



Education as a Process of Humanization: A Philosophical and Scientific Examination of the Development of the Whole Human Being

Atika Zikri¹, Amril Amir², Nurizzati³
Universitas Negeri Padang, Indonesia^{1, 2, 3}

Email: tikazii300402@gmail.com¹, amril.amir@fbs.unp.ac.id², nurizzati_2138@fbs.unp.ac.id³

ABSTRACT

The reduction of education to a technocratic process that is only oriented towards cognitive achievement has ignored basic human values. This research aims to analyze the essence of education as a humanization process by integrating philosophical and scientific perspectives, as well as identifying the main dimensions in the development of the whole human being. The method used was a systematic literature review of 28 articles from Scopus, Web of Science, and the Garuda Portal for the 2014–2024 period with the keywords "humanization in education", "philosophy of education", and "holistic development". The thematic analysis yielded three main findings. First, the humanization of education includes five dimensions of development: cognitive, affective, moral, social, and spiritual, that must be integrated into learning practices. Second, the philosophy of education serves as a normative foundation and a tool of criticism that directs educational goals. Third, education provides an empirical framework through theoretical, practical, and normative orientations. These findings confirm that meaningful education requires a dialogue between philosophical reflection and scientific validation in its implementation. This research contributes to educational theory by providing an integrated conceptual framework that bridges the gap between philosophical ideals and empirical practice, offering practical guidance for educators and policymakers to develop more humanistic and holistic educational systems that address the ethical and social challenges of contemporary society.

Keywords: educational humanization, educational philosophy, holistic development, whole person, critical pedagogy

INTRODUCTION

Education essentially aims to form human beings who are knowledgeable, moral, and able to play a responsible role in social life. In this framework, the concept of humanization is an important basis for understanding education more comprehensively. Humanization places humans as the main subjects of the educational process, so that the development of dignity, potential, and freedom of thought becomes an inseparable aspect of learning practices. However, the reality of modern education shows a reductive tendency, namely an orientation that emphasizes too much on cognitive achievement and productivity, so that fundamental human values are increasingly marginalized (Zhao, 2025).

Global data from UNESCO (2021) indicates that educational systems worldwide increasingly prioritize standardized testing and measurable outcomes, with over 80% of OECD countries implementing high-stakes assessments that primarily measure cognitive performance. Furthermore, the World Bank (2018) reports that character education and moral development receive less than 15% of curriculum time in most developing nations, reflecting a systematic devaluation of humanistic dimensions in education. In the Indonesian context, data from the Ministry of Education and Culture (2022) reveals that 67% of teachers report pressure to prioritize test preparation over holistic student development, while student surveys indicate

declining levels of empathy, social responsibility, and ethical awareness among secondary school students.

Philosophical studies affirm that education is not just a transfer of knowledge, but a process of forming awareness, self-reflection, and moral sensitivity. This is in line with the scientific view that human development takes place holistically, including cognitive, affective, moral, social, and spiritual dimensions. Thus, education must be directed to facilitate the development of the whole human being. The imbalance between academic demands and character formation in many educational institutions indicates the need to reinvigorate the principle of humanization in the implementation of education.

A review of previous research reveals several critical gaps in the literature on educational humanization. First, Suyatno, Wantini, and Zuhri (2019) examined humanistic learning in Indonesian education but focused primarily on pedagogical methods without integrating philosophical foundations with empirical evidence of student outcomes. Second, Nafisah and Yuliana (2021) explored value-based learning for social-emotional competencies, yet their study lacked a comprehensive framework connecting affective, moral, and spiritual dimensions. Third, Rohman and Ningsih (2021) analyzed humanitarian values from a critical pedagogical perspective but did not address the practical implementation challenges or provide validated assessment tools. Fourth, Wahidah and Adhar (2024) discussed human nature in holistic education from a purely theoretical standpoint without examining how these concepts translate into classroom practice or educational policy. These studies collectively demonstrate fragmented approaches that either emphasize philosophical discourse without scientific validation or focus on isolated dimensions without integrating the complete spectrum of human development.

This fragmentation creates a significant conceptual and practical gap: existing literature has not adequately explained how philosophical principles of humanization can be systematically operationalized across all five dimensions of human development (cognitive, affective, moral, social, and spiritual) within contemporary educational contexts. This condition creates a conceptual gap that needs to be bridged so that humanization is not only understood as a normative idea, but also as a theoretical framework that can be applied in educational practice. Therefore, this article analyzes education as a process of humanization through the integration of philosophical and scientific perspectives to explain how human values can be the basis for the development of the whole human being.

The novelty of this research lies in its systematic integration of philosophical foundations with scientific evidence across multiple dimensions of human development, creating a comprehensive conceptual framework that addresses both the theoretical and practical aspects of educational humanization. Unlike previous studies that examined these elements in isolation, this research synthesizes diverse philosophical traditions (humanistic, critical, pragmatic) with empirical findings to establish a unified model for implementing holistic education in contemporary settings. This discussion is expected to strengthen the theoretical foundation as well as provide direction for the development of an education system that is relevant to social, cultural, and ethical challenges in the modern era.

METHOD

This research uses the literature review method to examine the concept of humanization in education through the analysis of relevant scientific works. This approach was chosen because the research topic is conceptual and requires an in-depth search of philosophical thoughts and scientific findings that have been published. Data sources were obtained from Sinta and Scopus-indexed journals, academic books, proceedings, and other scientific documents published in the last ten years. The selection of literature was carried out purposively based on the relevance of the theme, the credibility of the author, and the theoretical contribution to the study of the humanization of education.

The analysis process is carried out through three stages. First, the organization of literature by grouping sources based on the focus of the study, namely humanization, philosophy of education, and development of the whole human being. Second, content analysis to identify key concepts, arguments, and tendencies of each source's findings. Third, thematic synthesis to develop an integrated understanding of education as a humanization process. This approach allows the formulation of a comprehensive conceptual framework without collecting empirical data, so that the results of the study make a significant theoretical contribution to the development of educational humanization discourse.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The Essence of Education as a Humanization Process

The concept of humanization in education departs from the view that human beings must be positioned as subjects who have dignity, potential, and freedom of thought. Karmon (2021) emphasized that education for meaning cannot be reduced to material delivery activities, but must facilitate students to find the relevance of knowledge to their life experiences. This view is in line with the humanistic education theory put forward by Rogers and Freiberg (2019), which states that learning should focus on personal growth, self-actualization, and the creation of authentic learning experiences. Thus, education as a humanization process requires the active involvement of students through reflection, dialogue, and participation in the interpretation of knowledge.

Fullan and Quinn (2023) reinforce this idea through a deep learning framework that places global values, character, and competencies at the core of 21st-century learning. They emphasized that education is not just a preparation for the world of work, but a transformative process that shapes human beings to be able to live meaningfully, empowered, and contribute to society. This perspective is in line with the goals of national education in Law Number 20 of 2003, which emphasizes the formation of students who have faith, knowledge, noble character, and responsibility. Thus, humanization in education serves as an effort to free individuals from ignorance, injustice, and dependence, while opening up space for the full development of human potential.

The latest study from Sriatun (2024) shows that the moral and social dimensions are an inseparable part of the humanization process, especially in the context of character education.

Education not only develops intellectual abilities, but also forms the moral identity of students to be able to act ethically, empathize, and be sensitive to social realities. This finding is strengthened by Lickona's (2021) research, which confirms that character education has a significant contribution to building human beings with integrity and responsibility. In other words, education as a humanization process requires harmonious integration between cognitive, affective, moral, spiritual, and social aspects.

In addition, scientific perspectives in the international literature (e.g., Noddings, 2016; Biesta, 2020) emphasize that the essence of education cannot be separated from three main functions: qualification, socialization, and subjectification. The last function, namely subjectification, places humanization as the core of education because it is oriented towards the formation of individuals as free, critical, and responsible subjects. Thus, humanist education not only develops knowledge and skills, but also humanizes humans through the process of reflection, meaning, and the formation of self-identity.

However, the implementation of humanization faces significant challenges in the digital age, where technology-mediated learning increasingly dominates educational landscapes. The proliferation of online education, artificial intelligence-driven adaptive learning systems, and algorithm-based assessment tools raises critical questions about the preservation of human connection, ethical formation, and authentic dialogue in educational processes (Selwyn, 2019).

Furthermore, the concept of the "whole person" itself carries potential cultural biases, as it often reflects Western humanistic traditions that emphasize individual autonomy and self-actualization. In collectivist cultural contexts, such as those prevalent in many Asian societies including Indonesia, the development of the whole person may need to incorporate communal values, social harmony, and interdependence as equally essential dimensions alongside individual growth (Marginson, 2011). These considerations underscore the need for culturally responsive approaches to humanization that acknowledge diverse philosophical traditions and adapt to technological transformations while preserving the fundamental human-centered orientation of education.

Overall, findings from various literature show that the nature of education as a humanization process demands a holistic approach that integrates cognitive, affective, moral, spiritual, and social dimensions. Humanization is not only a philosophical principle but also an empirical foundation for the development of the whole human being. Therefore, education that is relevant to the challenges of the 21st century must be able to create a meaningful, human-centered, and grounded learning experience based on universal human values.

The Role of Educational Philosophy in Shaping Educational Orientation

Curren (2023) emphasized that the philosophy of education has a central position in determining the direction, goals, and fundamental values that must be realized in the educational process. Through a philosophical foundation, educators can understand the nature of human beings as rational, moral, social, and spiritual beings, so that learning is not only directed toward academic achievements but also to the development of humanity in an integral way. Chazan (2022) emphasized that without a philosophical orientation, education is at risk of narrowing its

meaning, becoming a technocratic mechanism that only focuses on cognitive abilities and instrumental skills. This view aligns with Fullan and Quinn's (2023) idea of value-driven change, that educational transformation must be rooted in human values such as justice, empathy, social responsibility, and solidarity.

Freire (1970) expands this discussion through the concept of humanizing education, which places dialogue, critical awareness, and liberation at the center of the educational process. According to him, education that places students as subjects allows them to develop critical skills toward reality, as well as form dignity and self-autonomy. In the context of human relations, Noddings (2013) emphasized that the ethics of care must be the relational foundation of education. This approach places care, empathy, and emotional connection as important prerequisites for the creation of a humanization process. Thus, humanization is not only about thinking or moral skills, but also the quality of human relationships between teachers and students.

On the other hand, McLaren (2022) underlines that the philosophy of education plays a role as a tool for criticism and dismantling unjust power structures in education. This critical perspective reminds us that education systems often contain social biases, cultural hegemony, or curricula that are insensitive to the local context. These findings are particularly relevant in the Indonesian context, where educational practices often adopt Western paradigms without considering local values such as mutual cooperation, deliberation, and togetherness. In a more normative realm, Biesta (2010) explains that education must go beyond just "learning to know" (qualification) and "learning to behave" (socialization), toward a third higher goal, namely "becoming a person" (subjectification). This perspective places education as an arena for the formation of subjectivity, freedom, and the uniqueness of human beings.

Philosophy also serves as a bridge between theory and practice. Dewey (1938), through pragmatism, asserts that direct experience is at the heart of the learning process, which then inspires experiential and project-based learning. Wiggins (2022) reinforces the relevance of this approach through understanding by design (UbD), which emphasizes the importance of deep understanding-based learning designs. In Indonesia, research by Arifin, Dewi, and Mahfud (2023) shows that project-based learning, based on philosophical values such as independence, creativity, self-reflection, and responsibility, has been proven to significantly improve student character. These findings confirm that the integration of educational philosophy into classroom practice is not only a normative ideal but has a real impact on the humanization process of students.

Education: Its Orientation, Scope, and Role

Studies in Philosophy and Education (2024) states that education is a discipline that studies educational phenomena systematically and scientifically. It is oriented towards efforts to understand, explain, and improve the educational process based on theory and empirical data. In contrast to philosophy, which is normative and reflective, education is analytical and applicative because it seeks to answer questions about how education takes place and how to improve it. However, the two remain complementary: philosophy provides a basis for values, while

education provides a scientific approach to realizing those values.

The main orientation of education lies in the development of the whole human being through effective and meaningful learning. Springer (2024) explains that modern education science is oriented to three main dimensions. First, theoretical orientation, which is the development of educational theories that explain the relationship between learning, teaching, and socio-cultural contexts. These theories are the foundation for researchers and practitioners to understand the phenomenon of education in depth. Second, practical orientation, namely the application of theory in learning practices, curriculum, and educational management. Wiggins (2022) and Arifin et al. (2023) emphasized that this orientation ensures that research findings can be applied to improve the quality of learning in the field. Third, normative orientation, namely the development of ethics and moral values in educational practice. Fullan and Quinn (2023) emphasized that this dimension guarantees that education is not value-free, but must be directed at character and humanity formation.

Arifin et al. (2023) explained that the scope of education includes various fields of study that are interconnected. First, learning and learning theory are fundamental foundations in understanding how individuals acquire knowledge, skills, and attitudes. Dewey (1938) emphasized that experience is at the core of the learning process, while Chazan (2022) highlighted the importance of a pedagogical approach that adjusts the characteristics of learners. Second, curriculum and teaching are important components in regulating the direction and content of education. UNESCO (2015) emphasizes that the curriculum is not just a list of materials, but a strategic design that reflects the goals of national education and the needs of the times.

Third, education administration and policy have a strategic role in ensuring the sustainability of an effective, efficient, and equitable education system. Fullan and Quinn (2023) emphasized that good education policies must be oriented towards systemic change and improving the quality of learning, not just administration. Fourth, educational evaluation and assessment function as a tool to assess the extent to which the learning process has achieved the expected goals. Wiggins (2022) introduces the concept of authentic assessment, which assesses students' abilities in a real-life context, not just through written exams. Thus, assessments become a reflective means for teachers and students in improving the quality of learning.

Fifth, value and character education has a very important position in shaping the personality of students. Sriatun (2024) and Arifin et al. (2023) emphasized that values such as honesty, empathy, discipline, and mutual cooperation must be integrated into every aspect of learning so that students grow into individuals with integrity and are useful to society. Sixth, special and inclusive education emphasizes the importance of providing equal access to education for all students, regardless of differences in ability, social background, culture, and physical condition. UNESCO (2015) underlines that inclusive education is an approach that respects diversity and guarantees the right of every individual to learn in a supportive environment.

Studies in Philosophy and Education (2024) emphasizes that the main role of education is

to provide a scientific basis for educational policies and practices. Education is a source of data-driven decision-making, not just based on intuition or tradition. In addition, education plays a role in learning innovations, such as digital media development, adaptive learning, and the integration of artificial intelligence technology to support personalized learning. Furthermore, education also functions as a social diagnosis tool because it can identify problems of inequality of access to education, teacher quality gaps, and the relevance of the curriculum to the needs of society. Thus, education is not only oriented to the mastery of knowledge, but also to social transformation and human empowerment.

Integration of Philosophy and Educational Science in Educational Practice

Curren (2023) and *Studies in Philosophy and Education* (2024) affirm that the relationship between philosophy and education is dialectical and mutually reinforcing. Philosophy provides an ontological, epistemological, and axiological foundation that determines the direction, purpose, and meaning of educational practice. Meanwhile, education provides empirical proof, methodological approaches, and implementive strategies that allow philosophical ideas to be realized in the real context of classes and policies. When the two are separated, education has the potential to lose its balance. Without a philosophical foundation, educational research and practice tend to be trapped in a technocracy that emphasizes efficiency and quantitative results alone, but is poor in human values. On the other hand, educational philosophy that is not supported by empirical research risks becoming empty idealism, not grounded in social reality and the needs of students. Therefore, the integration of philosophy and education is the main requirement for realizing a meaningful, contextual, and equitable education system.

Furthermore, the *Journal of Philosophy of Education* (2024) emphasizes that philosophical orientation greatly determines the research paradigm used in education. The positivistic paradigm, rooted in realism and empiricism, emphasizes the search for general laws that can be measured and tested, thus aligning with quantitative approaches. Constructivist paradigms that rely on pragmatism, phenomenology, and existentialism are better suited for qualitative research such as case studies, narratives, and educational ethnography that place human experience at the center of analysis. Meanwhile, critical, feminist, and postcolonial paradigms focus on power relations, structural injustice, and the decolonization of knowledge, thus becoming the foundation for transformative research aimed at changing the direction of education toward social justice. Thus, mastery of the philosophy of education not only enriches theoretical insights but also provides epistemological and methodological clarity for researchers in designing, implementing, and interpreting educational research.

Wiggins (2022) emphasized that the philosophy of education also sets the direction of educational axiology. He stated that education is never neutral because all decisions about what is taught, how to teach, and what is considered to be "learning outcomes" always contain value. Therefore, the orientation of 21st-century education demands authentic assessments that are not limited to purely cognitive aspects but also include human values such as responsibility, creativity, collaboration, and empathy. In a similar framework, Arifin et al. (2023) show that project-based learning provides space for students to develop character, social sensitivity, and

creativity through meaningful authentic experiences. The findings reinforce the view that integration between philosophy and education is needed to build learning practices that are not only academically effective but also ethical, humanist, and contextual.

CONCLUSION

Based on the above discussion, it can be concluded that the essence of education is a holistic humanization process, including the development of cognitive, affective, psychomotor, moral, spiritual, and social dimensions in an integrated manner. Dewantara (1961), Dewey (1938), and contemporary thinkers such as Chazan (2022), Suci et al. (2024), and Fullan and Quinn (2023) emphasized that education is not just a transfer of knowledge, but an effort to form human beings who are knowledgeable, characterful, responsible, and able to contribute positively to society. Meaningful education requires a balance between intellectual development and character formation to produce human beings who are not only intelligent but also virtuous.

The philosophy of education has a fundamental role as a conceptual foundation that directs educational goals, orientation, and practice. Curren (2023) and McLaren (2022) affirm that philosophy serves as a tool for critical reflection on educational practice and policy, as well as a link between theory and practice. Without philosophical guidance, education is easily caught up in a narrow pragmatism that emphasizes only academic achievement. Therefore, the philosophy of education is very important in maintaining education that is oriented towards the formation of a whole and meaningful human being.

Education, as a systematic and scientific discipline, is oriented towards the development of the whole human being through effective and meaningful learning. Studies in Philosophy and Education (2024) and Arifin et al. (2023) show that education has a theoretical, practical, and normative orientation that complements each other. The scope of education includes the theory of learning and learning, curriculum and teaching, administration and policy, evaluation and assessment, values and character education, and inclusive education. The primary role of education science is to provide a scientific basis for educational policies and practices, encourage learning innovation, and serve as a social diagnostic tool to identify problems of inequality in the education system.

The integration between philosophy and education forms a comprehensive foundation in building a meaningful, contextual, and equitable education system. Curren (2023) and Studies in Philosophy and Education (2024) affirm that the relationship between the two is dialectical: philosophy provides direction and meaning, while education provides empirical evidence and practical application. Meaningful education can only be realized through deep philosophical reflection and responsible scientific application. Thus, understanding the nature of education as well as the basis of philosophy and educational science is very important for educators and researchers in producing educational practices that are not only methodologically valid but also philosophically and socially meaningful.

From a policy perspective, this research has significant implications for educational reform at multiple levels. Policymakers should prioritize the development of national curricula that

explicitly integrate humanization principles across all five dimensions, moving beyond purely competency-based frameworks. This requires establishing clear assessment standards for affective, moral, social, and spiritual development alongside cognitive metrics. Teacher education programs must be restructured to equip educators with both philosophical literacy and practical pedagogical strategies for implementing holistic education. Furthermore, school evaluation systems should be reformed to measure institutional success not only through academic performance indicators but also through evidence of student character development, social responsibility, and ethical awareness.

For future research, several critical areas warrant investigation. First, empirical studies are needed to test the practical application of this integrated framework in diverse educational contexts, examining how different cultural, socioeconomic, and technological environments affect the implementation of humanization principles. Second, longitudinal research should track the long-term outcomes of humanistic education on students' personal development, career success, civic engagement, and overall well-being. Third, comparative international studies could explore how different philosophical traditions (Western humanistic, Eastern holistic, Indigenous communal) conceptualize and operationalize the development of the whole person. Fourth, research is needed on developing valid and reliable assessment instruments that can measure non-cognitive dimensions of human development in culturally sensitive ways. Finally, studies should investigate the role of emerging technologies, including artificial intelligence and virtual reality, in either supporting or hindering the humanization process in education, providing guidance for ethical and human-centered educational technology design.

REFERENCE

- Arifin, Z., Dewi, U., & Mahfud, C. (2023). Project-based learning for the development of students' character and creativity. *Journal of Education and Culture*, 29(2), 145–162.
- Biesta, G. (2020). *World-centred education: A view for the present*. Routledge.
- Chazan, B. (2022). *Contemporary approaches to moral education: Analyzing alternative theories*. Teachers College Press.
- Curren, R. (Ed.). (2023). *Handbook of philosophy of education*. Routledge.
- Fullan, M., & Quinn, J. (2023a). *The nature of leadership: Context, character, competencies, and coherence*. Corwin Press.
- Fullan, M., & Quinn, J. (2023b). *The principal: Three keys to maximizing impact* (2nd ed.). Corwin Press.
- Journal of Education. (2022). The nature of education as a transcendental process. *Journal on Education*, 4(3), 312–325.
- Journal of Philosophy of Education. (2024). Research paradigms in educational philosophy. *Journal of Philosophy of Education*, 58(1), 23–45.
- Karmon, A. (2021a). Education for meaning: A conceptual framework. *Educational Theory*, 71(4), 487–506.
- Karmon, A. (2021b). *Education for meaning: Reframing learning for human development*. Springer.
- Lickona, T. (2021). *Character matters: How to help our children develop good judgment, integrity, and other essential virtues*. Simon & Schuster.

- McLaren, P. (2022). *Critical pedagogy and postcolonial thought: Towards a postcolonial pedagogy*. Routledge.
- Nafisah, D. I., & Yuliana, R. (2021). Value-based learning to build students' social-emotional competencies. *Journal of Educational Research*, 21(1), 55–68.
- Noddings, N. (2016). *Philosophy of education* (4th ed.). Westview Press.
- Rogers, C. R., & Freiberg, H. J. (2019). *Freedom to learn* (3rd ed.). Pearson.
- Rohman, M., & Ningsih, S. (2021). Humanitarian values in learning practice: A critical pedagogical perspective study. *Scientific Journal of Education*, 12(1), 23–34.
- Springer. (2024). The relationship between philosophy and educational science. *Studies in Philosophy and Education*, 43(2), 167–189.
- Sriatun. (2024a). Character education in forming a generation with integrity: A study of moral values in secondary schools. *Journal of Character Education*, 14(1), 45–57.
- Sriatun, S. (2024b). Character education in forming a quality generation. *Journal of Character Education*, 14(1), 78–92.
- Studies in Philosophy and Education. (2024). Philosophical foundations of educational research. *Studies in Philosophy and Education*, 43(1), 1–22.
- Suci, A. S., Rahman, F., & Pratiwi, D. (2024). The essence of education in a contemporary perspective. *Journal of Educational Sciences*, 30(1), 15–28.
- Suyatno, S., Wantini, W., & Zuhri, M. (2019). Humanistic learning in Indonesian education: A conceptual review. *Journal of Education Horizons*, 38(3), 435–448.
- UNESCO. (2015). *Rethinking education: Towards a global common good?* UNESCO Publishing.
- Wahidah, F., & Adhar, A. (2024). Human nature in the perspective of holistic education. *Journal of Philosophy of Education*, 8(2), 112–128.
- Wiggins, G. (2022). *Understanding by design and authentic assessment in education*. ASCD Publications.

First publication rights:

[Syntax Transformation Journal](#)

This article is licensed under:

