

Pesantren education system from the perspective of Paulo Freire's thought

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Abstract

This article aims to photograph the education system at Pondok Pesantren Edi Mancoro from the perspective of Paulo Freire's thought on education as a liberation practice. This article answers the criticism that pesantren is an educational institution that is rigid, restrictive, static, and exclusive. This research uses a qualitative approach and type of field research. Data collection techniques using observation, interviews, and documentation. Data analysis techniques using data presentation, data reduction, and concluding. The result of the research is a new perspective on education as a liberation practice in Pondok Pesantren Edi Mancoro. The research results show that a small part of the pesantren education system represents Paulo Freire's thought on education as a liberation practice. This research can be a reference for developing a more humanist pesantren education system.

Keywords: education system, paulo freire, pesantren

INTRODUCTION

Pesantren is said to be the oldest Islamic educational institution in Indonesia, which has existed since before the Dutch colonial era until now (Isbah, 2020 ; Meliani, Suhartini, & Basri, 2022 ; Usman, 2013). Some argue that pesantren have existed since Hindu and Buddhist times (Farida, 2019; Arifin, 2012). In addition, pesantren are also considered a miniature of moderate Indonesian Muslim communities (Ni'am, 2015 ; Abdillah, 2019 ; Aini, 2018). One of the advantages and uniqueness of Pesantren, among others, is that it is considered a humanist Islamic educational institution, and some Pesantren open the broadest possible opportunity for anyone who wants to study in Pesantren.

Pesantren are also not immune from criticism. Pesantren is often considered a static and exclusive educational institution (Zulhingga, 2013 ; Mushfi, 2017). Pesantren with several elements such as Kyai, students who live in dormitories, classical books, and mosques (Fahham, 2015 ; Anwar, 2016 ; Aziz & Perawironegoro, 2022) are known to have stringent rules for students. Strict rules and punishments are the uniqueness of pesantren that make them different from other educational institutions. The community often criticizes some pesantren that apply strict rules and corporal punishment. Lecturers from the Muhammadiyah University of ParePare in the Proceedings of the 7th National Conference held by the Association of Postgraduate Programmes of Muhammadiyah 'Aisyiyah Universities (APPPTMA) even wrote an exceptional paper criticizing the corporal punishment model prevailing in pesantren (Mutawakkil, 2018). Some criticisms and assumptions about pesantren can create a bad stigma against pesantren, and some parents hesitate to place their children in pesantren.

It becomes interesting when the pesantren education system, which is considered rigid, strict, and closed, is portrayed from the perspective of the thoughts of Paulo Freire, an educational figure who initiated liberating education. According to Paulo Freire, the pesantren education system has almost the same spirit as the concept of education. According to Paulo Freire, one thing that equates the pesantren education system with the idea of education is education for all without exception. Like Paulo Freire, who opened as widely as possible to anyone, most pesantren in Indonesia also opened as widely as possible to anyone who wants to gain knowledge there. Education for all without exception is the main strength of the education system and the concept of education, according to Paulo Freire.

Paulo Freire is an educational figure from Brazil who was born on 19 September 1921 and who, as a child, had to live in a difficult situation, especially economic problems, and experienced oppression from the state. This then made Paulo Freire's educational theories about the Pedagogy of the Oppressed and liberating education constructed (Datunsolang, 2018).

Paulo Freire's thought was a response to the oppression perpetrated by the people who caused the lower classes in Brazil to experience illiteracy and an attempt to solve the problem. Freire wanted to turn the whole world into an infinite classroom (Freire, 2001).

Is the pesantren education system indeed rigid, strict, and closed? Is it true that the pesantren education system contradicts Paulo Freire's thoughts regarding liberating education?

To answer these questions, researchers are interested in studying the education system in one of the pesantren in Semarang, namely Pesantren Edi Mancoro, then analyzing it from the perspective of Paulo Freire's thought. Pesantren di Mancoro Islamic is a pesantren located in Gedangan Village, Tuntang, Semarang Regency which has an exciting education system. Not only does it impose a traditional education system like pesantren in general, but the students are also given other education such as entrepreneurship, religious moderation, life skills, and art. In addition to having adequate facilities and infrastructure, Pesantren Edi Mancoro also has business units such as printing, publishing, and employment centers managed by the students. Among the interesting educational programs at Pesantren Edi Mancoro is a learning system similar to that of a university, and there are community service programs such as KKN (Kuliah Kerja Nyata). From this background, researchers are interested in studying the pesantren education system from Paulo Freire's thoughts at Pesantren Pesantren Edi Mancoro.

This research has similarities and differences with previous research studies. Here are some studies that have relevance to this research:

First, Aridhah Sendi Robikhah's (2018) research entitled: Paulo Freire's Liberation Education Paradigm in the Context of Islamic Religious Education. This research examines how Islamic Religious Education (PAI) is portrayed from Paulo Freire's thoughts on liberating education. Paulo Freire's liberation education in the context of Islamic Education demands that the Islamic Education materials delivered to students can answer the challenges of the times.

Second, Anatri Desstya et al. (2017) research entitled: 'Reflections on Science Education in Indonesian Primary Schools' (Relevance of Paulo Freire's Education Model with Science Education in Primary Schools). This research examines the relationship of Paulo Freire's thoughts on liberating education with science education in elementary schools. As a result, in terms of objectives, Paulo Freire's liberation education is in line with the goals of science education in elementary schools, namely developing students ability to think critically.

Third, Muhammad Rahmatullah's(2015) research entitled: Pesantren Education from the Perspective of John Dewey's Progressivism. This research portrays pesantren education from the perspective of John Dewey's Progressivism school. As a result, pesantren education is said to be in line with John Dewey's Progressivism school for one reason: the material learned in pesantren is practical and practiced in daily religious life.

Fourth, Rofik Nurhadi's (2016) research entitled: Pesantren Education System in Perspective of Democratisation. This research portrays the pesantren education system from the perspective of democratic values and principles. As a result, Kyai's leadership style, management, learning system, and the doctrine of Islamic egalitarianism taught in pesantren contribute to the principles of democracy.

The novelty of this research has several aspects. Firstly, most studies examining the thought or flow of educational philosophy are research. Meanwhile, this research examines Paulo Freire's thoughts but is field research. Researchers do not only portray pesantren education from the perspective of Paulo Freire's thoughts in general but are devoted to a particular pesantren education system, namely at Pondok Pesantren Edi Mancoro. Second, researchers have not found any research that examines the pesantren education system from the perspective of Paulo Freire's thought. From these two aspects, researchers conclude that this research has novelty.

METHOD

This research produces research conclusions in the form of data that describes in detail or research with procedures that make descriptive data (Moleong, 2008) so that it includes qualitative research. This research produces data in the form of a description of the portrait of the Pesantren education system at Pesantren Edi Mancoro, seen from the perspective of Paulo

Freire's thought. The research design used in this research is grounded theory because this research is directed to find a theory or at least strengthen a theory.

In this study, the research subjects consisted of caregivers, teaching staff, and students of Pesantren Edi Mancoro. From these research subjects, researchers comprehensively sought data on the portrait of the education system at Pesantren Edi Mancoro.

This research uses three techniques, namely interviews, observation, and documentation. Researchers interviewed the caregivers to get general data about Pesantren Edi Mancoro and the education system. Researchers will also interview *Santri* to obtain data on views, attitudes, and opinions while studying at Pesantren Edi Mancoro. Researchers conducted observations by directly observing (Mudir, 2013) using the five senses of an object, condition, behavior, situation, and process contained in Pesantren Edi Mancoro. Researchers obtained documents needed in the research, including an overview and profile of Pesantren Edi Mancoro and photos of learning activities.

This research uses Miles and Huberman's data analysis technique, data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion drawing. Researchers collected data related to learning activities at Pesantren Edi Mancoro. Afterward, researchers will classify or sort the data needed and present it. Furthermore, researchers will analyze the data presented in the form of the Pesantren education system at Pesantren Edi Mancoro, seen from the perspective of Paulo Freire's thought. Finally, the researcher concludes.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Education system in Pesantren Edi Mancoro

Pesantren Edi Mancoro has a unique education system. Because in addition to maintaining the traditional pesantren education system, Pesantren Edi Mancoro also makes innovations by combining the conventional pesantren education system with the modern pesantren education system. The vision of Pesantren Edi Mancoro is To produce cadres who are true companions of the people. Then this pesantren has a mission: forming *Santri* with deep religious insight and national and community insight in a plural Indonesian context as well as students who care in all situations and conditions and can provide broad community assistance with an open, non-profit, independent, and independent nature in determining policies and lines of struggle. The education program at Pesantren Edi Mancoro is classified

into several types, namely *Madrasatul Qur'an* (MQ) and “*Madrasah Diniyyah*”, which consists of 4 classes, namely *Khas*, *Awaliyah*, *Wustho*, and *Ulya*. The curriculum in the *Madrasah Diniyyah* consists of classical books with various disciplines such as *nahwu*, *shorof*, *tawhid*, *fiqh*, *akhlak*, *al-Qur'an*, and *hadith*. The learning method uses *sorogan*, *bandongan*, and deliberation (discussion). In addition to studying at the *madrasah diniyyah*, several extracurricular activities serve as a forum for the talents and interests of students.

Biography of Paulo Freire

Paulo Freire's name is Paulo Reglus Neves Freire; born in the small town of Recife on 19 September 1921. Recife is one of the centers of poverty in northeastern Brazil (Datunsolang, 2018). Paulo Freire's father, Joaquim Temistocles Freire, was a member of the military in Pernambuco and a follower of a mystical cult outside the official religion. Paulo Freire's mother, Edeltrudes Neves Freire, was a Catholic. Paulo Freire was born into a middle-class family, but since childhood lived in a poor situation because financial setbacks hit his family due to the economic crisis that hit the United States around 1929, which also spread to Brazil (Robikhah, 2018).

Since childhood, Paulo Freire has been used to living in hardship and enduring hunger. This motivated him to dedicate his life to fighting hunger. When he was ten years old, his family moved to Jabatao. His father soon died in this city, leaving Paulo Freire to struggle with a transitional period of financial deprivation. Under these conditions, Paulo Freire was part of the "ragtag people of the earth." When he was eight years old, Paulo Freire even experienced extreme hunger. This condition also influenced Paulo Freire's character in responding to every reality that emerged. Paulo Freire became very sensitive and critical of every reality he faced. From a young age, Paulo Freire was determined to fight for the rights of the hungry (Datunsolang, 2018).

At school, Paulo Freire was two years behind his classmates. At 15, Paulo Freire graduated with barely enough grades to get into high school. However, Paulo Freire finally finished high school after his family situation improved somewhat. Paulo Freire continued his education by entering the University of Recife and studying law (Husni, 2020). Paulo Freire also worked part-time as a Portuguese instructor at a secondary school. Like many teenagers, Paulo Freire began questioning the discrepancies between the sermons he heard in church

And the realities of everyday life (Collins, 2011). Paulo Freire finally earned his doctorate in 1959 at the University of Recife with a dissertation on Adult Education (Murtiningsih, 2004).

When Brazil experienced a military coup in 1964, Paulo Freire was arrested and detained because his teachings and methodology in eradicating illiteracy were considered subversive. After being released from prison, Paulo Freire traveled to Chile and became involved in an illiteracy eradication program that eventually attracted international attention. Paulo Freire was then invited to work for Unesco at The Children Institute for Agrarian Reform (Murtiningsih, 2004). In 1969-1970, Paulo Freire was invited by Harvard University to be a visiting professor. Paulo Freire taught at the Harvard Center for Studies in Education and Development and was a member of the Center for the Study of Development and Social Change (Collins, 2011). In 1970, Paulo Freire moved to Switzerland and worked as a consultant until he became assistant secretary for education at the World Council of Churches in Geneva. By mid-1979, Paulo Freire's thoughts were well-known in many countries. The Brazilian government finally asked Paulo Freire to return home to lead a faculty at the University of Sao Paulo (Murtiningsih, 2004).

Several works of Paulo Freire are pretty famous and influential to the world. *Educacao Como Practica da Liberdade* (free translation: Education as a Practice of Liberation) was written while Paulo Freire was in prison. Paulo Freire also wrote two critical essays for the Harvard Educational Review entitled Adult Literacy Process as Cultural for Freedom and Cultural Action and conscientisation. Another well-known work of Paulo Freire is a book entitled Pedagogy of the Oppressed (free translation: Education of the Oppressed). Paulo Freire also wrote other works across many countries (Murtiningsih, 2004).

The Education System of Pesantren Edi Mancoro from the Perspective of Paulo Freire's Thought

At least eight points represent Paulo Freire's thoughts on liberating education in the book "*Educacao Como Practica da Liberdade*." The following explains the eight points of Paulo Freire's idea and its contextualization in the education system at Pesantren Edi Mancoro.

Firstly, education that facilitates transitive-naive consciousness to transitive-critical consciousness will develop humans' ability to see the challenges of their times (Freire, 2001). The concept of education that promotes transitive-naive consciousness to transitive-critical consciousness means educating human beings to continuously become critical in facing the

transition period that will continue to roll. This means that the movement and change of the times will continue. Humans should not be naive, passive, believe in irrational things, and cannot do much in the face of changing times. Humans are expected to be able to be critical and play an active role and even make a glorious history during changing times.

In the context of the education system of Pesantren Edi Mancoro, what is meant by critical awareness is awareness as a Muslim and *Santri* and the responsibilities that surround it, and must be able to see challenges in modern times that can threaten the existence and authority of Islamic values and pesantren. To prepare *Santri* who have such abilities, Pesantren Edi Mancoro not only equips *Santri* with solid religious knowledge but also provides opportunities and experiences for *Santri* to study other fields outside of religion such as learning to organize, entrepreneurship and work experience, as well as direct service experience in the community.

Second, education makes people dare to talk about the problems of their environment and intervene in the background (Freire, 2001). Paulo Freire wants people not to remain silent and leave the issues to the authorities. Paulo Freire wants people to dare talk about the problems that arise in the environment and discuss solutions together. Not only that, but people also dare to intervene directly in solving these problems.

In the context of the education system of Pesantren Edi Mancoro, the environmental problems in question are religious issues that arise in society, for example, related to fiqh laws that will continue to emerge along with the pace of development of the times. Every *Santri* who has graduated from the pesantren will be considered the person who knows the most about religious issues. They are usually the place where people ask questions about religion. For various religious affairs in the community, they are generally also handed over to pesantren graduates. Pesantren Edi Mancoro prepares this through various educational programs. In addition to being equipped with a strong understanding of religion, the students also have the experience of mingling with the community around Pesantren Edi Mancoro. The students can see and hear firsthand the various religious issues that arise in the community.

Third, education can warn people of the dangers of the times and provide confidence and strength to face these dangers (Freire, 2001). Paulo Freire considers that threats will always continue to emerge along with the pace of development. Paulo Freire wants people to be

aware of these dangers. Furthermore, Paulo Freire wants people to be mindful of the risks and have the confidence, strength, and ability to face them.

In the context of the education system of Pesantren Edi Mancoro, the danger in question is in the form of erosion of religious values and pesantren where pesantren are required to make *Santri* have the confidence and strength to face this danger. Each *Santri* carries a colossal mandate, namely how to share the teachings of Islam with the community and maintain the values of Islamic teachings so that they do not fade eroded by the pace of development of an increasingly modern era. The *Santri* are expected to have the courage and confidence to preach wherever they are, even though danger will always lurk.

Fourth, education can change people's critical attitude toward the world (Freire, 2001). Paulo Freire wants education to shape people to be more critical of everything that happens in the world, one of which is required of government policies. Paulo Freire wants people not to take for granted what the government makes for the people. They must be able to criticize whether the policy is perfect for the people or only suitable for the elites but detrimental to the people. In addition, Paulo Freire also wants humans to be able to change the world, not to be the object of world change, but as an object. With the potential of reason that every human being has, Paulo Freire believes that every human being can change the world.

In the context of the education system of Pesantren Edi Mancoro, the critique referred to here is the critique that *Santri* must own in the context of an effort to solve problems related to religious teachings that arise in society. After going directly to the community, the *Santri* will face various issues related to religion. The *Santri* are expected to be critical in seeing the problems that arise and be able to solve these problems. For issues related to religion, the community entrusts more to pesantren alumni. In addition, the *Santri* are also expected to be able to change the environment that is not good to be better, an environment that does not know religion well know the faith.

Fifth, education can make people able to face problems as well as familiar with these problems, which is oriented toward research, not only facing irrelevant principles (Freire, 2001). Paulo Freire wants education to make human beings brave, resilient, and strong in facing problems or problems that arise in their lives. The courage possessed makes humans not reluctant to be familiar with issues and be able to solve them. But not only that, the way to

solve problems must be based on scientific research, not just based on assumptions and beliefs.

In the context of the education system of Pesantren Edi Mancoro, it continues the previous point, which is to educate *Santri* to become critical human beings in responding to problems surrounding religion and being able to solve these problems. This point discusses the methods used in solving the issues surrounding religion. The purpose of research orientation in the context of pesantren is to solve problems related to religious teaching issues using standardized methods, both *qauli* and *manhaji* methods. The *qauli* method is quoting the statements of scholars in books associated with the law of a case or action. The opinions of these scholars are used to answer religious issues that arise in society. While the *manhaji* method is a method that only takes the pattern and flow of thinking of the scholars in determining a law, the design and flow of thought of these scholars are used to answer religious issues that arise in society. This *manhaji* method is usually used to solve problems that have never occurred in the era in which scholars lived.

Sixth, education encourages people to discuss, work and create (Freire, 2001). Paulo Freire is known as a thinker in education, but from his actions in the field, he deserves to be labeled as an educational practitioner. Paulo Freire formulated his version of education methodology and took real action by applying the method. In addition to being able to discuss, the ideal education, according to Paulo Freire, is education that can encourage people to work. Work under the knowledge possessed and concerned so far.

Furthermore, it is expected that humans can become 'creators,' discovering new things that have never existed before. Paulo Freire made himself a role model where he could discuss and dialogue about education according to his version and work realistically, applying what was discussed and dialogued. Even better, Paulo Freire created a new methodology in education.

In the context of the education system at Pesantren Edi Mancoro, discussing, in this case, is deliberating in discussing issues surrounding religious teachings, working in the context of being able to go directly into the community to solve problems and work in the real sense of earning money, and creating scientific works such as writing books, articles, and translating texts by scholars. The students of Pesantren Edi Mancoro learn to discuss through deliberation activities held in the Ulya class, discussing the material studied and problems

that arise in the community. The students of Pesantren Edi Mancoro learn to work in the context of going directly to the community to solve problems through KKN and PPL activities. The students of pesantren Edi Mancoro learn to work in the real sense of earning money through several business units owned by the pesantren. The students of Pesantren Edi Mancoro learn to write books and articles and translate texts by scholars through the Pesantren Edi Mancoro Press Agency and the final assignment of writing scientific papers.

Seventh, education makes people not afraid to discuss reality, not scared to be laughed at, and brave enough to discuss things (Freire, 2001). Human beings have the same right to life. One of the humans' fundamental rights is the right to speak and discuss many things, following their knowledge and experience. There should be no silencing. No human being should be afraid to examine reality. Paulo Freire wants education that can make human beings into whole human beings who dare to do what is suitable as human beings, namely discussing facts, even if they have to become objects of laughter.

In the context of the education system at Pesantren Edi Mancoro, what is meant by reality is in the context of the fact of the life of Muslims and various problems where *Santri* is not afraid to discuss these matters even if they are laughed at, reviled, insulted, or get a wrong response. The students of Pesantren Edi Mancoro are expected to have a mentality as strong as steel because preaching religion is not easy. They must be ready to face criticism, insults, and wrong responses and be laughed at by many people. To train the mentality of students to be tough and as strong as steel, Pesantren Edi Mancoro provides the broadest possible opportunity for students to be involved in various existing organizations.

Eighth, education is for everyone, whether poor or rich; all have the right to education (Freire, 2001). Paulo Freire is among those who believe that poverty does not occur naturally but is a systematic effort by the ruling elite in various fields, including education. Education is designed in such a way that the aristocracy and the oppressed remain in their status unchanged. Expensive schools that the poor cannot afford are part of a systematic effort to perpetuate the position of the elite and oppressed. Every human being has the right to get a proper education.

Pesantren Edi Mancoro is open to anyone who wants to study at its without seeing social status with a very affordable, and even free fee. For those free, it is usually intended for *Santri*, meaning *Santri*, who helps with the housework of the caregiver's family. This point

Reinforces that the concept of education, according to Paulo Freire, has similarities with the idea of pesantren education, one of which is Pesantren Edi Mancoro.

CONCLUSION

Based on the results and discussion, it can be concluded that the Education System in Pesantren Edi Mancoro from the perspective of Paulo Freire's thoughts is an interpretation of Paulo Freire's thoughts, then contextualized with the education system in Pesantren Edi Mancoro. Paulo Freire's thoughts in the book *Educano Como Practica Da Liberdade* are contextualized with the educational process held at the Pesantren Edi Mancoro pesantren. According to Paulo Freire, Pesantren Edi Mancoro has almost the same spirit as the concept of education. According to Paulo Freire, one thing that equates the pesantren education system with the idea of education is education for all without exception. Just like Paulo Freire, who opened as widely as possible to anyone, Edi Mancoro also opened as widely as possible education, Pesantren, to anyone who wanted to study there. Education for all without exception is the main strength of the education system at Pesantren Edi Mancoro and the concept of education, according to Paulo Freire. However, despite having the same spirit, it does not mean that the education system at Pesantren Edi Mancoro does not have considerable differences with the concept of education, according to Paulo Freire. If Paulo Freire describes education that is as free without limits, the Pesantren Edi Mancoro education system provides freedom but is still limited by Pesantren regulations.

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