Friedrich Naumann Stiftung (FNS), many Islamic boarding schools in Indonesia that previously experienced marginalization could carry out various updates. There are actually other development patterns, such as establishing madrasa education and schools in pesantren circles and efforts to integrate religious education with secular education. However, according to Abdurrahman Wahid (2001), development through community empowerment is more acceptable and in harmony with the spiritual spirit and religious motivation. Even if, in reality, the program was based on Freirean critical pedagogy.

A relatively new book about pesantren with a critical pedagogical character was written by Dian Nafi et al. (Nafi, 2007), entitled *Pesantren Leaning Praxis*. Dian Nafi is the kyai and founder of Pesantren Al-Muayyad Windan Solo, a pesantren that became dissertation research (Pohl, 2006). The book is a manual compiled after kyai networks and Islamic boarding schools throughout Indonesia received training from INSIST, the institution that most actively promotes Freirean critical pedagogy through popular education in Indonesia (Nuryatno, 2009). Before establishing INSIST, the fact is that these key actors were also active in LP3ES and P3M, which are the motor of pesantren renewal through community empowerment programs. This book is an attempt to integrate Freirean liberation pedagogy into boarding school education. As a manual, the book is practiced in the implementation of the education system of the Al-Muayyad Windan Islamic boarding school

CONCLUSION

This paper is literary research that invests the influence of critical pedagogy in the development of the pesantren education system. The narrative literature review method has the advantage of collecting data from various literature that is difficult to obtain through systematics and using online academic databases. This study provides evidence to fill in the gaps in the literature on a topic that tends to be overlooked, namely the spread of critical pedagogy in the development of the pesantren education system. Thematic analysis shows how the development of Paulo Freire's ideas in Indonesia is especially among activists of non-governmental

organizations. The development of critical pedagogy extended to pesantren thanks to the work of NGO and pesantren activists in various community empowerment projects that were based mostly on Freire's ideas. One of the collaborations is in the form of adult learning training or popular education, in which many use media and technology. This finding makes a theoretical contribution by providing evidence in the form of an effort to unite the use of technology with the critical pedagogy of pesantren and social activists. This finding has significance because this critical pedagogy is becoming a hot discourse, especially in educational technology, because it is considered to be a framework that promotes soial justice and equality for learners.

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