



Conscientização in Freirean Critical Pedagogy: Implications for Strengthening Civic Reasoning in the Post-Truth Era

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Abstrak

The post-truth era has significantly transformed the nature of public discourse, where emotional appeals and misleading narratives frequently outweigh objective facts. This phenomenon poses serious challenges to education, particularly in developing students' critical reasoning and civic responsibility. Traditional instructional models based on passive knowledge transmission, commonly referred to as Banking Education, have proven inadequate in equipping learners with the analytical skills necessary to confront digital disinformation. This study aims to examine the relevance of Paulo Freire's Critical Pedagogy, particularly the concept of conscientização (critical consciousness), in strengthening civic reasoning in the post-truth era. Employing a qualitative library research method, this study analyzes major works by Freire and selected scholarly articles related to critical pedagogy, critical literacy, and post-truth discourse. The findings indicate that conscientização offers a transformative pedagogical framework that encourages learners to move beyond naïve awareness toward critical and reflective engagement with social realities. Through dialogical learning and problem-posing education, students develop the capacity to evaluate information critically, resist manipulation, and participate responsibly in democratic processes. This study concludes that Freirean Critical Pedagogy provides an essential philosophical foundation for contemporary education and should be integrated into modern curricula to foster critical, ethical, and emancipatory civic reasoning.

Kata Kunci: existentialism, EFL, humanistic learning, Merdeka Belajar, Indonesian education

Abstract

The post-truth era has significantly transformed the nature of public discourse, where emotional appeals and misleading narratives frequently outweigh objective facts. This phenomenon poses serious challenges to education, particularly in developing students' critical reasoning and civic responsibility. Traditional instructional models based on passive knowledge transmission, commonly referred to as Banking Education, have proven inadequate in equipping learners with the analytical skills necessary to confront digital disinformation. This study aims to examine the relevance of Paulo Freire's Critical Pedagogy, particularly the concept of conscientização (critical consciousness), in strengthening civic reasoning in the post-truth era. Employing a qualitative library research method, this study analyzes major works by Freire and selected scholarly articles related to critical pedagogy, critical literacy, and post-truth discourse. The findings indicate that conscientização offers a transformative pedagogical framework that encourages learners to move beyond naïve awareness toward critical and reflective engagement with social realities. Through dialogical learning and problem-posing education, students develop the capacity to evaluate information critically, resist manipulation, and participate responsibly in democratic processes. This study concludes that Freirean Critical Pedagogy provides an essential philosophical foundation for contemporary education and should be integrated into modern curricula to foster critical, ethical, and emancipatory civic reasoning.

Keywords: Critical Pedagogy, Paulo Freire, Conscientização, Post-Truth, Civic Reasoning, Critical Consciousness

1. Introduction

Education plays a fundamental role in shaping human consciousness, social responsibility, and democratic participation within modern societies. Education can be understood as a cultural and political space in which democratic values are developed through critical dialogue (Giroux, 2016). Learning is also expected to foster social justice, ethical awareness, and a strong sense of social responsibility (McLaren, 2015). Furthermore,

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education is viewed as a process that restores human dignity by positioning learners as active subjects in constructing knowledge (Freire, 2018). Critical thinking is considered essential for sustaining democratic citizenship in contemporary societies (Nussbaum, 2016). In addition, education should prioritize human subjectivity rather than focusing merely on technical efficiency and measurable outcomes (Biesta, 2015). Together, these perspectives suggest that education should nurture intellectual autonomy, moral sensitivity, and civic responsibility.

Educational philosophy serves as a foundational framework that determines whether learning promotes emancipation or reinforces passivity and ideological conformity. Without critical reflection, education may function as a tool of domination rather than liberation (Freire, 2018). Uncritical pedagogical practices tend to reproduce hegemonic values and perpetuate social inequalities (Giroux, 2018). Technocratic approaches to education are also seen as weakening students' moral agency and ethical responsibility (McLaren, 2015). The neglect of ethical reasoning in schooling can further undermine the development of responsible and reflective citizens (Nussbaum, 2016). Moreover, market-oriented educational models often marginalize critical dialogue and reduce learning to economic utility (Peters, 2017). Collectively, these perspectives emphasize the importance of philosophical engagement in shaping emancipatory learning environments.

In recent decades, the philosophical mission of education has faced serious challenges in the post-truth era. Public discourse is often shaped by emotion and ideology rather than reason (Bandarsyah, 2019). Digital platforms favor speed and popularity over accuracy (Peters, 2017). Algorithms strengthen polarization and spread misinformation (Fuchs, 2018). Echo chambers weaken rational debate (Sunstein, 2017). Young people are highly vulnerable to misleading content (Fatmawati, 2019). These conditions reduce critical awareness (Freire, 2018). Digital technology has also changed how people consume information. Networked societies reshape thinking patterns (Castells, 2015). Participatory media influences identity and politics (Jenkins et al., 2016). Digital literacy remains unequal (Buckingham, 2015). Uncritical online activity creates risks (Livingstone, 2018). Digital capitalism reinforces ideological control (Fuchs, 2018). Without critical pedagogy, technology may deepen oppression (Freire, 2018). Therefore, education must respond through ethical reflection and critical learning.

Despite these complex challenges, many educational institutions still rely on traditional pedagogical models that emphasize memorization, obedience, and standardized assessment. Authoritarian classroom structures often silence students' voices and limit participation (Giroux, 2016). Traditional pedagogy also tends to suppress dialogue and creativity (McLaren, 2015). Teacher-centered instruction remains dominant in many schools (Fikri, 2024). Standardized education weakens democratic learning practices (Biesta, 2015). These models reduce ethical reasoning and civic engagement (Nussbaum, 2016). They also reproduce intellectual dependency among learners (Freire, 2018). As a result, students' critical development remains limited. Learners are positioned as passive recipients rather than active meaning makers. Such passivity diminishes creativity and human dignity (Freire, 2018). Passive learning is also linked to ideological domination (Giroux, 2018). Intellectual conformity contributes to political disengagement (McLaren, 2015). Democratic societies require the ability to question authority (Nussbaum, 2016). Educational passivity is further connected to digital manipulation (Peters, 2017). Depersonalized schooling weakens learner identity (Biesta, 2015). Therefore, these scholars advocate participatory and dialogical learning environments.

In response to the current educational crisis, Critical Pedagogy has developed as a transformative philosophical movement that reconnects learning with social justice and democratic responsibility. It is widely understood as a form of resistance against social and cultural oppression (McLaren, 2015). It also promotes democratic participation and active citizenship (Giroux, 2016). Dialogue and solidarity are viewed as central foundations of emancipatory education (Freire, 2018). Critical Pedagogy is further interpreted as a critical way of producing and validating knowledge (Kincheloe, 2016). It emphasizes ethical responsibility in educational practice (Biesta, 2015). It also contributes to the development of global citizenship and moral awareness (Nussbaum, 2016). Through these principles, learning becomes reflective and socially engaged. At its core lies the concept of critical consciousness or *conscientização*. This concept refers to awareness combined with transformative social action (Freire, 2018). It also involves cognitive, emotional, and existential liberation (Dagostino Kalniz, 2017; Bethari, 2024). Critical consciousness supports cultural critique and political agency (Giroux, 2016; McLaren, 2015). It strengthens moral reasoning and ethical judgment (Nussbaum, 2016). Through dialogical learning, learners develop reflective judgment and social responsibility. Problem-posing education is considered a foundation of meaningful dialogue (Freire, 2018). Discursive engagement encourages critical debate and resistance (Giroux, 2018; McLaren, 2015). Critical questioning supports deeper understanding (Kincheloe, 2016). Dialogue is closely linked to democratic learning practices (Biesta, 2015).

Reflective learning also promotes digital awareness (Peters, 2017). Together, these processes foster intellectual autonomy and civic maturity.

Within digital society, critical consciousness plays an essential role in strengthening civic reasoning and democratic participation. Dialogical approaches are important for developing active and responsible citizenship (Laila et al., 2024). Public deliberation supports moral judgment and democratic decision making (Sunstein, 2017). Ethical reasoning is central to meaningful civic life (Nussbaum, 2016). Critical digital literacy enables individuals to evaluate online information responsibly (Peters, 2017). Media critique also contributes to democratic resilience and social awareness (Fuchs, 2018). Participatory engagement strengthens collective responsibility and political involvement (Jenkins et al., 2016). Therefore, civic reasoning requires reflective, ethical, and socially responsible judgment. This study aims to analyze the implications of Freirean Critical Pedagogy in strengthening civic reasoning in the post-truth era. Emancipatory learning is grounded in humanization and critical awareness (Freire, 2018). Democratic perspectives support inclusive participation (Giroux, 2016). Social transformation remains a central educational goal (McLaren, 2015). Existential awareness strengthens personal meaning in learning (Bethari, 2024). Psychological insights contribute to understanding learner development (Dagostino Kalniz, 2017). The integration of theory and practice supports effective civic education (Laila et al., 2024). By combining these perspectives, this research seeks to develop an emancipatory educational framework for contemporary digital societies.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Critical Pedagogy and Freirean Educational Philosophy

Critical Pedagogy emerged as a response to traditional educational models that emphasized obedience, memorization, and hierarchical authority. These approaches often positioned teachers as unquestionable authorities and students as passive recipients of knowledge. Such models tend to limit students' capacity for critical reflection and democratic engagement (Giroux, 2016). Authoritarian schooling also suppresses creativity and social awareness (McLaren, 2015). Education structured around domination weakens human dignity and intellectual freedom (Freire, 2018). Democratic societies require learning practices that cultivate independent judgment and moral responsibility (Nussbaum, 2016). Therefore, Critical Pedagogy aims to transform classrooms into spaces of dialogue, reflection, and active social participation.

Rooted in critical theory and humanist philosophy, Critical Pedagogy views education as a political and ethical practice oriented toward social transformation. Learning is not understood as a neutral activity but as a process shaped by historical, cultural, and ideological influences. Every educational practice reflects particular values and power relations (McLaren, 2015). Schools function as cultural institutions that can either reinforce or challenge social inequality (Giroux, 2018). Educators are therefore responsible for the social consequences of their teaching (Freire, 2018). Critical pedagogy also encourages learners to examine how information is produced and circulated in society (Peters, 2017). Through this perspective, education becomes a form of cultural and political engagement grounded in ethical awareness and critical reflection..

Critical Pedagogy and emancipatory education are strongly influenced by foundational ideas that emphasize humanization, dialogue, and social justice. Traditional schooling often positions learners as passive objects rather than active creators of knowledge (Freire, 2018). Oppressive educational practices tend to reproduce social inequality by limiting critical inquiry and collective reflection. Dialogical approaches challenge hierarchical classroom structures and authoritarian teaching styles (Giroux, 2016). This perspective also connects education with broader struggles for social justice and human liberation (McLaren, 2015). It promotes existential awareness and ethical responsibility in learning processes (Bethari, 2024). Through dialogue and reflective praxis, learners are encouraged to reclaim their agency and human dignity. This approach also strengthens students' capacity to participate actively in social change and democratic life.

At the core of Freirean philosophy lies the principle of dialogue and collective inquiry in learning processes. Authentic learning develops through reciprocal communication between teachers and students (Freire, 2018). Dialogue creates spaces for critical debate and democratic participation (Giroux, 2018). It also serves as a foundation for developing political consciousness and social awareness (McLaren, 2015). Through dialogue, learners connect personal experiences with broader structural and social analysis (Kincheloe, 2016). Dialogical education further strengthens digital and media literacy skills (Peters, 2017). These processes enable students to question dominant narratives and construct knowledge collaboratively. Dialogical learning also

fosters mutual respect and empathy among learners. As a result, classrooms become inclusive spaces that support critical reflection and collective problem solving.

Several contemporary scholars have expanded Freirean ideas to address global inequalities and the challenges of digital capitalism. Critical Pedagogy is understood as a form of cultural politics that resists neoliberal educational reforms (Giroux, 2016). Market-oriented schooling tends to weaken ethical awareness and civic responsibility (McLaren, 2015). Digital capitalism is closely linked to ideological control and information manipulation (Fuchs, 2018). Technological development without critical awareness may reinforce new forms of social and cultural oppression (Freire, 2018). Education also plays a central role in developing global citizenship and intercultural understanding (Nussbaum, 2016). These perspectives show that Critical Pedagogy remains highly relevant for addressing social injustice, media domination, and democratic decline in contemporary societies..

2.2 The Concept of Conscientização and Critical Consciousness

Conscientização holds a central position in Freirean educational philosophy as a process of intellectual and moral liberation. Critical consciousness develops when individuals recognize social realities as historically constructed and open to transformation (Freire, 2018). This awareness enables learners to challenge ideological domination within cultural practices (Giroux, 2016). It also connects personal reflection with collective social action (McLaren, 2015). Ethical judgment grows through sustained critical inquiry and moral reasoning (Nussbaum, 2016). Critical awareness is further required to navigate complex and misleading information environments (Peters, 2017). These perspectives show that conscientização represents a multidimensional process of intellectual empowerment and social responsibility.

The development of critical consciousness requires continuous engagement with lived experience through dialogical learning. Dialogue enables learners to reinterpret social meanings collaboratively and reflect on shared experiences (Freire, 2018). Dialogical spaces promote democratic participation and mutual respect among learners (Giroux, 2018). Questioning dominant narratives remains central to emancipatory learning processes (Kincheloe, 2016). Reflective dialogue also supports resistance to ideological manipulation and misinformation (Fuchs, 2018). Dialogical engagement strengthens critical media literacy and interpretative competence (Buckingham, 2015). These learning processes encourage learners to become more self-aware and socially responsive. Through these practices, learners develop the analytical skills necessary for social critique and responsible civic participation.

Beyond cognitive development, conscientização also involves emotional transformation and psychological empowerment. This process reflects a shift from fear and dependency toward confidence, resilience, and critical resistance (Dagostino Kalniz, 2017). Critical consciousness enables individuals to reclaim existential freedom and moral agency in social life (Bethari, 2024). Emotional engagement also strengthens political commitment and social responsibility (McLaren, 2015). Empathy supports the development of responsible and inclusive citizenship (Nussbaum, 2016). Self-reflection plays a key role in ethical judgment and decision making (Peters, 2017). These processes help learners manage emotions in complex social situations. They also strengthen self-confidence in expressing critical opinions. Together, these findings show that conscientização integrates intellectual growth with emotional maturity and psychological well-being.

In contemporary digital societies, critical consciousness is closely connected to media literacy and information evaluation. Participatory media environments require strong interpretative and analytical skills (Jenkins et al., 2016). Critical awareness enables learners to examine digital narratives within broader power structures (Giroux, 2016). Questioning the credibility and reliability of online content is essential for responsible media use (Buckingham, 2015). Digital critique also contributes to democratic resilience and social awareness (Fuchs, 2018). Reflective engagement supports ethical interaction with information flows (Peters, 2017). Uncritical media consumption tends to reinforce cultural silence and passive thinking (Freire, 2018). These perspectives highlight the continuing relevance of conscientização in contemporary digital contexts.

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Uncritical media consumption often leads to cultural silence and intellectual passivity (Freire, 2018). These skills enable individuals to resist misinformation and digital manipulation. These perspectives confirm the importance of conscientização in navigating contemporary digital realities.

2.3 Education and the Post-Truth Phenomenon

In contemporary digital societies, critical consciousness is closely related to media literacy and information evaluation. Participatory media environments require strong interpretative and analytical abilities (Jenkins et al., 2016). Critical awareness helps learners understand digital narratives within broader social and political power structures (Giroux, 2016). Assessing the credibility of online information is essential for responsible media use (Buckingham, 2015). Digital critique contributes to democratic resilience and social awareness (Fuchs, 2018). Reflective engagement supports ethical interaction with information flows (Peters, 2017). Uncritical media consumption often results in cultural silence and passive thinking (Freire, 2018). These competencies strengthen resistance to misinformation and online manipulation. Therefore, critical consciousness becomes a key foundation for active and responsible digital citizenship.

In digital environments, misinformation spreads rapidly through social networks, online communities, and automated information systems. Participatory media culture allows users to act as both content producers and consumers, often without sufficient critical evaluation (Jenkins et al., 2016). Many users lack the skills needed to distinguish reliable information from manipulation and propaganda (Buckingham, 2015). Online interactions frequently prioritize emotional reactions over factual accuracy and verification (Livingstone, 2018). These patterns are closely associated with declining reflective and analytical practices (Peters, 2017). Digital misinformation is also influenced by commercial interests and political agendas (Fuchs, 2018). These conditions weaken public trust and distort social understanding. They also increase learners' vulnerability to ideological influence. As a result, contemporary education faces greater challenges in promoting critical awareness and responsible digital citizenship.

Young people are especially vulnerable to digital disinformation due to limited media literacy and weak critical reasoning skills. Many students depend heavily on social media as their main source of information (Fatmawati, 2019; Livingstone, 2018). Teachers often face difficulties in developing analytical thinking in digital learning environments (Laila et al., 2024). Critical reasoning requires consistent and systematic pedagogical support (Nussbaum, 2016). Without critical pedagogy, students tend to internalize dominant narratives without reflection (Giroux, 2016). Passive learning environments further strengthen intellectual dependency and limited autonomy (Freire, 2018). These conditions reduce students' capacity to evaluate information independently and critically. They also weaken confidence in expressing critical opinions in public spaces (Peters, 2017). As a result, a widening gap emerges between educational goals and contemporary digital realities.

International research shows that post-truth culture challenges traditional educational paradigms and assessment-oriented instruction. Digital media environments often encourage superficial engagement rather than sustained reflection and deep analysis (Peters, 2017). These conditions weaken critical literacy and threaten democratic citizenship (Nussbaum, 2016). Neoliberal educational reforms further intensify this problem by prioritizing performance and standardization over critical learning (McLaren, 2015). As a result, students face increasing difficulties in developing reflective and analytical thinking. This situation reduces their ability to distinguish facts from opinion and manipulation. It also limits their participation in meaningful democratic dialogue. Without dialogical and emancipatory practices, learners may internalize ideological distortions and misinformation. Therefore, education must respond through critical intervention and transformative pedagogy

These developments indicate that post-truth culture requires a fundamental reorientation of educational practices. Critical Pedagogy provides a philosophical framework for addressing misinformation through dialogue, reflection, and ethical engagement. Schools are expected to function as spaces of democratic resistance and critical awareness (Giroux, 2016). Problem-posing education supports the development of critical consciousness and social responsibility (Freire, 2018). Critical digital literacy also enables learners to evaluate information more carefully and ethically (Peters, 2017). These approaches strengthen students' ability to question dominant narratives. They also encourage responsible participation in public discourse. Through reflective and dialogical learning, education can counteract ideological manipulation. Therefore, Critical Pedagogy remains essential for responding to the challenges of post-truth culture.

2.4 Critical Pedagogy, Media Literacy, and Civic Reasoning

Recent scholarly literature highlights the close relationship between Critical Pedagogy, media literacy, and civic education in contemporary digital societies. Media education should move beyond technical skills toward critical interpretation of political, economic, and cultural messages (Giroux, 2016). Critical pedagogy provides an ethical foundation for analyzing power relations embedded in media content (McLaren, 2015). Media literacy becomes emancipatory when learners are encouraged to question dominant narratives and social assumptions (Freire, 2018). These approaches help students understand how information shapes public opinion and social behavior. They also strengthen reflective judgment and democratic participation. Therefore, when integrated with critical pedagogy, media literacy functions as a tool for social transformation rather than mere information consumption..

Civic reasoning refers to the capacity to evaluate public issues ethically, logically, and democratically within pluralistic societies. Laila et al. (2024) define civic reasoning as the ability to analyze social problems through evidence based argumentation and moral reflection. Civic competence develops most effectively through participatory and inclusive learning environments (Giroux, 2018). Technical instruction alone is insufficient for cultivating democratic consciousness and social responsibility (McLaren, 2015). Authentic civic education requires continuous dialogue and collective inquiry among learners (Freire, 2018). Civic reasoning is also closely connected to moral imagination and social empathy (Nussbaum, 2016). Critical discourse supports democratic deliberation and responsible public decision making (Peters, 2017). These processes encourage students to reflect on social issues from multiple perspectives. They also strengthen commitment to justice and community engagement. Together, these perspectives show that civic reasoning emerges from reflective and dialogical learning practices.

Dialogical pedagogy plays a central role in connecting media literacy with civic engagement. Problem-posing education links academic knowledge with learners' lived experiences and social realities (Freire, 2018). Classroom debate supports the development of political awareness and critical sensitivity (Giroux, 2016). Dialogical learning also encourages resistance to ideological manipulation and misinformation (Fuchs, 2018). These practices strengthen students' ability to question public information and media narratives. They also promote ethical responsibility in digital participation. Dialogical classrooms foster mutual respect and openness to diverse perspectives. They create safe spaces for expressing critical opinions. Through sustained dialogue, learners develop the capacity to engage critically and constructively in democratic life..

Problem-posing education strengthens civic reasoning by connecting theoretical knowledge with real-life social challenges. This approach encourages students to analyze contemporary issues such as misinformation, political polarization, and social inequality (Fikri, 2024). Learners are guided to become critical investigators of social reality and public discourse (Freire, 2018). Contextual learning supports the development of political awareness and social sensitivity (Giroux, 2018). Experiential learning also contributes to ethical reflection and moral growth (Nussbaum, 2016). Contextual inquiry further strengthens democratic judgment and responsible decision making (Peters, 2017). Through critical discussion of current events, students learn to distinguish factual evidence from emotional manipulation and ideological bias..

Within democratic societies, the integration of Critical Pedagogy, media literacy, and civic reasoning is essential for sustaining public discourse and social responsibility. Education should cultivate resistance to ideological domination and promote critical awareness among learners (McLaren, 2015). Schools also function as important spaces for democratic renewal and civic participation (Giroux, 2016). These approaches strengthen students' ability to interpret social issues from historical and ethical perspectives. They also encourage responsible engagement with media and public information. Through reflective and participatory learning, learners develop social sensitivity and moral responsibility. Therefore, emancipatory education remains indispensable for developing reflective, ethical, and socially engaged citizens in the digital age.

2.5 Research Gap and Theoretical Contribution

This section discusses the main gaps and weaknesses in previous studies on Critical Pedagogy, critical consciousness, and media literacy within the post-truth context. Although many studies have addressed these

concepts separately, limited attention has been given to their systematic integration. Previous research often emphasizes ideological critique without sufficiently considering digital information dynamics (Giroux, 2016). Critical pedagogy studies also tend to focus primarily on classroom practices rather than broader sociopolitical structures (McLaren, 2015). In addition, media studies frequently overlook the philosophical and ethical dimensions of education (Peters, 2017). Digital literacy research often prioritizes technical competence over moral reflection and social responsibility (Fuchs, 2018). Such fragmented theoretical approaches weaken the emancipatory potential of education (Freire, 2018). Therefore, these limitations highlight the urgent need for more comprehensive and integrated theoretical frameworks in contemporary educational research..

Furthermore, much of the existing literature remains focused on theoretical debates or small-scale classroom interventions without adequately examining their long-term philosophical and civic implications. Educational research often overlooks moral reasoning and democratic responsibility in learning processes (Nussbaum, 2016). Narrowly framed pedagogical studies also fail to address broader systemic power relations (Giroux, 2018). Isolated instructional strategies are insufficient to promote lasting social consciousness and critical awareness (McLaren, 2015). Many educational projects lack strong critical epistemological analysis (Kincheloe, 2016). Empirical studies also rarely explore how digital environments shape civic identity and public engagement (Peters, 2017). These tendencies reduce the explanatory depth and transformative potential of contemporary educational research.

Empirical research in Indonesian and Southeast Asian contexts remains limited, especially regarding the application of conscientização in digital citizenship education. Local educational systems operate within complex political, cultural, and institutional environments that shape learning practices (Bandarsyah, 2019). Significant disparities in media literacy and access to reliable information also affect students' critical engagement (Fatmawati, 2019). Critical pedagogy therefore needs to be adapted to specific sociocultural conditions and local realities (Giroux, 2016). Contextualized praxis is essential for linking critical theory with everyday educational practices (Freire, 2018). Regional inequalities in digital infrastructure further restrict the effective use of critical and participatory learning approaches (Fuchs, 2018). Together, these factors complicate the implementation of emancipatory pedagogy in developing societies..

Regional educational research often prioritizes policy compliance and standardized outcomes over critical reflection and civic empowerment. Managerial and performance-oriented approaches tend to weaken democratic learning and student participation (McLaren, 2015). The marginalization of humanities and ethics education further reduces opportunities for moral and civic development (Nussbaum, 2016). Bureaucratic systems also limit dialogue, creativity, and critical engagement in classrooms (Freire, 2018). These conditions restrict pedagogical innovation and reflective learning practices. As a result, opportunities for developing critical consciousness remain limited in many educational settings.

And this study contributes to the existing literature by integrating Freirean Critical Pedagogy, post-truth discourse, and civic reasoning within a unified philosophical framework. Emancipatory learning is grounded in critical awareness, dialogue, and humanization (Freire, 2018). Democratic education further supports inclusive participation and social responsibility (Giroux, 2016). By emphasizing conscientização as an educational imperative, this research proposes an integrative model for developing reflective, ethical, and socially responsible learning practices in contemporary digital societies. This framework encourages learners to become active interpreters of social realities. It also strengthens their capacity to resist misinformation and ideological manipulation.

3. METHOD

This study adopts a qualitative library research design to examine the philosophical foundations and contemporary relevance of Freirean Critical Pedagogy in the post truth era. Qualitative library research is particularly appropriate for investigating theoretical concepts, normative frameworks, and interpretative perspectives through systematic engagement with textual sources (Creswell, 2018; Creswell & Poth, 2018). According to Peters (2017), philosophical inquiry in education requires deep textual analysis and contextual interpretation. Giroux (2016) emphasizes that critical educational research must integrate theoretical reflection with socio political analysis. Freire (2018) also argues that emancipatory pedagogy demands continuous reinterpretation in response to changing social conditions. Therefore, this approach enables a comprehensive understanding of conscientização as both a philosophical and pedagogical construct.

The philosophical critical perspective adopted in this study focuses on examining educational theories not only as abstract ideas but also as historically situated practices. McLaren (2015) argues that critical research should uncover hidden power relations embedded in educational discourse. Giroux (2018) similarly highlights the importance of ideological critique in educational studies. Freire (2018) emphasizes that critical inquiry must connect reflection with praxis. Kincheloe (2016) views philosophical analysis as a means of challenging dominant epistemologies. Nussbaum (2016) stresses that interpretative research should consider ethical implications. Through this perspective, the study critically evaluates Freire's educational thought within contemporary socio political contexts.

3.1 Data Sources

The data sources of this study are classified into primary and secondary materials to ensure analytical depth and conceptual rigor. The primary source is *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, which presents key concepts such as Banking Education, dialogue, praxis, and conscientização (Freire, 2018). This work remains a central reference in critical pedagogy research and emancipatory education (Giroux, 2016). It is also widely recognized for its relevance in understanding social transformation and critical learning practices (McLaren, 2015). These foundational ideas provide a strong theoretical basis for analyzing democratic, reflective, and socially engaged education in contemporary contexts..

Secondary sources include peer reviewed journal articles, academic books, and conference proceedings discussing Critical Pedagogy, post truth discourse, critical literacy, and civic education. These materials were selected based on academic credibility, publication relevance, and thematic alignment. According to Creswell (2018), triangulation of scholarly sources enhances interpretative validity. Giroux (2018) emphasizes the importance of engaging with interdisciplinary literature. Fuchs (2018) highlights the role of digital studies in contemporary pedagogy. Jenkins et al. (2016) contribute perspectives on media participation. Laila et al. (2024) provide contextual insights into citizenship education. This combination ensures theoretical diversity and analytical rigor.

3.2 Data Analysis

Data were analyzed using Critical Content Analysis combined with philosophical hermeneutics to ensure deep and systematic interpretation. This approach allows researchers to examine both explicit arguments and underlying assumptions within educational texts (Giroux, 2018; Kincheloe, 2016). Critical content analysis helps reveal how discourse reflects power relations and ideological structures (McLaren, 2015). Qualitative interpretive analysis also supports systematic meaning-making and theoretical validation in educational research (Creswell, 2018). Reflective interpretation strengthens emancipatory praxis and critical awareness (Freire, 2018). Contextual reading enhances understanding of social and historical meanings (Peters, 2017). Ethical evaluation further guides responsible and value-based interpretation (Nussbaum, 2016). Together, this analytical framework supports comprehensive and rigorous philosophical inquiry..

The analytical process involved four interrelated stages. First, key concepts such as Banking Education, dialogue, praxis, and conscientização were systematically described. Second, their philosophical meanings were interpreted within socio historical contexts. Third, theoretical and contextual findings were synthesized to construct an integrative framework. Fourth, pedagogical implications were evaluated in relation to curriculum design, teaching practices, and civic education. Creswell (2018) emphasizes iterative analysis in qualitative research. Giroux (2016) highlights reflective synthesis. Freire (2018) stresses praxis oriented evaluation. Through these stages, Freire's ideas were effectively integrated with contemporary educational realities.

4. Results and Discussion

4.1 Banking Education and Cognitive Vulnerability in the Post-Truth Era

The findings of this study show that Banking Education remains deeply embedded in many contemporary educational systems, especially within standardized and exam-oriented environments. Teacher-centered instruction continues to dominate classroom practices, with strong emphasis on memorization and procedural compliance (Fikri, 2024). Such instructional models limit intellectual autonomy and discourage critical reflection (Giroux, 2016). Authoritarian pedagogy also reproduces hierarchical power relations and institutional control (McLaren, 2015). Learning based on passive reception weakens human dignity and creative potential (Freire, 2018). Standardized assessment further reduces opportunities for democratic and participatory

learning (Biesta, 2015). Together, these conditions contribute to the persistence of cognitive passivity and limited critical engagement among learners.

Banking Education reinforces cognitive passivity by positioning students as receivers of predetermined knowledge rather than active constructors of meaning. This pedagogical orientation reduces learners to objects of instruction and limits their intellectual agency (Freire, 2018). Passive learning is closely linked to ideological domination and restricted critical awareness (Giroux, 2018). Uncritical acceptance of information weakens moral judgment and ethical reasoning (Nussbaum, 2016). Passive cognition also increases vulnerability to digital manipulation and misinformation (Peters, 2017). Intellectual conformity further limits social awareness and civic engagement (McLaren, 2015). These conditions discourage students from questioning dominant narratives and institutional authority. They also reduce motivation for independent learning and social participation. As a result, critical thinking and democratic engagement remain underdeveloped..

In the post-truth era, cognitive passivity greatly increases students' vulnerability to misinformation and ideological persuasion. Post-truth politics relies heavily on emotional appeals and selective presentation of information (Bandarsyah, 2019). Digital algorithms amplify misleading and sensational content across online platforms (Fuchs, 2018). Echo chambers strengthen biased perceptions and limit exposure to diverse viewpoints (Sunstein, 2017). Digital environments often reward popularity and sensationalism rather than accuracy and verification (Peters, 2017). Passive learners tend to internalize distorted social realities without critical examination (Freire, 2018). These conditions weaken students' capacity for rational evaluation and reflective judgment. They also reduce resilience against propaganda and online manipulation. As a result, critical awareness and democratic participation become increasingly fragile..

When learners become accustomed to accepting authoritative information without questioning its sources or intentions, their ability to evaluate digital content critically declines. Uncritical obedience often leads to intellectual dependency and limited autonomy (Giroux, 2016). Democratic citizenship requires healthy skepticism and reflective judgment (Nussbaum, 2016). Participatory media environments without critical literacy increase exposure to misinformation and manipulation (Jenkins et al., 2016). Passive media consumption is associated with declining analytical and interpretative skills (Livingstone, 2018). Intellectual conformity also contributes to political disengagement and social apathy (McLaren, 2015). These conditions make learners more vulnerable to ideological influence and persuasion. They also weaken confidence in independent thinking and public expression. As a result, critical participation in democratic life becomes increasingly limited. Furthermore, the dominance of Banking Education limits opportunities for dialogical learning and reflective inquiry. Freire (2018) emphasizes that dialogue is essential for developing critical consciousness. Giroux (2018) argues that democratic classrooms require open debate and mutual respect. Kincheloe (2016) highlights the importance of questioning in emancipatory education. Peters (2017) associates dialogical learning with digital awareness. Biesta (2015) stresses the ethical value of participatory pedagogy. Without such practices, students remain trapped in surface level learning.

These findings indicate that Banking Education is not merely an outdated instructional model but a structural obstacle to the development of critical citizenship in digital societies. Authoritarian pedagogy weakens democratic culture and limits civic participation (McLaren, 2015). Education should restore learners' agency and capacity for independent thinking (Freire, 2018). Educators also carry political and ethical responsibility in shaping critical awareness (Giroux, 2016). Critical learning contributes to moral development and ethical reasoning (Nussbaum, 2016). Educational reform further supports democratic resilience and social stability (Fuchs, 2018). These perspectives highlight the urgent need for pedagogical transformation. They also emphasize the importance of learner-centered and participatory approaches. Therefore, transforming Banking Education into dialogical and reflective pedagogy is essential for strengthening civic reasoning in the post-truth era.

4.2 Critical Pedagogy as a Humanizing Framework

Critical Pedagogy presents an alternative educational vision that places humanization, dialogue, and social responsibility at the center of learning processes. Education should cultivate democratic values and moral accountability among learners (Giroux, 2016). Emancipatory pedagogy is therefore expected to challenge structures of domination embedded in schooling practices (McLaren, 2015). Humanization is understood as an ontological necessity rather than merely a pedagogical strategy (Freire, 2018). Freire's philosophy is grounded in existentialist and humanist traditions that affirm human freedom and dignity (Bethari, 2024). Ethical

reflection also plays a crucial role in sustaining democratic life and social responsibility (Nussbaum, 2016). Together, these perspectives position education as a moral, political, and transformative project.

From a Freirean perspective, learners possess an ontological vocation to become autonomous and reflective subjects capable of shaping their own historical trajectories. Education should therefore nurture critical self-awareness and social responsibility (Freire, 2018). Autonomy develops through dialogical interaction and cultural critique within learning communities (Giroux, 2018). Subjectivity is formed through engagement with social struggles and collective experiences (McLaren, 2015). Critical digital literacy further strengthens independent judgment and informed participation (Peters, 2017). Epistemological awareness also plays a key role in personal and intellectual self-formation (Kincheloe, 2016). Through these interconnected processes, education promotes intellectual independence, democratic engagement, and ethical maturity..

Critical Pedagogy understands learning as praxis, defined as the dynamic integration of reflection and transformative action. Reflection without action leads to abstract thinking, while action without reflection lacks critical direction (Freire, 2018). Praxis therefore connects theoretical understanding with active social engagement (Giroux, 2016). It also supports political empowerment and collective agency (McLaren, 2015). Reflective action strengthens resistance to digital domination and ideological control (Fuchs, 2018). Ethical praxis further requires moral imagination and responsible judgment (Nussbaum, 2016). These processes encourage learners to connect personal experiences with broader social realities. They also foster long-term commitment to justice and democratic values. Through praxis, learners develop the capacity to act as conscious agents of social change and democratic transformation..

In contemporary digital societies, the praxis-oriented nature of Critical Pedagogy is highly relevant for confronting ideological manipulation and informational injustice. Digital environments require strong critical and interpretative skills to evaluate complex media messages (Peters, 2017). Digital capitalism also shapes public consciousness and influences patterns of information consumption (Fuchs, 2018). Media-driven communication often contributes to depoliticization and reduced civic awareness (Giroux, 2018). Education must therefore challenge cultural silence and passive media consumption (Freire, 2018). Participatory engagement further strengthens democratic involvement and collective responsibility (Jenkins et al., 2016). Reflective media use supports ethical judgment and civic accountability (Livingstone, 2018). Through praxis, learners develop the capacity to resist misinformation, ideological control, and digital manipulation.

Dialogical engagement functions as the central mechanism through which humanization and praxis are realized in educational practice. Dialogue reflects mutual respect and collective inquiry between teachers and learners (Freire, 2018). It also serves as a foundation for democratic culture and participatory learning (Giroux, 2016). Dialogical interaction strengthens social solidarity and shared responsibility (McLaren, 2015). It further supports epistemological critique and reflective knowledge construction (Kincheloe, 2016). Dialogue contributes to ethical reasoning and moral deliberation in learning processes (Nussbaum, 2016). In digital contexts, it also plays a vital role in promoting critical and responsible deliberation (Peters, 2017). Through sustained dialogue, learners develop empathy, critical awareness, and long-term civic commitment.

These analyses show that Critical Pedagogy represents a comprehensive philosophical framework for humanizing education in the post-truth era. Education must restore learners' historical agency and capacity for social transformation (Freire, 2018). Institutions also carry responsibility for fostering democratic values and critical awareness (Giroux, 2016). Pedagogical practices are closely connected to struggles for social justice and human liberation (McLaren, 2015). Humanization is further linked to existential authenticity and personal integrity in learning processes (Bethari, 2024). It also contributes to democratic resilience and ethical public engagement (Fuchs, 2018). Moral responsibility remains central to sustaining reflective and responsible citizenship (Nussbaum, 2016). Together, these perspectives confirm that Critical Pedagogy provides a strong foundation for developing reflective, ethical, and socially engaged citizens.

4.3 Conscientização as an Antidote to Disinformation

Conscientização functions as a comprehensive cognitive, moral, and social process through which individuals develop critical awareness of the political, economic, and cultural structures shaping everyday life. Critical consciousness emerges through continuous reflection on social realities and lived experiences (Dagostino Kalniz, 2017). Learners are encouraged to recognize oppression as a historical and changeable condition rather than an inevitable reality (Freire, 2018). Critical awareness also supports cultural critique and democratic engagement (Giroux, 2016). Conscientização is closely connected to collective struggle and social

transformation (McLaren, 2015). It further strengthens ethical reasoning and moral judgment in public life (Nussbaum, 2016). Through this gradual process, learners move from naïve conformity and fatalism toward reflective, responsible, and transformative agency.

The transition from naïve to critical consciousness requires sustained pedagogical support and supportive learning environments. Uncritical education often reinforces intellectual dependency and passive learning habits (Freire, 2018). Reflective inquiry plays an essential role in developing critical awareness in digital societies (Peters, 2017). Through continuous questioning and dialogue, learners are encouraged to examine social realities more deeply. These practices help students take ownership of their learning and civic responsibilities. They also strengthen resilience against ideological pressure and misinformation. Critical learning environments promote openness to diverse perspectives and respectful debate. They encourage learners to connect personal experiences with broader social issues. Such engagement supports long-term intellectual growth and democratic participation. As a result, critical consciousness does not emerge spontaneously but must be intentionally cultivated through structured, reflective, and participatory educational practices.

Problem-posing education plays a central role in nurturing critical consciousness and dialogical learning. This approach connects academic knowledge with learners' lived experiences and social contexts (Freire, 2018). Contextual learning encourages students to analyze real social issues and public problems critically (Fikri, 2024). Classroom dialogue supports the development of political awareness and civic sensitivity (Giroux, 2016). Critical questioning also strengthens epistemological understanding and reflective thinking (Kincheloe, 2016). Problem-posing pedagogy further promotes critical digital literacy and responsible media engagement (Peters, 2017). Ethical inquiry remains central to meaningful learning and moral development (Nussbaum, 2016). Through this integrated approach, learners become active investigators of social reality and responsible participants in democratic life.

In practical classroom contexts, generative themes such as viral hoaxes, online propaganda, and political misinformation can serve as powerful triggers for critical inquiry. Meaningful learning develops when educational content is connected to students' concrete social experiences and everyday realities (Freire, 2018). Participatory media analysis helps learners understand how information is produced, shared, and interpreted in digital spaces (Jenkins et al., 2016). Critical examination of digital content also strengthens democratic resilience and social awareness (Fuchs, 2018). These learning activities encourage students to question sources, intentions, and ideological interests behind information. They also promote awareness of how emotions and bias influence online communication. Through guided discussion, learners develop confidence in expressing critical opinions. Collaborative analysis fosters respect for diverse perspectives and reasoned debate. Such practices strengthen ethical judgment and responsible decision making. As a result, students become more capable of evaluating information critically and participating constructively in democratic life..

Through sustained engagement with problem-posing and dialogue, learners develop the ability to decode ideological messages, recognize power relations, and question dominant discourses. Critical literacy requires understanding how meaning is socially constructed within cultural and political contexts (Giroux, 2016). Reading texts must also be connected with interpreting social realities and lived experiences (Freire, 2018). Media critique further strengthens political awareness and critical participation in public life (Fuchs, 2018). These practices encourage learners to examine hidden assumptions behind information. They also help students recognize manipulation and symbolic control. Through reflective discussion, learners become more aware of their own biases and perspectives. Collaborative analysis fosters openness to alternative viewpoints. Such engagement promotes ethical sensitivity in responding to social issues. As a result, this form of literacy extends beyond technical fact-checking toward deeper philosophical analysis of intention, ideology, and moral consequences..

These findings suggest that conscientização serves as a foundational mechanism for developing resilient and reflective learners in digital societies. Critical consciousness strengthens democratic participation and active civic involvement (McLaren, 2015). Awareness of historical and social conditions also enhances learners' sense of agency and responsibility (Freire, 2018). Through reflective learning, students become more capable of engaging in public discourse and community decision making. They also develop stronger resistance to misinformation and ideological pressure. Critical awareness supports ethical judgment and social responsibility in complex digital environments. As a result, conscientização functions as a transformative pedagogical strategy for fostering democratic resilience and responsible citizenship.

4.4 Implications for Curriculum and Civic Reasoning

The effective implementation of conscientização requires fundamental changes in curriculum design, pedagogical orientation, and institutional culture. Emancipatory education cannot be realized through traditional content-driven curricula that prioritize memorization over critical reflection (Freire, 2018). Curriculum should function as a space for democratic dialogue and participatory learning rather than ideological transmission (Giroux, 2016). Meaningful reform also involves challenging hierarchical power relations within classroom interactions (McLaren, 2015). Curricular innovation further supports the development of critical digital literacy and responsible media engagement (Peters, 2017). Ethical reasoning must be integrated into academic instruction to promote moral awareness and civic responsibility (Nussbaum, 2016). And these perspectives indicate that curriculum reform is essential for cultivating critical consciousness and democratic learning.

Within this transformed framework, teachers are required to redefine their professional roles from authoritative transmitters of knowledge to dialogical facilitators and co-learners. Authentic teaching develops through mutual learning, respect, and shared responsibility in the classroom (Freire, 2018). Co-learning practices strengthen democratic culture and participatory interaction among students (Giroux, 2018). While collaborative pedagogy also enhances epistemological awareness and reflective understanding (Kincheloe, 2016). Facilitative teaching supports political empowerment and critical engagement with social issues (McLaren, 2015). Reflective instruction further strengthens responsible learning in digital environments (Peters, 2017). Through these practices, educators create inclusive learning spaces that encourage inquiry, dialogue, and active participation.

Curricula grounded in Critical Pedagogy should integrate contemporary social issues that reflect learners' lived realities and digital experiences. Media ethics and political communication need to become central components of modern education (Fuchs, 2018). Participatory citizenship within digital culture also supports active and responsible engagement in public life (Jenkins et al., 2016). Responsible online interaction strengthens students' awareness of rights, duties, and social impact (Livingstone, 2018). Contextual learning further promotes cultural critique and social sensitivity (Giroux, 2016). Global citizenship education encourages openness to diversity and international responsibility (Nussbaum, 2016). Contextualized knowledge production connects academic learning with social practice (Freire, 2018). These curricular approaches help learners understand complex social problems more deeply. They also foster long-term commitment to ethical action and democratic participation. Together, these integrations enhance curricular relevance, critical awareness, and moral responsibility.

Civic reasoning should be reconceptualized as an ethical, reflective, and socially responsible capacity rather than merely a technical skill. Civic competence develops through dialogue and moral deliberation within participatory learning environments (Laila et al., 2024). Democratic participation is closely connected to reflective judgment and critical awareness (Giroux, 2018). These processes strengthen empathy, ethical sensitivity, and responsibility in public life. They also encourage learners to engage constructively with social and political issues. Through sustained reflection and dialogue, individuals develop the capacity to make informed and morally grounded civic decisions. Such learning experiences foster respect for diversity and social justice. They promote active involvement in community problem solving. They also strengthen long-term commitment to democratic values and public integrity..

Learners who develop critical consciousness tend to demonstrate resilience against ideological manipulation, strong commitment to social justice, and active engagement in public discourse. Critical awareness enables individuals to see themselves as historical agents capable of shaping social change (Freire, 2018). It also supports democratic resistance and responsible civic participation (Giroux, 2016). These capacities strengthen learners' ability to evaluate political messages and media narratives critically. They encourage consistent involvement in community dialogue and social initiatives. Such learners are more likely to defend ethical principles in complex social situations. Together, these attributes reflect the formation of responsible, independent, and emancipated citizens in contemporary societies.

These findings indicate that Critical Pedagogy plays a significant role in strengthening democratic culture and social responsibility in education. Schools carry an institutional responsibility to sustain democratic values and critical participation (Giroux, 2016). Educators also have a moral obligation to promote human dignity and social justice through their teaching practices (Freire, 2018). These commitments encourage learners to respect diversity and engage in constructive dialogue. They also support the development of ethical awareness in public

life. Such educational practices foster long-term responsibility toward social and political challenges. They help students recognize their role in maintaining democratic institutions. They also cultivate sensitivity to social injustice and marginalization. Consequently, curricular transformation grounded in conscientização provides a sustainable foundation for emancipatory education and democratic resilience in contemporary societies.

5. Conclusion

This study confirms that Freirean Critical Pedagogy constitutes an essential philosophical and pedagogical response to the complex educational challenges of the post-truth era. Contemporary education must actively confront ideological manipulation, democratic decline, and the spread of misinformation. Emancipatory pedagogy remains central to promoting social justice, critical awareness, and intellectual independence. Education is therefore required to restore human dignity and strengthen learners' capacity for reflective judgment and ethical reasoning. Philosophical reflection also plays a crucial role in developing responsible digital citizenship and critical media engagement. Educational institutions must recognize their ethical responsibility in shaping democratic values and public integrity. These commitments encourage learners to question dominant narratives and resist intellectual passivity. They also foster resilience against emotional manipulation and ideological pressure. Through dialogical and reflective practices, students become more capable of participating in democratic life. Such educational approaches support long-term social responsibility and civic commitment. Together, these perspectives affirm that Critical Pedagogy provides a strong foundation for addressing misinformation, inequality, and intellectual passivity in contemporary societies..

The findings of this study demonstrate that traditional Banking Education has failed to develop learners' critical, moral, and civic capacities. Passive learning environments tend to reproduce intellectual dependency, discourage independent thinking, and limit ethical awareness. Authoritarian and memorization-based instruction also weakens political engagement and reinforces ideological conformity. Such educational models are highly vulnerable to digital manipulation and emotional persuasion, while depersonalized learning practices reduce students' sense of agency and social responsibility. As a result, learners educated under these approaches remain susceptible to misinformation and superficial reasoning. In contrast, conscientização emerges as a transformative mechanism that enables learners to move from naïve awareness toward critical consciousness and ethical responsibility. Critical consciousness integrates reflective thinking with meaningful social action and emotional maturity. It supports cultural critique, political awareness, and moral reasoning in complex social contexts. Through dialogue, problem-posing education, and reflective praxis, learners develop stronger judgment, intellectual autonomy, and civic commitment. Consequently, this transformative approach fosters resilient, responsible, and socially engaged citizens in contemporary digital societies.

Through sustained engagement in dialogical learning environments, students develop the capacity to evaluate information critically, recognize ideological manipulation, and participate responsibly in public discourse. Critical debate, reflective praxis, and participatory engagement strengthen democratic learning and social awareness. These practices also promote responsible digital behavior and encourage active involvement in community and social movements. As a result, learners gain greater intellectual autonomy, ethical sensitivity, and commitment to social justice. In this context, integrating Critical Pedagogy into contemporary curricula is not merely a pedagogical option but a moral and political imperative. Education must function as a practice of freedom that promotes human dignity and critical agency. Educational institutions carry responsibility for sustaining democratic values and civic participation. Curriculum reform should therefore be aligned with ethical citizenship, critical digital literacy, and participatory democracy. Through these principles, education becomes a space for liberation, humanization, and democratic empowerment in contemporary societies.

In conclusion, education grounded in conscientização enables learners to become autonomous historical subjects rather than passive objects of digital manipulation. Through critical reflection and ethical engagement, students develop the capacity to understand social realities and act responsibly within them. This approach strengthens resistance to ideological domination, misinformation, and emotional persuasion in digital environments. It also encourages learners to participate actively in democratic processes and community development. By fostering moral leadership and reflective citizenship, education contributes to the formation of socially responsible individuals. Such learning practices promote long-term commitment to justice, equality, and human dignity. They also cultivate resilience in responding to social conflict and political uncertainty. Through dialogical and participatory pedagogy, students learn to value diversity and constructive dialogue. As a result, Freirean Critical

Pedagogy offers a sustainable and ethically grounded framework for developing critical, responsible, and socially engaged citizens in contemporary digital societies.

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