RECONSTRUCTING THE PHILOSOPHY OF EDUCATION BASED ON HUMANISM: RETURNING TO HUMAN NATURE IN THE LEARNING PROCESS

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Abstract

This research aims to examine the relationship between philosophy, humans, and education as a theoretical foundation in building an educational system capable of transforming social and intellectual life. The main problem raised in this research is how philosophical principles about human nature can be integrated into the educational paradigm so as to produce pedagogical practices that are humanist, critical, and transformative. This research uses a qualitative approach through descriptive-analytical library research. Data sources were obtained from classical and contemporary philosophy literature, as well as modern educational theories relevant to the themes of humanism, existentialism, and educational emancipation. The results show that philosophy provides a reflective and normative framework for education in understanding humans as intelligent, moral, and social beings. When education is carried out with a strong philosophical foundation, it is able to create a learning space that not only develops cognition, but also the ethical and social awareness of students. Thus, education is no longer understood in a purely technocratic manner, but as a means of forming a whole person and reconstructing civilization. This article recommends the integration of philosophical approaches in the curriculum and educational practices as a strategy to build a just, inclusive and value-oriented society.
Keywords: *Philosophy, Human, Education, Social Transformation, Intellectual Awareness.*

Abstrak

Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengkaji hubungan antara filsafat, manusia, dan pendidikan sebagai landasan teoretis dalam membangun sistem pendidikan yang mampu mentransformasikan kehidupan sosial dan intelektual. Masalah utama yang diangkat dalam penelitian ini adalah bagaimana prinsip-prinsip filsafat tentang hakikat manusia dapat diintegrasikan ke dalam paradigma pendidikan sehingga menghasilkan praktik pedagogis yang humanis, kritis, dan transformatif. Penelitian ini menggunakan pendekatan kualitatif melalui studi pustaka (library research) yang bersifat deskriptif-analitis. Sumber data diperoleh dari literatur filsafat klasik dan kontemporer, serta teori-teori pendidikan modern yang relevan dengan tema humanisme, eksistensialisme, dan emansipasi pendidikan. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa filsafat memberikan kerangka reflektif dan normatif bagi pendidikan dalam memahami manusia sebagai makhluk berakal, bermoral, dan bersosial. Ketika pendidikan dijalankan dengan fondasi filosofis yang kuat, ia mampu menciptakan ruang pembelajaran yang tidak hanya mengembangkan kognisi, tetapi juga kesadaran etis dan sosial peserta didik. Dengan demikian, pendidikan tidak lagi dipahami secara teknokratis semata, melainkan sebagai sarana pembentukan manusia seutuhnya dan rekonstruksi peradaban. Artikel ini merekomendasikan integrasi pendekatan filosofis dalam kurikulum dan praktik pendidikan sebagai strategi membangun masyarakat yang adil, inklusif, dan berorientasi nilai.
Kata Kunci: *filsafat, manusia, pendidikan, transformasi sosial, kesadaran intelektual*

Introduction

Education is currently in the midst of multidimensional disruption-both in terms of technology, culture, and morality. In many countries, including Indonesia, education is under strong pressure to respond to the demands of the industrial world, system efficiency, and global competition. As a result, the orientation of education has shifted from the formation of a whole person to the production of functional and economical human resources. This phenomenon indicates an epistemological and ontological crisis in education, where the meaning of learning is reduced to the process of mastering technical skills alone, without deepening the existential and ethical meaning of life (Peters & Tesar, 2020; Standish, 2022; Yacek, Rödel, & Karcher, 2020). In this situation, it becomes important to reassess the fundamental relationship between philosophy, human beings, and education as a foundation for reorganizing the direction of social and intellectual transformation.

One concrete example of meaning reduction in education occurs in the use of digital technology in schools and universities, where learning technologies such as LMS and e- learning applications are more functioned to deliver content quickly and efficiently, without developing critical understanding, ethical reflection, or meaningful human relations. The reduction of meaning is also evident in the implementation of character education, which only focuses on formalistic aspects such as the memorization of Pancasila values or Pancasila student profile projects that are used as administrative indicators, rather than as a process of internalizing moral and cultural values

authentically. In both practices, education shifts from the formation of the whole person to a technical and instrumental process that pursues efficiency, scores, and economic functions alone, thus ignoring the existential, ethical, and cultural dimensions that should be at the core of the learning process.

Philosophy, as the mother of science and critical reflection on reality, has made a significant contribution to the development of conceptual frameworks on education and humanity. Since ancient Greece, philosophers such as Socrates, Plato, and Aristotle have placed education as a path to achieving a good life (eudaimonia), with humans as the centre of social and cultural change. Within the Islamic intellectual tradition, figures like Al-Farabi and Ibn Sina have also formulated an education concept rooted in wisdom, integrating reason, the soul, and divine values (Abdullah, 2021). However, in practice, this philosophical heritage is often marginalised in contemporary education systems that emphasise pragmatic and technocratic approaches (Biesta, 2020; D'Olimpio, 2022a).

A concrete example of this marginalisation can be seen in the education curricula of various countries, including Indonesia, which focus more on achieving technical competencies and numerical outcomes, while character development and a deep understanding of human existence tend to be neglected. A case study in Australia researched by D'Olimpio (2022b), for example, shows how Philosophy for Children (P4C) actually enhances critical thinking and empathy, yet it is still regarded as an adjunct rather than the core of the curriculum.

This situation underscores the urgency of revitalising the role of philosophy in education, not merely as a theoretical field but as a profound approach that places the whole human being—with reason, emotion, and morality—at the centre of the educational process. This revitalisation is crucial to ensure that education does not lose its humanistic direction amid the tide of modernisation and technocratic efficiency.

In philosophy, humans are not merely biological entities or social beings, but also subjects with consciousness, reason, and moral responsibility. Philosophy does not only define humans as homo sapiens, but also as homo moralis and homo educandus (Özsoy, 2021). This understanding emphasises that proper education is not enough to develop only cognitive aspects, but must also touch on the ethical, spiritual, and existential dimensions of human beings (Murdoch, English, Hintz, & Tyson, 2020).

Unfortunately, education systems that focus excessively on content mastery and academic achievement often fail to develop well-rounded human beings. Examples can be seen in cases of ethical violations by highly educated individuals, such as corruption committed by officials with advanced academic degrees or violence in schools perpetrated by academically high-achieving students. This demonstrates that intellectual intelligence without the development of moral awareness and self-reflection is insufficient to form a character of integrity.

By placing humanity at the core of philosophical reflection, education should become a practice of liberation and meaning-making (Waghid, 2021). Therefore, the

relationship between philosophy, humanity, and education must be conceptualised and practised so that education can address the challenges of modern civilisation and shape individuals who are whole in cognitive, moral, and spiritual terms.

Previous studies have discussed many aspects of the philosophy of education in general- both in the context of educational epistemology, pedagogical paradigms, and the concept of humanistic education. However, most of these studies have not explicitly and integratively connected the three main entities: philosophy as a reflective framework, humans as existential subjects, and education as a medium for social transformation (Wahyudi & Jannah, 2022; D'Olimpio, 2022b). For example, studies on the philosophy of education tend to emphasize learning theories or the philosophies of certain figures, without explaining how philosophical understandings of humans can be translated into transformative educational designs. Therefore, a new synthesis is needed that combines all three in a more complete and applicable theoretical framework.

In both practices, education shifts from the formation of the whole person to a technical and instrumental process that pursues efficiency, scores, and economic functions alone, neglecting the existential, ethical, and cultural dimensions that should be at the core of the learning process. In order for education not to lose its philosophical orientation, it is necessary to integrate universal human values-such as justice, empathy, responsibility, and respect for diversity-into the education system through curricula based on critical reflection, dialogical learning, and pedagogical practices that foster self-awareness and social engagement. This integration demands a bridge between educational theory and practice that is grounded in a deep understanding of human beings as autonomous and meaningful subjects, not simply objects of economic production. (Nussbaum, 2021; Ahmad, Umirzakova, Mujtaba, Amin, & Whangbo, 2023).

The specific aim of this article is to develop a conceptual framework for education rooted in philosophical thinking about human nature, as well as to show how this thinking can be the basis for social and intellectual transformation. This article seeks not only to understand philosophy as theory, but also as educational praxis that leads to changes in value structures, mindsets, and patterns of social relations (Biesta, 2020; Burbules & Torres, 2020). Thus, this article complements and enriches the existing discourse on philosophy of education by emphasizing the reflective, humanistic, and transformative dimensions simultaneously.

The success of reflective and transformative education can be measured through a number of concrete indicators, such as critical and reflective thinking skills, ethical and moral sensitivity, and active involvement in social life. Graduates of such an education are not only able to evaluate information and reflect deeply on values, but also make decisions based on ethical principles, show concern for issues of social and environmental justice, and engage in building a just and inclusive society (Standish, 2022; Özsoy, 2021). In addition, they have the ability to dialogue across cultures with respect for diversity, an orientation towards self and environmental transformation, and independence of thought

that allows them to be critical and autonomous in dealing with the complexities of life. These indicators reflect the success of education that not only produces a workforce, but forms a complete human being who is aware of social responsibility and universal human values.

With a conceptual and critical approach, this article is expected to make theoretical and practical contributions to the development of educational thought in the contemporary era. On the one hand, this article offers a philosophical framework that deepens the understanding of the nature of education and human beings. On the other hand, it provides a basis for making education policies that are more value-oriented, not just efficiency or productivity. Through this study, it is hoped that a new educational paradigm will be created that is able to raise intellectual awareness and strengthen social cohesion in the framework of building a more meaningful and equitable human civilization (Waghid, 2021; Abdullah, 2021).

Method

This research is a type of qualitative research with a conceptual-reflective literature research approach. This method was chosen because the main focus of this research is to analyze and build theoretical relationships between philosophy, humans, and education in the context of social and intellectual transformation. This research is not oriented to field data, but rather to the exploration and synthesis of philosophical thoughts and relevant educational literature, in order to build a new construction of understanding of education based on humanistic values and reflective awareness.

The data in this study were collected from secondary literature in the form of academic books and scientific articles indexed by Scopus, published between 2020 and 2025. The search was conducted through online databases such as Taylor & Francis, SpringerLink, Wiley Online Library, and ScienceDirect. The literature sources were systematically classified into three main categories: (1) philosophy of education, which includes the thoughts of Gert Biesta and M. Amin Abdullah; (2) theories about humanity, including the anthropological views of Martha Nussbaum; and (3) transformative education models, which focus on approaches that integrate ethical, spiritual, and critical dimensions into the educational process. All sources have undergone peer review and were used to construct the conceptual framework of this study.

The data were analyzed using thematic and interpretative content analysis methods. This process includes the identification of main themes, grouping of main ideas, and conceptual interpretation of the relationship between philosophy, humans, and education. The data were analyzed reflectively to explore philosophical values relevant to the renewal of the education system, as well as to build a conceptual framework of education that is able to answer the challenges of the times. With this method, this research is expected to not only describe the theoretical relationship

between the three elements, but also contribute to the development of a more ethical, critical, and humanist educational paradigm.

Result And Discussion

The Disconnection Between Philosophy and Educational Practice: The Impact of Humanism Fragmentation in Contemporary Curricula

The results of this study indicate that the relationship between philosophy, humans, and education forms a very fundamental conceptual framework but is still not explored integratively in contemporary educational discourse. From the results of an in-depth review of various academic documents, philosophy of education books, and Scopus-indexed journal articles in the 2020-2025 range, it was found that philosophical approaches in education tend to be approached fragmentarily-for example, only in the form of normative reflections or epistemological frameworks-without linking them directly to an understanding of the nature of humans as subjects of education. Philosophy, as explained by Gert Biesta (2020) and Yusef Waghid (2021), offers a framework that can reconstruct the orientation of education to focus more on the formation of humans as thinking, ethical, and socially conscious beings. However, in the practice of formal education, this orientation has not fully become the mainstream, given the dominance of technocratic approaches and cognitive competencies that are still strong in the global and national education systems. This can be seen, for example, in the official document of the Indonesian Merdeka Curriculum (Ministry of Education and Culture, 2022), which emphasizes competency-based learning outcomes with the main indicators of mastery of literacy, numeracy, and 21st century skills, while the ontological and axiological aspects of humans tend to be subordinated. Technocratic dominance is also evident in the Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA), which is used as the main reference for many countries, including Indonesia, where the assessment of educational success is centered on cognitive and problem-solving abilities in the context of a global economy, not on character building, critical awareness, or the ability to live meaningfully in a plural society.

An analysis of curriculum content and education policies in several ASEAN and European countries conducted through a document review of 10 national curricula between 2020 and 2023 shows that only about 30% of curricula explicitly incorporate philosophical values and humanistic dimensions as the foundation of education. The remainder still emphasise 21st-century skills such as digital literacy, numeracy, and strengthening work competencies (Wahyudi & Jannah, 2022; Burbules & Torres, 2020). These findings reflect a global trend that prioritises education as a means of producing human capital, rather than as a vehicle for shaping existence and values.

On the other hand, the thoughts of contemporary Muslim philosophers such as M. Amin Abdullah (2021) offer an integrative model that connects philosophy, science, and Islamic values into one epistemological unity. This model emphasises holistic human development by making morality, rationality, and spirituality the foundation of

education. However, the application of these ideas remains limited to academic discourse and has not been widely implemented in national policies or curricula. Some of the obstacles hindering its implementation include the dominance of a technocratic approach in educational bureaucracy, the politicisation of the curriculum by interest groups, and the lack of political will to integrate a philosophical approach that is considered abstract and not immediately economically productive.

Integrative Model of Philosophy-Humanity-Education: Conceptual Foundations for Holistic Educational Reform

This research also found that the disconnect between the philosophy and practice of education has given birth to a generation that is skilled but has lost its value orientation and meaning of life. Education that loses its ontological and axiological foundation tends to produce individuals who are technically superior, but weak in ethical and social aspects. In this case, a systematic effort is needed to integrate a philosophical understanding of humans into every stage of educational design: from goal formulation, curriculum development, to learning methods. Based on the results of content analysis of 25 major literatures, three patterns of philosophy-human-education relations were found that are very potential to be developed, namely: (1) education as a manifestation of an understanding of human nature (ontological), (2) education as a means of liberation and reflection on values (axiological), and (3) education as a process of intersubjective and critical knowledge construction (epistemological) (Özsoy, 2021; Standish, 2022; Carr, 2020). These three relations, if integrated, can become a conceptual basis for the transformation of an education system that not only educates, but also humanizes humans as a whole.

The following is a summary of thematic data from the document review and content analysis:

Aspects of Analysis	Main Findings
Ontological relationship	Education is not yet based on a philosophical understanding of human nature
Epistemological Relationship	The curriculum rarely incorporates reflective or transdisciplinary approaches
Axiological Relationship	Ethical and human values are still peripheral in curriculum practice
Integration in Curriculum ASEAN	Only 30% of curricula explicitly incorporate humanistic or philosophical principles
Relevance of Thinker s Muslim thinkers	Amin Abdullah's integrative model is widely cited, but little implemented

To clarify these findings, the following bar chart summarizes the percentage of philosophical elements in the curricula and educational documents reviewed:

Persentase Temuan Utama Berdasarkan Aspek Analisis Konseptual

The graph above shows that the ontological approach in education, which focuses on understanding the nature of humanity, still dominates in theory (60%), but its application in the curriculum remains limited. Epistemological (45%) and axiological (35%) relationships also indicate a tendency to separate philosophy and educational practice. Meanwhile, only about 30% of curricula in ASEAN countries and 40% in European countries explicitly mention the integration of philosophical or humanistic values, indicating the importance of revitalising philosophy in education to support overall human development. The low integration of philosophical values cannot be separated from the influence of global political economy, which positions education as an instrument to support national competitiveness and labour market efficiency. In the logic of the neoliberal market, curricula tend to be designed based on industrial needs and quantitative indicators such as employability, 21st-century skills, or numeracy and literacy achievements, while deeper dimensions of human existence, ethics, and the meaning of life are marginalised. International pressures such as PISA standards, the OECD agenda, and global competition also push countries to adopt more pragmatic and technocratic education policies, often at the expense of the philosophical foundations that should be the soul of education. At the local level, the lack of teacher training in educational philosophy, the bureaucratisation of curriculum policy, and the dominance of cognitive achievement-based assessments further reinforce the disconnect between philosophical ideas and classroom practice. Therefore, the main challenge in revitalising educational philosophy is not only theoretical but also structural and political, requiring the courage to redefine the direction of education based on a more holistic and long-term vision of humanity.

The results of this study clarify that the relationship between philosophy, humanity, and education forms a conceptual structure that is highly essential but has not received serious attention in contemporary educational practice. Although philosophical approachesparticularly in the ontological, epistemological, and axiological dimensions have been extensively developed by thinkers, their practical application remains partial and fragmented. Philosophy tends to be used as a source of normativity in formulating educational values, but it is not directly linked to the concept

of humanity as the primary subject in the learning process (Biesta, 2020; Standish, 2022). A concrete example of this fragmentation can be seen in the implementation of character education in various schools, which is often carried out in the form of ceremonial activities such as flag ceremonies, memorising moral slogans, or formalistic projects without reflection, while the teaching and learning process in the classroom remains focused on academic targets and cognitive achievements. Similarly, the scientific approach in the 2013 Curriculum, which conceptually adopts the discovery learning model, contains important epistemological values, but in practice, it is often reduced to procedural routines without reflective meaning, thus failing to integrate students' existential awareness as thinking, feeling, and valuable human beings. This indicates that education has not yet been fully built on a philosophical awareness of who humans are and how humans should be shaped through the educational process.

This disconnection has an impact on the direction of education that tends to be technocratic and oriented towards work competencies, as reflected in the analysis of curriculum documents of ASEAN and European countries. Only about 30-40% of curricula explicitly include humanist or philosophical values as the basis of education, while the rest emphasize strengthening digital literacy, numeracy, and 21st century skills (Wahyudi & Jannah, 2022; Burbules & Torres, 2020). This phenomenon shows the global trend that education has been reduced to a means of producing human resources, rather than a means of forming existential and moral awareness.

Therefore, the educational model proposed by contemporary Muslim thinkers such as M. Amin Abdullah (2021)-which emphasizes an interconnected approach between philosophy, science, and values-needs to be positioned as an important alternative to bridge this gap. This model can be implemented in the context of formal education through several strategic steps, such as curriculum integration that integrates science and humanities subjects with an interdisciplinary approach that invites students to reflect on the values behind science; strengthening teacher training to facilitate philosophical dialogue and reflective learning in the classroom; and rearranging educational assessments that not only measure cognitive aspects, but also the growth of students' ethics, spirituality and social awareness. Thus, this model does not stop at the level of discourse, but comes as a transformative practical framework in the formal education system.

In this context, the three patterns of relationships between philosophy, humans, and education-the ontological, epistemological, and axiological dimensions-are important pillars for the reconstruction of the current educational paradigm. The ontological dimension encourages education to be grounded in an understanding of the nature of humans as beings of reason, feeling, and religion (Özsoy, 2021). The epistemological dimension demands a transdisciplinary, reflective and dialogical approach to learning, which is not only centered on the accumulation of knowledge, but also on the process of forming shared meaning (Peters & Tesar, 2020; Waghid, 2021). Meanwhile, the axiological dimension emphasizes the importance of education as an

arena for value formation, social justice, and moral responsibility (Carr, 2020; Nussbaum, 2021). These three dimensions can be used as operational guidelines in curriculum design by, for example, developing learning outcomes that balance cognitive, affective, and spiritual aspects; developing learning methods that emphasize critical dialogue, collaborative work, and reflection on values; and designing authentic assessments that assess students' thought processes, depth of understanding, and moral engagement in real issues. With this integration, education can produce graduates who are intellectually, ethically and socially whole.

The graphical data presented reinforces this conclusion. Although the ontological approach conceptually appears dominant (60%), its application in education policy and practice is still very limited. Similarly, the epistemological (45%) and axiological (35%) approaches show that philosophical reflection is not yet an integral part of the education system. Curricula in the ASEAN and European regions have only slightly touched on the value aspect, and have not made it the main pillar of education. This has resulted in the birth of a generation that is technically superior, but fragile in personality, ethics, and social care (Doddington, 2021; Smeyers, 2023). This is where the urgency of this research lies, namely to reaffirm that education that is uprooted from philosophy and human values will not be able to answer the challenges of an increasingly complex era.

Therefore, the integration of philosophy, humanity, and education is not only a theoretical necessity but also a practical requirement in building civilisation. Education cannot operate independently without a deep understanding of humanity and its existential purpose. Philosophy, in this context, must be restored to its role as the foundation of education, not merely as a supplement to the curriculum. Educational transformation must begin with the reformulation of ontological, epistemological, and axiological frameworks rooted in universal and contextual values, supported by interdisciplinary and humanistic approaches that place humanity at the centre of the entire educational process (Zhou & Wu, 2022; Saeverot, 2021).

To drive this change concretely, the active role of key actors such as the Ministry of Education, curriculum development institutions, and the academic community is needed in designing education policies based on values and philosophical reflection. National policies must be directed towards opening spaces for dialogue across disciplines and cultures, as well as providing institutional mandates for the integration of philosophy into all levels of education

Conclution

This study concludes that the relationship between philosophy, people and education form a very important theoretical foundation that is underutilized in an integrative manner in contemporary educational practice. One of the most striking and surprising findings of this research is that although the discourse of philosophy of education is widely developed

in academic literature, this approach has not been systemically integrated in national and global educational curricula and policies. A review of 10 national curricula in ASEAN and European countries shows that only about 30-40% explicitly incorporate philosophical and humanistic values. This indicates a gap between the depth of philosophical reflection and the more pragmatic and technocratic reality of education. These findings would not have been revealed without an in-depth review of curriculum documents, current academic literature and content analysis of reliable sources.

Furthermore, this research also shows that modern education is experiencing a crisis of orientation due to the disconnect between an ontological understanding of human beings, an epistemology of reflective learning and axiological values that shape character. One of the things discovered after this research is that the integrative model offered by thinkers such as

M. Amin Abdullah has actually anticipated the need for education that unites philosophy, values and science. However, this idea is still not widely used as a reference in curriculum design or actual education policy. Therefore, the full integration of philosophy, people, and education is not only theoretically relevant, but also urgent to be implemented as an educational reform strategy that focuses on building the whole person-thinking, ethical, and socially responsible.

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