THE APPLICATION OF CRITICAL PEDAGOGY IN DEVELOPING STUDENTS' SOCIAL AND MORAL AWARENESS THROUGH PANCASILA AND CITIZENSHIP EDUCATION

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to analyze the development of students' critical awareness and political understanding through the application of critical pedagogy in social studies education. Using qualitative research methods, data were collected through observation, assessment, and documentation at SMKN 1 Aceh Tengah. This study focused on evaluating students' abilities to identify social injustice, analyze power structures, and engage in political issues both locally and globally. The results showed that students demonstrated a good level of critical thinking in recognizing social injustice and understanding the impact of political decisions on everyday life. In addition, students demonstrated an active commitment to social and political change by expressing their opinions ethically and seeking solutions to social problems. These findings suggest that integrating critical pedagogy into social studies learning effectively fosters socially and politically conscious students, in line with the goal of civic education to create reflective, responsible, and active members of society.

Keywords : *Critical Pedagogy; Social Awareness; Morals; Civic Education*

INTRODUCTION

The Indonesian nation is at a critical juncture, determining whether it will succeed in its struggle to achieve its goals of improving public welfare, educating the nation, and contributing to creating a world based on freedom, lasting peace, and social justice. Facing the challenges of an era marked by globalization and the rapid development of information technology, the younger generation is required to possess abilities beyond mere academic intelligence; they also need to be equipped with a strong social awareness. This is why it is crucial for everyone involved in education to recognize that education should aim to shape the whole person.

Law No. 20 of 2003 concerning the Education System states that education is a conscious and planned effort to create a learning and teaching environment so that students actively develop their potential to possess spiritual and religious strength, self-control, personality, intelligence, noble character, and the skills needed for themselves and society. Dewey (2003) explains that education is the process of developing fundamental intellectual and emotional skills toward nature and fellow human beings. In today's era of globalization and digital revolution, education is required to not only transfer knowledge, but also equip students with critical thinking skills, creativity, and moral character that are able to answer the challenges of an ever-changing era.

One important form of progress we can observe in the development of thought in the world of education is the emergence of the concept of critical pedagogy, an approach first introduced by Paulo Freire (Utami and Alfian, 2017). This concept marks a major shift in perspective on the educational process, from a mere transfer of knowledge to a dialogical process that empowers students. Critical pedagogy not only teaches academic skills but also encourages students to develop a critical awareness of the social, cultural, and political realities around them. Critical pedagogy is the idea of critiquing outdated views, formulating new perspectives on humans in relation to their social environment, and encouraging people to participate in the process of building a just and prosperous democratic society (Giroux, 2011). Thus, this approach emphasizes that education should be a tool for liberating humans from various forms of oppression, while simultaneously opening up space for active participation in building a more just and democratic society.

Critical pedagogy is fundamentally closely linked to the realm of social and political awareness. This approach positions education not simply as a neutral process of imparting knowledge, but as a politically charged activity capable of opening students' awareness to the social realities around them. By linking education to political issues, students are encouraged to develop critical thinking skills, question existing social conditions, and understand the power dynamics that shape their daily lives. Through this process of critical understanding, students are expected to become more than passive observers, but rather to take an active and responsible role in promoting more just and humane social change (Giroux, 2018). Within this framework, it is crucial for students to be able to connect the personal challenges they face with broader social issues, as the two are inseparable. Every individual's problems are essentially a reflection of larger social, economic, and political structures. For example, a person's struggle to find employment cannot be understood solely as a matter of personal skills, but must be viewed in relation to national economic growth, available job opportunities, and the economic policies implemented by the government. Likewise, the difficulties faced by students in paying for education fees are not only an individual problem, but are closely related to how educational institutions are managed,

including how the state builds a national education paradigm that is oriented towards accessibility and justice.

In this regard, the boundaries between the private and public spheres become blurred, and personal experiences are always closely connected to larger social structures. Therefore, education through a critical pedagogical approach seeks to equip students with the ability to structurally analyze social reality, enabling them to understand the connection between personal experiences and public challenges, and to actively participate in the process of political transformation toward a more just and civilized society.

Students are social beings, meaning they cannot live alone without communicating with others. Fundamentally, no human being is truly perfect; every individual has both strengths and weaknesses. However, these shortcomings can be complemented through social interaction with others. In this process of social communication, individuals within society collectively form a system of values and norms that serve as the foundation for regulating social behavior. These values and norms serve as guidelines for community members in carrying out various activities, thus creating order in communal life. However, the existence of a system of values and norms alone does not automatically guarantee the creation of an orderly, balanced, and harmonious society. In practice, discrepancies, violations of norms, and even social conflict are still common. Therefore, the success of a social system in creating order and harmony depends heavily on the level of social awareness possessed by each member of society. Social awareness means an individual's ability to understand, appreciate, and commit to collective values, as well as a willingness to adjust personal interests for the common good (Fathurrahman et al., 2013). Without social and political awareness, there will be only formal rules with little influence. This awareness needs to be continuously cultivated through education, role models, and active participation in community life. Thus, the creation of an orderly, peaceful, and just society depends not only on written rules, but also on the involvement of conscience and social responsibility of each citizen.

As a reference, based on previous research conducted by Febrianti (2024), students were able to more critically understand the power dynamics woven into language and become more reflective about the social conditions around them. Furthermore, it also demonstrates that critical pedagogy facilitates students' active engagement in dialogue, critical thinking, and social action as part of the learning process. Furthermore, Elu (2021) explains that through critical pedagogy, students are able to develop critical awareness to face the world. The critical awareness possessed by educators and students enables them to not objectify each other but to develop an attitude of respect as equal subjects, with the world as their object.

Based on the background of the problem outlined previously, the researcher is interested in examining in more depth how the application of critical pedagogy can contribute to developing students' social and political awareness, particularly through social studies education. The researcher aims to understand the extent to which a critical pedagogical approach can develop critical thinking skills, awareness of issues of social injustice, and active student involvement in the social and political dynamics around them. In addition, this study aims to explore concrete practices in classrooms that use the principles of critical pedagogy, and evaluate their effectiveness in encouraging students to become more reflective, caring individuals, and ready to participate in social change efforts.

METHOD

This study uses a qualitative research method with a descriptive method. According to Denzin & Lincoln (2018), a qualitative method is a research method that uses a natural setting with the intention of interpreting the phenomena that occur and is carried out by involving various existing methods. The reason for using a qualitative method is because the researcher wants to describe the events being studied and then describe them in the form of a description of the application of critical pedagogy can contribute to developing social and political awareness of students through social science education. This research was conducted at State Senior High School 7 Surakarta. With research objects of 6 students in 3 levels (10, 11, 12). This research was conducted naturally without any treatment of the research subjects.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

The application of critical pedagogy to develop students' social and political awareness involves data collection using instruments that refer to three main components: (1) Development of Critical Awareness, (2) Reflection on social reality, and (3) Critique of power structures (Giroux, 2018). Each component is measured through a number of sub-indicators assessed based on the predicate categories: Good and Fair.

The results of the assessment of these three components are presented in the following table. This table shows the distribution of subject predicates for each indicator and sub-indicator that have been designed. This data serves as the basis for conducting an in-depth analysis of the application of the critical pedagogy approach in social science learning.

Components and Indicators (Critical Pedagogy and Social Awareness)
Predicate Subject
1 2 3 4 5 6
1. Development of Critical Awareness
Students are able to identify social injustices in their surrounding environment
Good
Good
Good
Good
Good
Good
Students question norms, policies, or social practices that are considered unfair
Good
Good
Good
Good
Good
Good
2. Reflection on Social Reality
Students develop an awareness that personal experiences are connected to the broader social context
Good

Good
Good
Good
Good
Good
Good
Good

3. Students reflect on the relationship between personal experiences and social structures

Good
Good
Good
Good
Good
Good

Based on the analysis of the critical pedagogy and social awareness component table, it can be seen that in the aspect of developing critical awareness, students demonstrate quite good abilities in identifying social injustices in their surroundings. This is evident in the predominance of "Good" grades given to almost all subjects. This ability is important because it provides the initial foundation for students to understand social reality and foster empathy for the injustices that occur around them. This awareness of injustice also serves as the basis for encouraging them to participate in social change efforts.

Furthermore, in the indicator of questioning social norms, policies, or practices deemed unjust, students also demonstrated good results. This indicates that they are not simply accepting social conditions as they are but are beginning to develop critical thinking skills. Students who are able to question unjust norms or policies demonstrate that the process of internalizing the values of social justice has been effective. This is a key characteristic of critical pedagogy, which encourages students to be more than passive in their dealings with existing social structures.

The second component, reflection on social reality, allows students to develop an awareness that their personal experiences are connected to the broader social context. The results showed that the majority of students received a "Good" score, indicating that they understood that the events they experienced did not occur in a vacuum but were influenced by broader social, cultural, and economic factors. This demonstrates progress in building collective social awareness.

Furthermore, students also received a good score in reflecting on the relationship between personal experiences and social structures. This demonstrates that students not only understand the connection between their personal lives and social conditions but are also able to articulate this connection effectively. This ability is crucial in developing individuals who are aware of their role in society and understand their social responsibilities.

The third component, critical assessment of power structures, indicates that students are quite successful in identifying structures of power and domination in society. A dominant assessment of "Good" indicates that they are able to understand how power operates and how domination can occur in various life contexts. This understanding is crucial so that students do not become victims of injustice, but are able to recognize and challenge it constructively.

Furthermore, students' ability to be critical of various forms of oppression, discrimination, and marginalization also shows good development. This demonstrates that the learning process

has successfully instilled the values of justice, equality, and respect for human rights. This critical attitude is necessary in social life to create a more just and inclusive environment.

Overall, the table illustrates that the critical pedagogical approach and social awareness applied in learning have had a positive impact on student development. Students are not only able to identify injustice and domination but are also beginning to develop a critical and reflective attitude towards the social reality around them. This aligns with the goal of critical education, which aims to shape individuals who think freely, fairly, and responsibly towards their community.

However, although the results achieved are quite satisfactory, it is important to remember that developing critical awareness is a long-term process. Continuous mentoring and the provision of open discussion spaces are necessary so that students can continue to hone their analytical skills. Teachers also need to link learning materials to current issues relevant to students' lives so that the process of social criticism does not stop in the classroom.

In conclusion, the results of this evaluation demonstrate the students' great potential to become agents of social change in the future. By continuously fostering critical thinking and reflective skills, and awareness of power structures, students will be better prepared to face the complex challenges of social life. Therefore, the role of teachers in facilitating this process is crucial to ensure that the values of social justice and equality continue to be instilled in the educational process.

Based on the data obtained from the two tables regarding Critical Pedagogy and Social Awareness and Critical Pedagogy and Moral Pedagogy, it can be concluded that students have demonstrated good development in critical thinking skills in identifying social injustice, analyzing power structures, and understanding political dynamics in their surroundings. These achievements indicate that students are beginning to develop social and political awareness, which is essential for developing active, caring, and responsible citizens. In the context of social sciences, these results are highly relevant because Civics (PPKn) aims to develop students' insight into social realities, build critical awareness, and cultivate the socio-political skills needed in community life.

Students' abilities to identify social problems, critique unjust norms and practices, and reflect on broader social experiences demonstrate that the critical pedagogy approach successfully connects learning to the realities of everyday life. This aligns with the goal of PPKn, which is not only to transfer theoretical knowledge but also to equip students with reflective, critical, and analytical thinking skills regarding the social dynamics around them. This critical pedagogy-based PPKn learning makes students not only passive observers of social phenomena, but also encourages them to question, understand, and even seek solutions to various existing social injustice issues.

CONCLUSIONS

Students have demonstrated considerable proficiency in identifying social injustice, analyzing power structures, and understanding political dynamics in their environment. This achievement demonstrates that a critical pedagogy-based learning approach successfully fosters reflective awareness, analytical thinking, and encourages active student participation in social and political issues. This aligns with the primary goal of social studies (IPS), which focuses not only on mastery of material but also on developing social sensitivity and the ability to take responsible action.

In general, the integration of critical pedagogy into IPS learning has proven effective in strengthening students' roles as agents of social change, aware of injustice and able to offer solutions. This awareness is a crucial foundation for developing democratic, just, and critical-thinking citizens. Therefore, efforts to maintain and enrich this approach in the learning process must be ongoing so that students can play an active role in building a more just and civilized society.

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