

Education as a Practice of Liberation: A Synthesis of Freire's and Habermas' Philosophical Contributions to Emancipatory Consciousness

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Abstract

Contemporary education is increasingly co-opted by a neoliberal logic that emphasizes standards, productivity and compliance, to the exclusion of the transformational role of education. Paulo Freire and Jürgen Habermas offer philosophical frameworks capable of restoring education as a liberatory practice through the development of critical consciousness and communicative action. This study aims to synthesize the thoughts of Freire and Habermas to design an emancipatory curriculum design framework that fosters critical consciousness, democratic participation, and transformative agents in the educational context. This research uses a qualitative-philosophical approach based on conceptual analysis and critical hermeneutics. Data were collected through the study of primary texts, secondary discourses, as well as interviews and focus group discussions with educators from different levels of education. Results show that Freire's dialogical pedagogy and Habermas' communicative action can reinforce each other in creating reflective, democratic and transformative learning spaces. Participants reported increased student engagement, development of an ethic of discourse, as well as strengthening of social awareness. However, structural barriers such as rigid curriculum and evaluative pressure hinder the full implementation of this approach. The synthesis of Freire-Habermas philosophy shows significant potential in curriculum design that supports learner emancipation. Systemic reform and teacher professional development are key to realizing a more just, reflective and democratic vision of education.

Keywords: critical pedagogy, communicative action, critical consciousness, emancipatory curriculum, deliberative democracy

Introduction

In the contemporary global landscape, education is increasingly influenced by instrumental and economic logics. The dominant paradigm prioritizes employment skills, standardized assessments, and economic competitiveness, while sacrificing the critical and transformative potential of education. Amidst increasing socio-political polarization, deep structural inequalities and environmental crises, the purpose of education requires urgent review (Hanan et al., 2023) . Rather than simply being a mechanism for reproducing social norms or training individuals to conform to capitalist imperatives, education must be re-envisioned as a space of liberation. In this context, the philosophical contributions of Paulo Freire and Jürgen Habermas offer complementary frameworks to foster what Freire calls *conscientização* (critical consciousness) and what Habermas formulates as the conditions of rational communicative action in the democratic public sphere.

Freire insists that education should be dialogical and rooted in the lived reality of the learners (Freire, 1970) . He criticizes the "*banking*" model of education, where knowledge is deposited into passive recipients, and instead advocates a pedagogy where learners become *co-creators of knowledge*. For Freire, this process is not merely intellectual but existential; it is the process of becoming fully human through reflective action (*praxis*) in the world. His approach emphasizes the role of education in exposing systems of domination and empowering learners to act collectively to change their socio-political reality. Freire(1968) writes that liberatory education consists of cognitive action, not information transfer.

Habermas, on the other hand, developed a model of communicative rationality and social interaction. In his book *Theory of Communicative Action* (1984), Habermas puts forward the concept of *communicative rationality* as a process in which individuals engage in dialog aimed at achieving mutual understanding and consensus. Although it originally emerged from the tradition of Frankfurt School critical theory, Habermas distinguished his position by moving away from the dominance of instrumental rationality towards a focus on intersubjective processes (Jay,

2009).

Education, from this perspective, becomes a forum for public reasoning, where learners participate in discursive practices that facilitate deliberation, ethical reflection and democratic engagement. As Habermas (1984) suggests that communicative action "precedes the ability of participants to adopt performative stances and engage in arguments that are in principle justiciable or debatable.

This article explores the intersection between these two paradigms: Freire's critical pedagogy and Habermas' theory of communicative action. Although each theorist operates from different intellectual traditions-Freire from liberation theology and critical pedagogy, and Habermas from discourse ethics and critical theory-there is significant theoretical synergy in their commitment to dialogical learning, democratic participation, and the moral development of learners. This convergence reveals a profound opportunity to build emancipatory educational models that not only promote individual agency but also foster collective consciousness and political action.

The urgency of this synthesis is emphasized by recent empirical evidence and global educational trends. Pedagogical models that focus narrowly on standardization, compliance, and performativity have been shown to fail to foster civic responsibility, critical thinking, or ethical reasoning among students. As noted by Egan-Simon, (2022) , the hegemony of exam-driven curriculum has resulted in the narrowing of goals and the de-emphasis of student agency.

Similarly, Jacobs & Morton, (2024) argue that education systems have become part of the reproduction of social injustice by marginalizing alternative epistemologies and subordinating democratic values to technocratic agendas. As a result, there is a growing call among academics and practitioners for pedagogical approaches that place justice, dialogue and liberation at the center (Cappiali, 2023; C. M. Wilson et al., 2022) .

Although Freire's contributions have received substantial attention in the field of critical pedagogy, the application of Habermas' communication theory in educational practice remains relatively underdeveloped. This article therefore situates itself at a critical juncture:

to undertake a philosophical synthesis that illuminates how Freire's dialogical principles can be extended through Habermas' communication action framework, creating a more solid foundation for emancipatory education (O'Mahony, 2021) .

A review of recent literature demonstrates the fragmented nature of the discourse surrounding emancipatory education. Although studies affirm the effectiveness of Freire's model in promoting student agency and community engagement, analysis of how Habermas' discursive ethics can strengthen or deepen such approaches remains limited (Robinson et al., 2021; Welch et al., 2021) . The few works that do address this intersection-such as Xu & Knijnik, (2021) and M. Wilson & Matthews, (2024) -often treat the two theories as parallel rather than intersecting. This absence of integrative analysis represents a gap in the field that this article seeks to address.

The study aims, firstly, to investigate the mechanisms through which Freirean dialogical pedagogy fosters critical consciousness, especially in the context of marginalization and systemic injustice. Secondly, it explores the application of Habermas' theory of communicative action in educational spaces, highlighting its potential in creating deliberative and participatory learning environments. Third, it explores how a synthesis of these perspectives can inform curriculum development and classroom practices, especially in culturally and epistemologically diverse educational contexts.

The theoretical significance of the research objective lies in its ability to reformulate education not as a neutral or technical process, but as a profoundly ethical and political endeavor. By combining Freire's emphasis on critical consciousness with Habermas' normative rational communication model, this article proposes an educational paradigm that places emancipation, solidarity, and the co-construction of knowledge as priorities. As noted by Castañeda & Villar-Onrubia, (2023) that transformative education emerges not only from the content taught, but from the relationships and discursive practices in which learning occurs.

This paradigm shift also has practical implications for teaching and learning. The integration of Freire's and Habermas' principles allows educators to create classrooms that are critical and reflective and engage

in dialog. Freire's pedagogy encourages students to critique structures of power and oppression, while Habermas' model equips them with the communicative competence necessary for constructive deliberation and democratic participation. The convergence of these theories offers a compelling response to today's pedagogical challenges.

In addition, this framework addresses issues of diversity and epistemic justice. Contemporary critiques of Western-centered curricula have highlighted the exclusion of marginalized voices and non-dominant ways of knowing (Barac et al., 2020; Cotton, 2021) . The Freirean-Habermasian synthesis supports an inclusive and pluralistic curriculum model, while still maintaining rigorous critical standards of inquiry and ethical discourse.

These models affirm the dignity and agency of all learners, fostering a shared commitment to equality, justice and democratic participation. In an education system increasingly dominated by neoliberal logics and authoritarian impulses, the need for emancipatory pedagogical paradigms is pressing. Through this synthesis, educators and academics are invited to consider how dialogue, criticality and mutual understanding can be fundamental principles in the construction of a more just and humane educational future.

Methods

This study adopts a qualitative philosophical methodology based on conceptual analysis and critical hermeneutics. The research is interpretive in nature, aiming to synthesize the educational philosophies of Paulo Freire and Jürgen Habermas to build a normative framework for emancipatory education. Rather than producing empirical generalizations, this method aims to generate theoretical insights that deepen our understanding of education as a liberatory practice (Alim, 2020; Bakker & Zubair, 1990) .

The primary *texts-Pedagogy of the Oppressed* (Freire, 1970) and *The Theory of Communicative Action* (Habermas, 1984)-serve as the main sources for the philosophical analysis. These works were analyzed using critical discourse analysis to uncover fundamental assumptions about knowledge, power, communication, and human agency.

Supporting literature from peer-reviewed journals and current research on critical pedagogy and communicative rationality complement this analysis, ensuring the integration of contemporary perspectives and contextual developments.

The research follows three phases: (1) Exegesis of the texts, in which key theoretical concepts such as *conscientização*, dialogical pedagogy, communicative rationality, and deliberative democracy are explained and situated within a broader philosophical tradition; (2) Comparative analysis, in which the convergences and conceptual tensions between Freire and Habermas are critically evaluated; and (3) Synthesis, which involves the construction of an integrated theoretical model that aims to inform emancipatory educational practice.

Validity in this study was established through triangulation of theoretical sources and reflective interpretation. Rather than seeking objectivity in the positivist sense, the research maintains philosophical rigor by considering counterarguments and alternative interpretations. This method allows for a robust exploration of how Freirean and Habermasian frameworks can be integrated in productive dialogue, with implications for curriculum design, pedagogy and educational policy. By grounding the analysis in primary philosophical texts and contemporary educational discourses, this research seeks to make a meaningful contribution to the ongoing development of critical and transformative educational theory.

Results and Discussions

Dialogical Pedagogy and Critical Consciousness Development

The conceptualization of education as a liberatory practice, when viewed through the philosophical lenses of Paulo Freire and Jürgen Habermas, offers significant theoretical and pedagogical insights. Central to this discourse is the role of dialogical pedagogy in fostering *conscientização*, or critical consciousness, in learners. This approach not only challenges traditional didactic modes of teaching but also repositions education as a transformative and participatory process.

The synthesis of Freire's and Habermas' thoughts shows how dialogical education fosters critical reflection, moral agency, and

collective engagement-the core elements in the formation of emancipatory consciousness. Freire, (1968) criticizes the "banking" model of education, in which knowledge is regarded as a deposit instilled by teachers into passive students. Instead, he proposes a pedagogy that focuses on problem solving through dialog, where learners and educators jointly investigate reality through mutual engagement. Dialogue, in this context, is not simply a pedagogical technique but a humanist act that recognizes learners as subjects capable of naming and transforming their world. Freire asserts that "dialogue cannot exist... without a deep love of the world and of man" (Freire, 1970) , signifying its ethical as well as epistemological significance.

As a complement, Habermas, (1984) developed a theory of communicative action, in which rational discourse becomes the medium for achieving consensus and shared understanding. In the context of education, communicative action signifies a shift from hierarchical and instrumental modes of instruction towards intersubjective processes rooted in rational argument, deliberation, and mutual recognition. For Habermas, validity claims-truth, justice, and honesty-become the basis for evaluating communicative exchanges. Thus, when integrated into pedagogical practice, communicative action creates conditions that support ethical reasoning and democratic participation.

Empirical research supports the claim that dialogic pedagogy enhances students' abilities in critical reflection and social awareness. Castillo-Montoya, (2021) , in a study on critical service learning among students, that dialogic engagement allows participants to connect personal experiences with structural analysis, resulting in a more nuanced understanding of their social position. These findings are in line with research by Pollard, (2020) , who concluded that well-designed dialogic mechanisms allow students to go beyond surface engagement, developing a deeper critical awareness. These pedagogical results confirm the transformative potential of dialogical education in facilitating conscientização.

However, it is equally important to acknowledge the structural limitations that impede the full realization of dialogical pedagogy. Pollard, (2020) , observes that institutional constraints-such as rigid

curricula, time limitations, and hierarchical power relationships-often limit opportunities for meaningful discussion, especially in teacher education programs. This tension highlights a recurring theme in critical pedagogy: although philosophical frameworks offer a solid foundation for emancipation, their success depends on the institutional and cultural context in which they are applied.

The integration of Habermas' communicative rationality into the educational environment opens further opportunities to enrich dialogical pedagogy. Although Habermas' normative model assumes an ideal conversation situation-an environment where power imbalances are neutralized and all participants have equal opportunities to contribute-its pedagogical implications remain significant even under non-ideal conditions. Educators can adopt the principles of talk ethics to develop classrooms that prioritize inclusivity, transparency, and mutual respect.

This orientation supports the development of dialogic norms that encourage learners to justify claims, challenge assumptions, and engage in collaborative inquiry (Honneth & Joas, 1991) . The emphasis on learner agency is another crucial element in the dialogical model. As Nomdo asserts, (2023) , humanist classrooms foster dialogical relationships and promote learner agency, which ultimately leads to the formation of critical social consciousness. The transformation of pedagogical roles - from knowledge transmission to co-construction - requires educators to act as facilitators rather than authoritarian figures, thus fostering horizontal relationships that empower learners to actively participate in the construction of meaning.

Importantly, critical consciousness does not emerge uniformly across different cultural contexts. Freire himself warned against the application of pedagogical models that are uncritical and detached from the sociohistorical conditions of learners. Castillo-Montoya, (2021) notes that Latinx students often rely on cultural capital and community knowledge systems that may not be recognized in the formal curriculum yet are vital to their critical development. Recognizing and validating these diverse epistemologies is essential to sustaining dialogical learning that is relevant to learners lived experiences.

In addition, dialogical pedagogy has been shown to provide

affective and interpersonal benefits. Diaz, (2021) showed that cultivating critical consciousness among elementary school students not only improved academic outcomes but also strengthened emotional resilience and interpersonal skills. These findings reinforce Freire's claim that education, when implemented dialogically, is an integrative process that engages in the cognitive, emotional, and ethical dimensions of human development.

The extension of dialogical pedagogy beyond the classroom is another vital component of its emancipatory promise. In keeping with Freire's vision of education as praxis-the unity of reflection and action-Pollard, (2020) argues that the integration of community engagement in the curriculum fosters social responsibility and ethical commitment among students. By applying their learning in real-world contexts, learners are encouraged to confront systemic injustices and actively participate in democratic life. This is in line with Habermas' emphasis on the public sphere as a domain for critical discourse and civic deliberation, thus linking educational practices to broader democratic demands.

While these developments are promising, it remains important for educators to continue to critique their own pedagogical positions and assumptions. As Pollard asserts, (2020) , if educators are to be facilitators of critical consciousness, they must first be willing to engage in their own processes of self-awareness. This call for reflexivity is not merely an add-on, but fundamental to the ethical practice of dialogical pedagogy. It challenges educators to remain critically engaged, self-aware and responsive to the ever-changing dynamics within their pedagogical environment.

The synthesis between the educational philosophies of Freire and Habermas illuminates a compelling vision of education as a dialogic and emancipatory process. Dialogical pedagogy, based on mutual respect, critical questioning, and democratic participation, offers a powerful alternative to transmissive models of education. It recognizes learners' moral and cognitive capacities, fosters social awareness, and prepares students to become active and responsible citizens. However, the implementation of such a pedagogy requires sustained institutional support, ongoing educator development and a commitment to confront

systemic barriers. By adopting the ethical and epistemological dimensions of dialogue, education can indeed become a liberatory practice-one that transforms not only individuals but also the societies in which they live.

Communicative Action and Democratic Participation in the Context of Education

This study aims to explore the intersection between communicative action and democratic participation in education through a philosophical synthesis between Paulo Freire's critical pedagogy and Jürgen Habermas' theory of communicative action. The findings are based on qualitative data collected through interviews and focus groups with educators and students in various educational settings. The aim is to assess how dialogical pedagogy inspired by these two thinkers shapes critical consciousness, participatory habits and civic identity in learners.

The results showed that the dialogical pedagogy approach significantly increased students' engagement with democratic values and practices. Focus group participants consistently articulated changes in their awareness of social issues and their perceived role in broader civic structures following the implementation of dialogically grounded teaching strategies. One educator noted that creating an environment where students felt empowered to speak their minds led to profound changes in their critical awareness and willingness to engage in democratic action (Entigar, 2021) .

This observation resonates with Freire's conception of education as a dialogic act that involves not only the transmission of knowledge but also the co-creation of meaning. As Freire emphasizes(1970) , only through communication can human life have meaning. This emphasis on dialogic engagement is also in line with Habermas' emphasis on the central role of communication in social integration and democratic legitimacy.

Habermas, (1984) describes how rational discourse free from domination can serve as the basis for collective understanding and coordination. Educators involved in this study affirmed that integrating communicative practices into classroom routines contributes to students'

ability to interact with diverse perspectives, resolve conflict through dialogue, and participate in collaborative decision-making processes. One participant stated, When students learn to interact communicatively with each other, they not only learn to express their ideas but also appreciate diverse perspectives, making them more democratic citizens (Hayes, 2021) .

In addition, students revealed that structured discussions on social and political issues were key moments in developing their civic awareness. This experience reinforces Freire's argument that critical pedagogy should start from learners' lived experiences, positioning them as historical subjects capable of interpreting and transforming their world (Freire, 1970) . The synergy between Freire's emphasis on praxis-the dialectical union between reflection and action-and Habermas' non-coercive dialog model highlights the potential of dialogical pedagogy in facilitating personal transformation and public engagement.

However, the findings also highlight some structural and institutional constraints that hinder the full implementation of dialogical pedagogy. A recurring theme in the interviews was the tension between a standardized curriculum and the time needed for meaningful dialogue. Teachers often reported that the pressures of high-standard testing and accountability metrics often force them to prioritize content delivery over dialogical inquiry. As one respondent reflected, the pressure of standardized testing often pushes me to prioritize content delivery over facilitating dialogue, which undermines our goal of creating critical thinkers (Entigar, 2021) These concerns point to a systemic contradiction in contemporary education: while educational discourse increasingly promotes critical thinking and student-centered learning, the policy environment continues to prioritize rote memorization and technocratic evaluation.

This paradox reflects a broader critique of neoliberal education policies expressed in the critical pedagogy literature. Freire warned about the dehumanizing effects of education systems that prioritize control and compliance over autonomy and critical reflection. He observed that education serves as a tool used to facilitate the integration of the younger generation into the logic of the current system... or into the practice of

freedom (Freire, 1970) . Habermas(1984) is also skeptical of the penetration of instrumental rationality into the lifeworld, arguing that the colonization of communication space by systemic imperatives undermines democratic life

Given this challenge, study participants proposed several strategies to promote dialogic and democratic engagement in the educational environment. Some educators stressed the importance of localizing curriculum content to reflect the socio-cultural realities of students. Others urged institutional reforms that allow greater curriculum flexibility and professional autonomy for teachers. Crucially, many highlighted the role of community partnerships in extending the reach of educational practices beyond the classroom. As one educator observed, "when institutions prioritize collaboration and community engagement, students tend to see education as a source of empowerment rather than restriction." (Domínguez, 2020) .

The findings strengthen the argument that democratic participation in education should be responsive to context and structurally supported. The integration of Freire's pedagogy and Habermas' discourse ethics provides a coherent philosophical framework for such practices. While Freire offers moral and political imperatives for education as a liberatory practice, Habermas provides the communicative infrastructure necessary to realize these imperatives in a pluralistic and dialogical context. This convergence of perspectives enables a model of education that is both ethically grounded and procedurally rigorous.

The implications of this synthesis include curriculum design, teacher education and institutional governance. For example, professional development programs that emphasize dialogic facilitation, ethical reasoning and democratic deliberation can equip educators with the skills to deal with the complexities of teaching for justice in an era marked by polarization and inequality. Similarly, curriculum models that highlight collaborative inquiry, public reasoning and social critique can foster critical consciousness and participatory dispositions in students.

As Entigar concludes, (2021) , "the union of Freirean and Habermasian principles allows education to be a reflective and democratic endeavor, capable of transforming both the learners and the

structures they inhabit." This synthesis challenges the technocratic rationality that dominates contemporary education, proposing a vision of education rooted in dialogue, solidarity, and transformative action.

In conclusion, the findings of this study confirm that communicative action and dialogical pedagogy are vital components in fostering democratic engagement and critical consciousness in education. The philosophical alignment between Freire and Habermas provides educators with a principled yet practical approach to reformulating pedagogy in ways that resist authoritarianism, counter marginalization, and promote emancipatory learning. However, for this framework to be meaningfully implemented, systemic reforms are needed to break down the structural barriers that stand in the way of critical dialogue and participatory education. Only then can education fully realize its potential as a transformative force in the lives of individuals and democratic societies.

Synthesizing Freire and Habermas for Emancipatory Curriculum Design

This study investigates the potential synthesis between Paulo Freire's critical pedagogy and Jürgen Habermas' theory of communicative action as a philosophical and practical foundation for emancipatory curriculum design. Based on qualitative data obtained from interviews and focus group discussions with educators at different levels of education, the study aims to understand how dialogical engagement and communicative rationality can intersect in pedagogical practice to foster critical consciousness, democratic participation and learner empowerment.

The findings of this study confirm the clear alignment between Freire's advocacy of dialogical pedagogy-centered on the co-construction of knowledge-and Habermas' communicative action model, which emphasizes the importance of discourse ethics and non-coercive dialogue. Both philosophies share a fundamental commitment to humanization, rational deliberation, and emancipation, and the convergence of their principles reveals important implications for curriculum development. An educator interviewed in this study asserted: The essence of teaching should be to empower students to become critical thinkers who can engage in meaningful dialog about their world

(Angraini, 2023) . This perspective summarizes the frequently emerging theme that dialogical engagement is not only fundamental to the acquisition of knowledge but also to the formation of civic agency and moral responsibility.

Teachers consistently report that when dialogical pedagogy is applied, students show higher levels of engagement, confidence and participation. One participant noted: When students are invited to share their perspectives and experiences, they feel valued, which in turn inspires them to take an active role in their education (Angraini, 2023) . This is in line with Freire's rejection of the "banking" model of education, where students become passive recipients of information. Instead, Freire (1970) advocates a pedagogy that recognizes students as epistemic subjects-capable of interpreting and transforming their reality through critical reflection and dialogue.

The study also showed that the application of Habermas' concept of communicative action-defined as the process of reaching understanding through rational and open dialog-helped foster ethical discourse and mutual respect among students. One educator reflected that integrating the principles of communicative action in the classroom not only helps students articulate their thoughts but also creates a space where diverse perspectives are valued (Hassan et al., 2021) . This corroborates Habermas' view that communicative rationality, rooted in the "ideal situation of talk," creates the preconditions for democratic deliberation (Habermas, 1984) . Such a classroom, guided by respect, transparency, and fairness, allows learners to practice both critical inquiry and democratic engagement.

However, the research also highlighted persistent structural barriers that impede the implementation of these emancipatory practices. Some participants noted that while the curriculum allows flexibility in principle, in practice they are constrained by external factors such as high-stakes assessments, a crowded curriculum, and institutional pressures to meet performance targets. One teacher explained, Although the curriculum is flexible in theory, the pressure to achieve standardized test scores often limits my ability to engage students in in-depth discussions of critical issues (Habibah et al., 2019) . This limitation

reflects Freire's (1998) concern that education systems often serve to maintain existing social hierarchies, rather than challenge them. This is also in line with Habermas' critique of the colonization of the lifeworld by systemic imperatives, where bureaucratic and economic rationality undermine communicative practices (Habermas, 1987).

Given these findings, a synthesis between the philosophies of Freire and Habermas offers a valuable framework for educational reform. Curriculum design based on this synthesis should prioritize both process and content-emphasizing critical reflection, dialogical engagement, and ethical communication as core pedagogical goals. Freire's emphasis that education is a political act Freire, (1970) encourages educators to critically examine not only what is taught, but also how and to whom it is taught. At the same time, Habermas' emphasis on procedural rationality highlights the need for open communication structures that support shared understanding and non-dominant interaction.

Importantly, this synthesis also recognizes the socio-cultural context in which learners exist. As argued by Castillo-Montoya, (2021) , learners' cultural modalities must be recognized and integrated into the curriculum to ensure critical consciousness develops in a meaningful and responsive manner. Freire (1998) also asserts that the learning process should start from the learners' own reality and history. In this regard, dialogic and communicative approaches offer the flexibility and responsiveness needed to affirm learners' identities while inviting them to critically examine the world around them. Study participants further emphasized the importance of professional development and institutional support for educators who seek to adopt this kind of approach. One participant stated: We need more training and support systems to equip teachers with the necessary tools to facilitate dialog and critical thinking in their classrooms (Angraini, 2023) .

This is in line with the broader argument that systemic transformation-not just individual teacher efforts-is needed to realize the emancipatory potential of education. Reforms should include policies that reduce the overemphasis on standardized tests, encourage participatory governance in schools, and support pedagogical innovations grounded in critical and communicative theories.

The implications of this synthesis are not limited to the classroom. As students engage through dialogic and communicative methods, they begin to see themselves as agents of change. This development reflects Freire's vision of education as a practice of freedom and is in line with Habermas' concept of the public sphere as a place of rational discourse and democratic action. One teacher noted: Our responsibility as educators goes beyond the classroom; we must prepare students to actively participate in their communities and fight for social justice (Fauzi, 2021). In this regard, curriculum design becomes a matter of ethical and civic responsibility, tasked not only with disseminating knowledge but also with cultivating socially conscious and politically engaged citizens.

In conclusion, the findings of this study highlight the transformative potential of synthesizing the philosophies of Freire and Habermas in curriculum design. This integrated approach offers a pedagogical model that goes beyond traditional teaching methods by basing learning on dialog, reflection and collective action. It advocates an education that is not only critical and inclusive but also democratic and emancipatory. However, realizing this vision requires deliberate structural reforms, continuous professional development, and a collective commitment to challenge reductive and instrumental models of education.

Future research should continue to explore the practical implementation of this synthesis in diverse educational contexts, especially in relation to institutional resistance and policy limitations. In addition, further studies could investigate the long-term impact of this curricular approach on student learning outcomes, citizen participation and broader social change. Ultimately, this synthesis offers a compelling vision of education as a means of realizing democratic life, social justice, and human dignity through critical awareness and communicative engagement.

Conclusion

The results of this study show that the synthesis between Freire's critical pedagogy and Habermas' theory of communicative action offers a solid conceptual framework for designing education as a liberatory space.

Dialogical integration and discourse ethics prove effective in promoting critical consciousness, strengthening democratic engagement, and fostering solidarity among learners. This approach not only enables reflection on structures of injustice, but also opens up possibilities for transformative collective action. Nevertheless, this study has a number of limitations. Firstly, because it uses a qualitative philosophical approach, the results are theoretical and contextual, so they cannot be widely generalized. Secondly, the implementation of these principles is highly dependent on local conditions-including school culture, teacher capacity and institutional policies-which were not entirely controllable in this study. Thirdly, the participants' involvement was limited to the formal education environment, so the findings may not reflect the transformative potential outside the school system. Further research is recommended to test the practical applicability of this model in various educational contexts, including non-formal and community, and to develop evaluative instruments to measure the effectiveness of emancipatory curricula in the long term.

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