

Deconstructing Ta'dzim Culture through Critical Pedagogy Inspired by Sayyidah Aisyah

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Abstract

The culture of *ta'dzim* in the pesantren tradition reflects a legacy of Islamic scholarly ethics (*adab*) that sustains the moral relationship between teacher and student and ensures the continuity of knowledge transmission. However, in contemporary practice, *ta'dzim* is often reduced to passive obedience, limiting dialogic engagement and weakening students' (*santri*) critical reasoning. This study aims to deconstruct the hierarchical understanding of *ta'dzim* by proposing a critical pedagogy model grounded in the educational practices of Sayyidah Aisyah (r.a.), characterized by dialogue, clarification (*tashīh*), and intellectual courage in early Islamic scholarship. This qualitative research employs a library-based approach and applies Critical Discourse Analysis to examine power relations and meaning construction in religious and pedagogical texts. The findings indicate that Sayyidah Aisyah's pedagogy represents an "*active-discursive ta'dzim*," positioning learners as intellectually agentic subjects. This approach aligns with key principles of critical pedagogy, particularly Paulo Freire's concept of conscientization. This study contributes by reconceptualizing *ta'dzim* as an epistemic and dialogical practice rather than a purely hierarchical norm. It reorients Islamic education discourse from an obedience-centered paradigm toward a critical-participatory framework rooted in tradition. This shift provides a theoretical foundation for developing pesantren-based pedagogical models that integrate ethical reverence with critical inquiry in response to contemporary educational challenges.

Keywords

Deconstruction; Ta'dzim Culture; Islamic Pedagogy; Santri

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INTRODUCTION

Within the world of *pasantren*, various cultures can be found, one of which is the culture of *ta'dzim*. This culture is essentially an expression of ethical *adab* and the transmission of moral values within the teacher-student relationship, deeply rooted in classical Islamic scholarly traditions (al-Attas, 1993; Zamakhsari Dhofier, 2011). However, in practice, *ta'dzim* often undergoes a shift in meaning from epistemic respect toward absolute obedience devoid of critical dialogue thus potentially transforming into a form of cultural hegemony (Gramsci, 1971). This hierarchical pedagogical relationship frequently positions the authority of the *kiai* or *ustadz* as the sole source of truth, while the *santri* are positioned as passive subjects who receive knowledge without a process of reflection or negotiation of meaning (Freire, 2005). Such conditions imply a reduction in the students' critical reasoning, as the educational process emphasizes symbolic compliance over the development of critical consciousness, which is fundamentally the spirit of emancipatory education (Giroux, 2011). In this context, *ta'dzim* no longer functions as a medium for internalizing *adab*, but rather as a mechanism for the reproduction of symbolic power that restricts discourse and marginalizes the intellectual courage of students to question, criticize, and re-interpret knowledge contextually (Bourdieu, 1991). Consequently, a re-reading of the culture of *ta'dzim* is necessary so that it remains rooted in the values of *adab* without negating the critical dimensions essential to the Islamic intellectual tradition itself.

Historically, traditional *ta'dzim* values within the *pasantren* culture have served as the foundation for shaping students' (*adab*) and scholarly ethics, emphasizing respect, obedience, and sincerity in the pedagogical relationship between teacher and student (Ibn Jamā'ah, 2004; al-Attas, 1993). However, in the context of contemporary Islamic education, a paradigmatic gap has emerged between *ta'dzim* patterns oriented toward symbolic hierarchy and the students' need to develop discursive reasoning that is dialogic, reflective, and contextual (Habermas, 1984). The challenges of the modern era characterized by information openness, plurality of discourse, and complex social issues demand that students possess not only ethical obedience but also argumentative capacity and the ability to reason critically within the public scholarly sphere (Giddens, 1991; Giroux, 2011). When *ta'dzim* is practiced normatively without the accompaniment of discursive space, it potentially limits students' intellectual participation and obstructs the transformation of knowledge from mere inheritance into a dialectical process (Freire, 2005). This gap underscores the urgency of reinterpreting *ta'dzim* values to maintain scholarly *adab* while simultaneously opening a pedagogical space that allows students to act as active subjects in the production of meaning and knowledge, in line with the demands of an Islamic education that is responsive to contemporary dynamics (Azra, 2012).

This research is further grounded in the concept of deconstruction introduced by Jacques Derrida, which stems from his critique of structuralist thinking that tends to view meaning as something fixed, final, and hierarchical (Derrida, 1976). Deconstruction is not intended to destroy a text, tradition, or specific value; rather, it seeks to dismantle the hidden assumptions within them,

binary oppositions, and the power relations operating behind the production of meaning (Culler, 1982). In practice, deconstruction invites readers to realize that meaning is always open, contextual, and the result of an ongoing interpretive process, rather than a frozen, singular truth (Norris, 1991). This approach is vital in cultural and educational studies as it enables a re-reading of symbolic practices including the tradition of *ta'dzim* to avoid falling into the sacralization of meaning that closes off the space for criticism and intellectual dialogue (Sarup, 1993). Consequently, deconstruction serves as an analytical tool to reveal how a value, originally ethical in nature, can undergo a functional shift into a mechanism for legitimizing authority, which the educational subjects themselves may not always recognize.

Meanwhile, critical pedagogy has developed as an educational paradigm that rejects the one-way transmission model of knowledge and positions learners as active subjects in the learning process (Freire, 2005). Paulo Freire asserts that education should be liberating rather than domesticating, by fostering the emergence of *conscientization* a reflective consciousness that enables students to understand, question, and transform their social reality (Freire, 1970). In its further development, critical pedagogy emphasizes the importance of dialogue, participation, and egalitarian pedagogical relations as prerequisites for the formation of discursive reasoning and intellectual courage (Giroux, 2011). This approach is highly relevant in the context of contemporary Islamic education as it offers an emancipatory framework that does not negate the values of *adab* and ethics, but rather enriches the educational process through dialogic praxis rooted in critical reflection (McLaren, 2015). By integrating the spirit of critical pedagogy, *pesantren* education has the opportunity to shift the position of *santri* from objects of symbolic obedience toward intellectual subjects capable of actively participating in the production and negotiation of scholarly meaning. To clarify the conceptual framework of this research, the following theoretical foundation diagram summarizes Jacques Derrida's Deconstruction and Critical Pedagogy as the analytical tools for re-reading the culture of *ta'dzim* in *pesantren*.



Sayyidah Aisyah (r.a.) cannot merely be reduced to a narrator of hadith; rather, she must also be understood as a critical educator figure who played a central role in shaping the early Islamic intellectual tradition through practices of

correction, dialogue, and scholarly debate with the Companions (al-Zarkasyī, 2004). Her scholarly authority is reflected in her courage to rectify the understandings of other Companions including senior figures whenever inaccuracies were found in hadith interpretation or religious practices, an attitude that demonstrates a high level of discursive reasoning and critical ethos (Ibn Sa'd, 2001; al-Dhahabī, 1996). In many narrations, Aisyah did not simply transmit texts; she also interpreted contexts, presented rational arguments, and weighed historical dimensions and *maqāṣid al-sharī'ah* in explaining the Prophet's teachings, thereby making the learning process dialogic and reflective (Nadwi, 1998). The pedagogical pattern embodied by Aisyah asserts that scholarly authority in Islam does not rest upon hierarchies of gender or age, but rather on intellectual capacity and argumentative integrity, aligning with the principles of modern emancipatory education (Ahmed, 1992). Thus, the intellectual progressivism of Sayyidah Aisyah presents an Islamic educational model that integrates *adab*, the courage for critical thinking, and epistemic responsibility an exemplary model relevant for building the discursive reasoning of *santri* without negating the values of *ta'dzim*.

The educational model exemplified by Sayyidah 'Ā'ishah (r.a.) demonstrates that *ta'dzim* is not merely synonymous with passive obedience; rather, it can function as an ethical foundation for dialogic and critical scholarly practices. This is evident in her teaching methods, which positioned students as intellectual subjects encouraged to question, discuss, and rationally test their understanding without losing respect for scholarly authority (al-Zarkashī, 2004; Nadwi, 1998). In various narrations, Aisyah did not only transmit hadith but also opened spaces for clarification and the correction of erroneous understandings even when they originated from senior Companions a pedagogical practice that implicitly deconstructs rigid hierarchical relations within the learning process (Ibn Sa'd, 2001). This pattern asserts that respect for a teacher does not have to be manifested through the silencing of critical reason, but rather through active participation in responsible scholarly discourse, aligning with the principles of intellectual *adab* in classical Islamic tradition (al-Ghazālī, 2005).

Sayyidah Aisyah's pedagogical approach can also be interpreted as a deconstructive practice against the meaning of *ta'dzim* that has been reduced to a symbol of obedience, shifting it toward an 'epistemic *ta'dzim*' based on argumentation and dialogue. By prioritizing contextual rationality, cause-and-effect analysis, and *maqāṣid* considerations in understanding the Prophet's Sunnah, Aisyah established a learning culture that encouraged students (*santri*) to internalize values rather than merely memorizing texts (Ahmed, 1992; Hallaq, 2009). From the perspective of critical pedagogy, this model reflects an emancipatory educational relationship where scholarly authority is tested through discourse rather than maintained through symbolic dominance (Freire, 2005; Giroux, 2011). Thus, Sayyidah Aisyah's education offers a normative and practical framework to transform the culture of *ta'dzim* in *pesantren* into an active-discursive scholarly ethos one that respects the teacher while maintaining the courage to think, question, and engage in critical dialogue within the boundaries of *adab* and epistemic responsibility. This study aims to reinterpret *ta'dzim*

through a critical pedagogical framework inspired by Sayyidah Aisyah to foster discursive reasoning among santri.

RESEARCH METHOD

This study employs a pure qualitative library research design, focusing exclusively on textual analysis without involving human subjects or a specific research locus. This study employs a qualitative approach with a library research method, aiming to deeply understand and interpret the ideas, concepts, and constructions of meaning contained within both classical and contemporary scholarly texts (Creswell, 2014). Library research was selected as it allows the researcher to conduct a critical examination of primary and secondary sources such as the works of classical scholars, hadith compendiums, Islamic educational literature, and modern social and pedagogical theories—to construct a systematic and contextual conceptual analysis (Zed, 2014). In qualitative research, data are not treated as numerical values but as texts and discourses analyzed through processes of reduction, categorization, and meaning interpretation to identify patterns, conceptual relationships, and theoretical significance (Miles & Huberman, 2014). This approach is highly relevant for examining the pedagogical thoughts and practices of Sayyidah Aisyah, as well as the deconstruction of *ta'dzim* culture, as the research focus lies in a profound understanding of meanings, values, and epistemological implications, rather than mere empirical measurement (Sugiyono, 2019).

Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) is employed in this study as an analytical approach to examine how language, texts, and scholarly narratives reproduce or challenge specific power relations, ideologies, and social practices (Fairclough, 1995). This approach views discourse not as neutral, but as a social practice laden with interests, thereby enabling the researcher to trace how the concepts of *ta'dzim*, scholarly authority, and teacher-student relations are constructed, normalized, or contested within religious and pedagogical texts (van Dijk, 2001). Through the analysis of linguistic choices, argumentative structures, and socio-historical contexts, CDA helps reveal the mechanisms of symbolic hegemony that potentially restrict students' discursive reasoning, while simultaneously opening space for more emancipatory alternative readings (Wodak & Meyer, 2009). This approach is highly relevant in Islamic educational research because it does not merely describe texts but also links them to the pedagogical practices and power structures surrounding them, allowing for a critical reinterpretation of *ta'dzim* values without detaching them from the framework of *adab* and Islamic scholarly ethics.

The data sources are systematically categorized into primary and secondary texts. The primary data sources in this study include classical hadith compendiums and critical pedagogy literature, used complementarily to trace the patterns of discussion, correction, and intellectual dialogue of Sayyidah `Ā'ishah (r.a.). Within the hadith treasury, works such as *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*, *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim*, *Musnad Ahmad*, and thematic compilations regarding Aisyah's critiques and corrections of other Companions serve as essential references for identifying pedagogical practices that are dialogic and argumentative in nature (al-Bukhārī,

2002; Muslim, 2001; al-Zarkashī, 2004). These texts are analyzed not merely as normative sources, but as discourses reflecting the dynamics of scholarly relations and intellectual authority in early Islam (Hallaq, 2009). Meanwhile, critical pedagogy literature such as the works of Paulo Freire and his successors is utilized to construct a conceptual framework for interpreting Sayyidah Aisyah's educational practices as a form of emancipatory education that fosters dialogue, critical consciousness, and active student participation (Freire, 2005; Giroux, 2011). Secondary sources consist of contemporary academic literature on Islamic education, studies on *adab* and *ta'dzim*, and critical pedagogy frameworks, particularly the works of Paulo Freire and subsequent scholars. These texts are selected to provide a comparative and interpretive framework for analyzing the pedagogical significance of the primary sources. The integration of hadith sources and critical pedagogical theory enables a more comprehensive analysis of how the classical Islamic scholarly tradition harbors critical pedagogical potential relevant to the contemporary context of Islamic education.

The steps for deconstructing texts or the traditions of *ta'dzim* are conducted through a critical reading aimed at uncovering hidden assumptions, binary oppositions, and power relations beneath these practices of respect (Derrida, 1976). The initial stage involves identifying dominant meaning structures that position *ta'dzim* as hierarchical obedience and singular authority, followed by tracing how these meanings are normalized through language, symbols, and daily pedagogical practices (Culler, 1982). The second stage entails an analysis of binary oppositions such as teacher/student, obedient/critical, and sacred/profane to demonstrate that these categories are not natural but are the results of social and historical constructions (Sarup, 1993). The subsequent stage involves dismantling the internal tensions within the text or tradition by highlighting contradictions, ambiguities, and marginalized alternative spaces, thereby opening the possibility for a more dialogic and reflective meaning of *ta'dzim* (Norris, 1991). Through this process, deconstruction does not aim to negate the value of *ta'dzim*; rather, it seeks to reinterpret it as an ethos of epistemic *adab* that enables participatory and emancipatory pedagogical relations, in line with the principles of critical education (Freire, 2005).



RESEARCH RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The findings indicate that the practice of *ta'dzim* in pesantren is primarily manifested through a hierarchical pedagogical relationship that emphasizes

respect for kiai and ustadz as holders of scholarly and moral authority. This is reflected in students' communication ethics, adherence to institutional regulations, and the internalization of values such as *tawadhu'* (humility) and *khidmah* (service) as part of character formation. (Dhofier, 2011; Bruinessen, 1995). On a positive note, this culture contributes significantly to maintaining the continuity of Islamic scholarly traditions, creating moral stability, and fostering respect for knowledge and teachers as the foundation of intellectual *adab* (al-Attas, 1993). *Ta'dzim* also functions as a social mechanism that strengthens the cohesion of the *pesantren* community and shapes an ethos of discipline and loyalty toward institutional values passed down through generations (Azra, 2012). However, in practice, *ta'dzim* also exhibits several limitations when understood normatively without the accompaniment of critical reflection. Excessively rigid hierarchical relations have the potential to obstruct academic dialogue and position students as passive subjects in the learning process, thereby limiting discursive reasoning and the intellectual courage to question or correct (Hefner, 2009; Freire, 2005).

In certain contexts, *ta'dzim* can even transform into a mechanism of symbolic hegemony that legitimizes authority without opening space for rationalization and argumentation, as critiqued in contemporary sociology of Islamic education studies (Bourdieu, 1991; Fairclough, 1995). These limitations indicate that while *ta'dzim* possesses fundamental ethical value, it requires a pedagogical reinterpretation to remain relevant to the needs of modern students faced with discursive complexity and the demands of critical thinking in a global era.

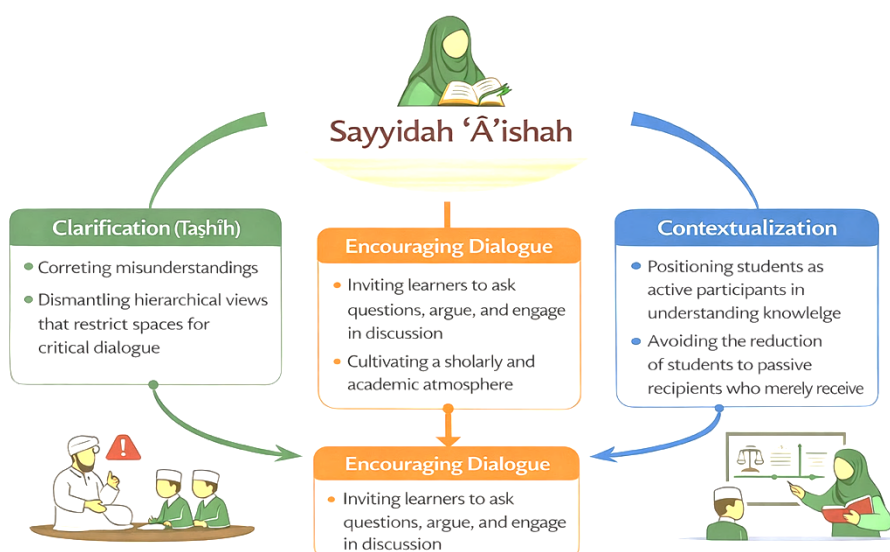
Historically, Sayyidah Aisyah (r.a.) is recognized as a prolific teacher and *muhaddithah* (hadith scholar) who did not merely narrate hadith but also actively taught knowledge to the Companions and subsequent generations. In scholarly discourse, Aisyah's narrative authority is characterized by the vast number of hadith she narrated, as well as her reflective and contextual teaching methodology, which integrated the understanding of the Qur'an and Sunnah simultaneously within the learning process (Rehman, 2024; Musferah, 2021). Her educational model was frequently dialogic, wherein students or Companions were invited to discuss the context of a hadith, investigate its interpretive aspects, and relate it to the social realities of the time, thereby facilitating the active engagement of learners in understanding the Prophet's teachings. This approach demonstrates that early Islamic learning traditions were not merely transmissive but also interactive, allowing for the exchange of reasoning and rational explanations between teacher and student.

In addition to teaching, Sayyidah Aisyah (r.a.) is renowned for her role in providing clarification (*tashih*) toward reports or understandings considered inaccurate or incomplete by the Companions. Hadith study literature records that she utilized her comprehensive knowledge of the Sunnah and the context of revelation to evaluate the authenticity of a narration; even when the narrator was a prominent Companion such as Abu Hurairah, she demonstrated intellectual courage and a commitment to scholarly truth (Rehman, 2024). This clarification method was not merely coincidental but was conducted through argumentation

grounded in *nāṭiq* (logical reasoning), linguistic understanding, and the ethics of the Muslim community an effort that essentially opened a space for critical dialogue not only regarding narration but also in determining the principles of doctrinal understanding. In this way, Aisyah contributed to the development of the science of *jarḥ wa ta'dīl* (validation and evaluation of hadith narrators), which became the foundation of the hadith discipline in Islamic tradition. Based on historical data findings, the pedagogy of Sayyidah Aisyah (r.a.) exhibits characteristics of teaching that are dialogic, critical, and oriented toward the clarification of meaning, as summarized below:

Sayyidah Aisyah's (r.a.) pedagogical interventions among the Companions demonstrate that she did not position herself as a source of absolute authority, but rather as a facilitator of dialogue who nurtured critical questioning and clarification. This practice aligns with Islamic educational principles that support *ijtihād* within the boundaries of *sharia* namely, the responsible use of reason to understand texts contextually and encourages the discourse of 'queering' or challenging traditional interpretations whenever contradictions in meaning are found (Nadwi, 2007). Her active role in intellectual dialogue, as recorded in various narrations and historically analyzed by scholars, implies that the Islamic learning tradition is not monolithic but is open to contextual criticism, argumentative thinking, and the negotiation of meaning between teacher and student. Thus, her way of teaching, providing clarifications, and encouraging critique illustrates a pedagogical model that not only respects scholarly authority but also strengthens discursive reasoning amidst the dynamics of the Companions' community.

Pedagogical Characteristics of Sayyidah 'Ā'ishah



An educational model that places students within active-discursive learning relations fosters several key points that shape their discursive reasoning. First, student involvement in open dialogue and discussion as seen in the practice of *musyawarah* (deliberative discussion) in *pesantren* teaches students not only to receive information but also to examine, compare, and construct a collective understanding through an egalitarian and responsible exchange of thoughts (Radino & Mubarak, 2025). Second, openness to critical questioning serves as the foundation of discursive reasoning, as learners are trained to question assumptions, analyze ambiguities in meaning, and test the consistency of arguments, aligning with the principles of critical pedagogy that encourage reflective consciousness (Freire in Hussien, 2008; Alam & Fadlillah, 2024). Third, students are invited to engage in meta-reflection regarding their own understanding, bridging textual evidence with contemporary social contexts to mature their critical and evaluative thinking skills. Fourth, the emphasis on argumentation based on texts (classical books, hadith, and other primary sources) and empirical contexts helps students develop reasoning that is not merely normative but also integrates logic, evidence, and the ethics of dialogue (Maduratna, 2025; study of dialogic discussion at Pesantren Al-Munawwir Krapyak, 2025). Thus, through these four points, students can synergize to form discursive reasoning capable of actively reading, critiquing, and producing scholarly discourse, rather than merely accepting authoritative narratives without rational scrutiny.

In the *pesantren* tradition, *ta'dzim* is often understood normatively as high respect for the teacher, manifested through polite gestures, obedience, and symbolic etiquette. However, such an understanding risks leading to an 'epistemic silence' that stifles the students' discursive reasoning when respect is perceived as requiring an absence of questioning or exploratory dialogue (Athollillah & Syaehotin, 2020; Harahap & Ahmad, 2022). A progressive reinterpretation of *ta'dzim* views respect not as passive silence, but as an active form of honoring the teacher through the advancement of knowledge namely, through critical dialogue, the clarification of texts (*nass*) and their contexts, and the negotiation of meaning within the learning process (Mukminin et al., 2025).

This concept aligns with the classical views of Islamic educational thinkers such as Imam al-Ghazālī and Hasyim Asy'ari, who emphasized that a student's *adab* toward a teacher encompasses *ta'allum* (active learning), being a *muta'ālim* (a responsible learner), and the willingness to question, clarify, and test understanding (the concept of *adab al-'ālim wa al-muta'allim*), ensuring that the knowledge acquired truly lives in practice rather than being merely memorized (Al-Zarnuji in Zainurrohmanah, 2024). Through such an approach, *ta'dzim* becomes a pedagogical energy that revitalizes knowledge through discussion and reflection; it does not contradict moral respect, but rather expands it into a productive 'epistemic respect' in the formation of students' discursive reasoning.

The reinterpretation of *ta'dzim* as an active-discursive attitude gains strong legitimacy from Islamic normative sources, including both hadith and classical *adab* literature. In a sahih narration, the Prophet (PBUH) asserted that the cure

for ignorance is asking questions (*innamā shifā' al-'iyyi al-su'āl*), demonstrating that the courage to question and discuss is an inherent part of the ethics of seeking knowledge, rather than a form of defiance against a teacher's authority (Narrated by Abū Dāwūd). This principle was practically exemplified by Sayyidah Aisyah (r.a.), who repeatedly provided clarifications (*tashīh*) toward the understandings of other Companions through argumentative dialogue, without negating the *adab* and respect for the Prophet's knowledge (al-Zarkashī, al-Ijābah, 2004). Similarly, Imam al-Zarnūjī in *Ta'lim al-Muta'allim* and KH. Hasyim Asy'ari in *Adab al-'Ālim wa al-Muta'allim* emphasized that a student's *adab* toward a teacher does not end with silence and symbolic obedience, but is manifested through the earnestness to understand, request explanations, and maintain the continuity of knowledge so that it does not cease at mere memorization (al-Zarnūjī, n.d.; Hasyim Asy'ari, 2006).

Thus, authentic *ta'dzim* is not the silencing of reason, but an epistemic respect that revitalizes knowledge through discussion, clarification, and intellectual responsibility—an educational model historically practiced by Sayyidah Aisyah and relevant for building the discursive reasoning of *santri* in contemporary *pesantren*. To understand the shift in the meaning of *ta'dzim* within the context of Islamic education more systematically, a conceptual mapping is required to illustrate the relationship between old understandings and more contextual reinterpretations. This mapping is crucial so that the concept of *ta'dzim* is not perceived as normative and static, but as a dynamic value intertwined with scholarly traditions and intellectual *adab*. Therefore, the following mind map is presented to illustrate the process of deconstructing the meaning of *ta'dzim* from an understanding that emphasizes passive obedience to an active respect manifested through dialogue, discussion, and intellectual engagement, as exemplified by Sayyidah Aisyah in the early Islamic scholarly tradition.



Sayyidah Aisyah's (r.a.) pattern of critique is characterized by what can be termed as 'civil intellectual confrontation' the courage to rectify erroneous understandings through rational and textual argumentation without compromising scholarly *adab* and ethics. In many narrations, Aisyah presented corrections by referring to the Qur'an, the historical context of the Prophet's sayings, and coherent logical reasoning; thus, critique was positioned as an effort to preserve the purity of knowledge rather than a denial of personal authority (al-Zarkashī, 2004; Ibn Sa'd, 2001). This pattern is highly relevant to the *sorogan* method in *pesantren*, which traditionally provides space for direct interaction between the student (*santri*) and the teacher (*kiai*). Within this framework, Aisyah-style critique can be manifested through the practice of reading clarifications, reflective questioning, and argumentative dialogue initiated by the student toward the teacher, using polite language and text-based evidence, in accordance with the principle of *adab al-baḥṭh wa al-munāẓarah* (ethics of inquiry and debate) in the Islamic scholarly tradition (al-Ghazālī, 2005). Consequently, *sorogan* becomes not only a means of rote-learning evaluation but also a space for the formation of civilized critical reasoning.

Meanwhile, in the *bandongan* method which tends to be monologic and centered on the *kiai's* authority Sayyidah Aisyah's pattern of critique can be adapted through pedagogical strategies that open spaces for discussion before or after the lecture, such as *baḥṭh al-masā'il* forums, book discussions, or structured clarification sessions. This practice aligns with the early Islamic intellectual tradition, where the transmission of knowledge was always accompanied by the process of *tafaqquh* (deepening of meaning) through argumentative Q&A and dissenting opinions (Hallaq, 2009). Contemporary studies on *pesantren* education indicate that integrating critical discussion into the *bandongan* system can shift pedagogical relations from passive obedience toward responsible intellectual participation, without diminishing the value of *ta'dzim* (Dhofier, 2011; Azra, 2012). By adopting the ethos of civil critique practiced by Sayyidah Aisyah, the *bandongan* method can transform into a medium of active *ta'dzim*, where students honor the teacher not through silence, but by revitalizing knowledge through understanding, inquiry, and dialogue rooted in *adab* and scholarly integrity.

Within hierarchical traditional educational patterns, students (*santri*) are often positioned as 'objects' of education passive recipients of knowledge who are submissive to the teacher's authority and whose success is measured through obedience and the reproduction of memorized texts (Dhofier, 2011). While effective in preserving the transmission of scholarly traditions, this model potentially limits students' space for reflection and intellectual initiative when the learning process is perceived as a one-way transfer (Freire, 2005). From the perspective of critical pedagogy, such a relationship is termed the 'banking model of education,' where learners are treated as empty vessels to be filled with knowledge, rather than as subjects capable of producing meaning (Freire, 1970). The shift toward the student as a 'subject' of education demands a paradigmatic change: the recognition of the student's capacity as an intellectual agent capable of questioning, interpreting, and critiquing knowledge within the framework of

scholarly *adab*, aligning with the principle of *tafaqquh fī al-dīn*, which emphasizes profound understanding rather than mere literal acceptance (al-Ghazālī, 2005).

The pedagogy of Sayyidah Aisyah (r.a.) represents an early Islamic educational model that does not stop at the transmission of knowledge, but emphasizes the formation of intellectual consciousness through dialogue, clarification, and contextual reasoning. In various narrations, Aisyah did not merely convey hadith; instead, she engaged students and Companions to understand the historical background, normative intent, and rational implications of the Prophet's teachings, thereby making the learning process reflective and participatory (al-Zarkashī, 2004; Ibn Sa'd, 2001). This pattern demonstrates that education is positioned as a process of *tafaqquh*—a deepening of meaning rather than mechanical memorization—aligning with Islamic epistemological principles that place reason as a responsible instrument for understanding revelation (al-Ghazālī, 2005; Hallaq, 2009). Consequently, Aisyah's pedagogy constructs a learning subject who is conscious of their position, role, and intellectual responsibility in comprehending and practicing knowledge.

This concept shares a strong commonality with Paulo Freire's critical pedagogy theory, specifically the notion of 'critical consciousness' (*conscientização*) a process through which learners become aware of social realities, power relations, and their own position as subjects capable of reflection and transformation (Freire, 1970; Freire, 2005). Freire rejects the 'banking model' of education that positions students as passive objects, emphasizing instead dialogue as the primary means of intellectual liberation. When read within this framework, Sayyidah Aisyah's pedagogical practices such as her corrections of the Companions, her rejection of ahistorical textual understandings, and her encouragement of questioning can be understood as an early form of 'conscientization' within the Islamic tradition: an epistemic awareness that flourishes through critical dialogue while remaining firmly grounded in *adab* (Nadwi, 1998; Ahmed, 1992).

The integration of Sayyidah Aisyah's pedagogy with modern critical pedagogy demonstrates that emancipatory values are not foreign concepts within Islam; rather, they have been present as *praxis* throughout Muslim scholarly history. The difference lies in their normative foundations: Freire's critical pedagogy is rooted in socio-humanistic critique, whereas Aisyah's pedagogy is grounded in the ethics of revelation and moral responsibility toward scholarly truth (Giroux, 2011; Biesta, 2013). However, both converge on the same objective: forming learning subjects who are conscious, reflective, and courageous in engaging in critical dialogue. Within the context of contemporary *pesantren*, this synthesis enables the development of an educational model that does not negate *ta'dzim*, but reconstructs it as 'epistemic respect' honoring the teacher by revitalizing knowledge, building discursive reasoning, and fostering the critical consciousness of *santri* as holistic subjects of Islamic education.

The transformation of *santri* into subjects with intellectual agency is reflected in dialogic educational practices that provide space for participation, argumentation, and critical reflection, as exemplified in the early Islamic intellectual tradition by figures such as Sayyidah Aisyah (r.a.), who treated

students and fellow Companions as discourse partners rather than objects of obedience (al-Zarkashī, 2004; Nadwi, 1998). In the context of contemporary *pesantren*, strengthening *santri* agency can be achieved through book discussions, *baḥṭh al-masā'il*, and open clarifications within both *sorogan* and *bandongan* methods, allowing *santri* to play an active role in the process of knowledge production (Azra, 2012). Educational studies indicate that when learners are recognized as subjects, they develop 'intellectual agency' the ability to take a stance, formulate arguments, and take responsibility for their own understanding which is the foundation of discursive reasoning and transformative learning (Giroux, 2011; Biesta, 2013). Thus, this shift does not negate *ta'dzim*; rather, it reconstructs it as 'epistemic respect': honoring the teacher by revitalizing knowledge through active, critical, and civilized intellectual engagement.

CONCLUSION

This study concludes that while the culture of *ta'dzim* in *pesantren* represents a foundational form of Islamic scholarly adab essential for maintaining ethical relationships and the continuity of knowledge transmission, its hierarchical and normative interpretation risks reducing it to passive obedience that limits students' critical engagement. By examining the pedagogical practices of Sayyidah Aisyah (r.a.), this research finds that early Islamic scholarship embodied a dialogic and critical educational model characterized by clarification (*tashīḥ*), rational discourse, and intellectual courage, which reflects an "active-discursive *ta'dzim*." This finding demonstrates that respect for authority in Islam is inherently compatible with critical reasoning and intellectual participation. Therefore, the main contribution of this study lies in reconceptualizing *ta'dzim* as an epistemic and dialogical practice rather than a purely hierarchical norm, providing a theoretical foundation for transforming *pesantren* pedagogy into a more critical-participatory model that remains rooted in tradition while addressing contemporary educational challenges.

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