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The Essence of Education in the Perspective of John Dewey

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Abstract:

Education is key in the development of a country. People who have a high level of education are better able to assist the government in developing the country together. The government can provide facilities that support education by providing opportunities to gain experience. Education based on experience will be more embedded in people's minds. This research aims to explore the deeper meaning of education related to education seen from John Dewey's point of view. The method in this research uses a library study method, where the sources obtained come from books, articles, and papers that are still closely related to the research theme. The analysis technique in this research uses qualitative techniques in the form of descriptive. John Dewey is one of the philosophers whose thoughts can change world civilization, one of which is in the field of education. Four fundamental concepts in John Dewey's philosophical thinking that give color to his thinking in the field of education, namely experience, growth, transactions, One of the keywords in John Dewey's philosophy as a whole and not just in his philosophy of education is "experience".

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Introduction (مقدمة)

Education, fundamentally, is the human endeavor to enhance knowledge, whether acquired through formal or non-formal institutions(Rafif, 2020). The essence of humanity, from its creator's perspective, lies in being a perfect creature endowed with reason. Thus, humans constantly think about the continuity of their lives and generations. Humans strive to find various ways to survive, both for themselves and for their descendants or generations, while simultaneously improving the quality of their lives, both physically and non-physically, in a natural course of events. This is the general essence of education(Albantani et al., 2022).

The goals of education(Fitrianto et al., 2023) can determine success in the process of shaping human personalities. The purpose of education is also to develop the potential of learners to

become individuals who have faith and piety towards the Almighty, possess noble (Nashihin, 2019), are healthy, knowledgeable, creative (Widiana & Jampel, 2016), independent, and responsible individuals. The primary concern of education is humanity.

Education is also the foundation of the development of a society and a nation (Rahmawati, 2022). Without education, societies generally live in decline, leading to significant moral decay. In line with its importance, education needs to be considered a crucial agenda to be implemented according to appropriate principles (Ssanyu et al., 2023). In the context of Islamic education, it should be based on the Qur'an and the Sunnah (Yoke Suryadarma Fariz Mirza Abdillah, 2017), as Islamic education that deviates from these sources can lead to failure in shaping committed Muslim individuals who adhere to the requirements of their faith.

Therefore, a comprehensive discussion on the essence of education examines various aspects of human life that reveal the concepts of education. It can even be said that education is experienced by all individuals from all walks of life.



Method (منهج)

The method employed in this research is library research, commonly known as a literature review. Data for this study were obtained from journals and books related to the research topic. Data collection involved identifying John Dewey's thoughts from journals, books, papers, or articles closely related to the theme of this research. The analysis technique in this study is qualitative and descriptive in nature.



Result (نتائج)

1. The Essence of Education

Before delving too deeply into the essence of education, Aziz Masang presents several variables related to education itself as follows (Aziz Masang, 2021): a. Definition and Concept of Education The term "education" in Malay is a derived noun from the root word "didik," which means to care for, nurture, and teach. The word "education" (Slee, 2023) is also synonymous with instruction, training, nurturing, guidance, lessons, care, and teaching. In English, education is referred to as "education," which is said to originate from the Latin words "e'ex" and "ducere," meaning 'to lead,' interpreted as gathering information within oneself to shape talents.

The three concepts of education are as follows: the first is Tarbiyyah. Tarbiyyah comes from the word "rabba." In a broad context, the understanding of Islamic education contained in the word "tarbiyyah" consists of four approaches: preserving and nurturing the nature of students as they approach adulthood, developing all potentials toward perfection, directing all nature toward perfection, and implementing education gradually.

Tarbiyah Tarbiyah comes from the word "rabba." (Ridwan, 2018) In a broad context, the understanding of Islamic education contained in the word "tarbiyyah" consists of four approaches: preserving and nurturing the nature of students as they approach adulthood, developing all potentials toward perfection, directing all nature toward perfection, and implementing education gradually.

Ta'lim The term "ta'lim" comes from the word 'alima. In Arabic, this word can have several meanings, such as to know or feel, and inform (Dana, 2020). This is based on the Quranic verse Al-Baqarah/2:31, which means: "And He taught Adam the names – all of them." And the

Quranic verse Al-Baqarah/2:151, which means: "Just as We have sent among you a Messenger from yourselves reciting to you Our verses and purifying you and teaching you the Book and wisdom and teaching you that which you did not know." These verses explain the educational activities carried out by the Messenger (Ibnu Fitrianto, 2018), which are not limited to teaching the recitation of the Quran but also striving for the purification of body and soul (tazkiyah) so that, with this purity, humans can understand the Book and wisdom and gain other knowledge they did not know.

Ta'dib The basic meaning of the word "ta'dib" in Arabic is in the form of "addaba," which has another meaning as "ad-dua'a (Syah, 2017)." The meaning of this word is an invitation, so it has the sense of inviting someone to attend an event or feast. In Mu'jam al wasit by Ibrahim Anis, the word "addaba" is interpreted as: a) Training good behavior and manners; b) Holding a party or feast, meaning behaving and acting politely, training or habituation; c) Educating, training, improving, disciplining, and taking action.

2. Biography of John Dewey

John Dewey was born on October 20, 1859, in Burlington, Vermont, east of the United States. Dewey was the third child and had three siblings (Wulandari, 2020). Dewey's extended family hailed from New England. Dewey wrote extensively on psychology and philosophy, viewing philosophy as a continuous expression in human struggle. He developed a type of logic that is neither formal nor truth logic (Williams, 2017). This logic is called instrumentalism, created to examine the inherent truth in the arrangement of objects.

In 1884, he earned a doctorate and then worked as an instructor at the University of Michigan (J. Dewey, 1904). Dewey also became a professor at the University of Minnesota in 1888 and 1889. Later, Dewey returned to serve as the Head of the Philosophy Department at the University of Michigan until 1894. During his tenure, Dewey extensively studied logic, psychology, and ethics.

Besides lecturing in his own country, Dewey delivered lectures in other countries such as Tokyo, Beijing, and Nanking from 1919 to 1921. He also conducted educational surveys in Turkey, Mexico, and Russia. His international reputation lies in his contributions to the philosophy of education, known as "American Progressivism." Dewey not only influenced professional philosophy circles but also contributed to the fundamental development of ideas in economics, law, anthropology, political theory, and psychology. He was a highly renowned spokesperson for democratic ways of life in the United States (Jalaluddin, 2002). John Dewey passed away in New York on July 1, 1952.

Dewey left behind numerous works that are still studied and researched, influencing education and philosophy in various countries. Some of his works in education include "Democracy and Education" (1961), "Experience and Nature" (1925), "Problems of Men" (1946), "Education Today" (1940), and "Knowing and the Known" (1949). In philosophy, his works include "How We Think" (1910), "Reconstructions in Philosophy" (1920), "Experience and Nature" (1825), and "Logic: The Theory of Inquiry" (1938) (Muizzuddin & Fitroini, 2022).

3. Philosophical Views of John Dewey

Among the three figures in the pragmatism movement, namely Peirce, James, and John Dewey, John Dewey is often referred to as the modern pragmatist. This movement asserts that the truth of a theory depends on its usefulness in human life. Therefore, the measure for all actions

is their practical utility and the results that advance life (Miettinen, 2000). John Dewey not only embraced pragmatic principles but also introduced some of his own ideas and concepts, which later became part of pragmatist doctrine. One of his significant contributions is to the theory of education. Similar to his contributions to the philosophical tradition, Dewey's adeptness in maintaining a pragmatic orientation towards skills and their application to human life is evident.

John Dewey's theory (Hildebrand, 2022) of education is inseparable from his interest in philosophy. For him, philosophy is the resolver of life's problems, while education involves training humans to solve life's problems. Therefore, philosophy and education, according to him, cannot be separated; philosophy forms the foundation of educational theory.

A key concept in John Dewey's philosophy overall (J. Dewey, 2022), not just in his philosophy of education, is "experience." Experience encompasses the complex and multifaceted activities and outcomes of the active interaction of conscious and growing human beings with their ever-changing environment throughout history. John Dewey emphasizes that there is no need to question the truth of knowledge but rather to what extent knowledge solves the problems faced by society (Mujib, 2019). John Dewey colors his ideas constructively and dynamically through the phenomena of life and their meanings, which are embodied in various philosophical concepts that have strong relevance to the current situation. There are four fundamental concepts in John Dewey's philosophical thinking, and these heavily influence his thoughts in the field of education: experience, growth, transaction, and inquiry.

John Dewey, essentially a philosopher who views reality as constructed through the rational action based on our memories with past experiences, sees reason using this memory as a step or tool to create something better. The value of something new can be discovered through experimental action on what we do and create. It is this notion of reason seen as a step or tool that led John Dewey to try to apply it in the field of education. Dewey's contribution to education is famously known for child-centered education (J. Dewey & Boydston, 1988). However, Dewey's educational thoughts have some shortcomings. Dewey's thinking is greatly influenced by Charles Darwin's theory of evolution (1809-1882), which teaches that life in this world is a process, starting from the lowest level and progressing and advancing. Life is not static but dynamic. All is in the making; everything is in development. Dewey's view reflects the theory of evolution and his belief in the capacity of humans for moral and societal progress, especially through education.

The four fundamental concepts in John Dewey's philosophy of education are, first, Experience. In one of his books, Dewey specifically discussed the relationship between experience and nature (J. Dewey, 1906). It can be said that the book was written to give color to the philosophy he was building. In initiating the discussion about experience, Dewey used terms such as naturalism-empiricism, empiricism-naturalism, humanism-naturalistic as names for the philosophy he was working on. Here, we can see his original ideas that had never been presented by previous philosophers. If empiricism emphasizes experience, and naturalism emphasizes the natural, Dewey tries to combine these ideas into a new perspective (Widodo, 2003).

In the context of experience, there is a difference between orthodox and contemporary thinking relevant to describing the current condition (J. Dewey, 1996). These views are (1) orthodox views describe experience as something related to knowledge, while contemporary views see experience as a close reciprocal relationship between the physical and environmental. (2) Orthodox views state that (at least initially) it is something physical influenced by the subjective, which, according to contemporary views, is a real world entering human actions and

modified through their responses. (3) Experience is bound to something that already exists or is given, but now the vital form of experience is experimental, an effort to change what has been given, characterized by projection, unknown exploration, related to the future, and distinctive. (4) In the past, experience was limited to specificity, but now experience is under the control of the environment and a struggle to distance it. (5) In the traditional view, experience and thought are antithetical problems, but experience based on contemporary understanding is full of conclusions where, in reality, there is no real experience without conclusions, natural and constant reflection (Burks, 1968). Good and experience-based education must consider the interests, habits, desires, curiosity, initiative, and freedom of individual learners as subjective realities. At the same time, the demands based on external objective conditions cannot be ignored.

The second concept is Growth. John Dewey once said that life is development, and to grow and develop is to live. This concept is translated into education, meaning that (1) the education process has no end beyond its development, (2) the education process is one of the continuous reorganization, reconstruction, and transformation

4. The Essence of John Dewey's Education

John Dewey's influence on the development of modern education, particularly in America, is widely recognized. His views, which were initially experimented at the University of Chicago, critiqued the deterministic nature of traditional educational systems (R. E. Dewey, 2012). Today, his perspectives are not limited to America but have also gained prominence globally (Wulandari, 2020). According to Dewey, the realization of a democratic society is possible when democratic principles become ingrained habits in the world of education. He asserted that the fundamental idea of democracy is a shared way of life. Dewey emphasized that democracy is a belief, a core principle that must be systematically elaborated and implemented in the form of social and political rules. In this regard, Dewey stressed the importance of academic freedom within the educational environment (Ratnasari, 2023).

Indirectly, Dewey stated that academic freedom is necessary to develop democratic principles in schools based on interaction and cooperation, founded on attitudes of mutual respect and appreciation, fostering creative thinking to find and implement solutions (Yoke Suryadarma Muhammad Safari, 2018). Implicitly, this means that democratic schools should encourage and provide opportunities for all students to actively participate in decision-making (Yoke Suryadarma Fariz Mirza Abdillah, 2017), design activities, and execute them. For Dewey, the function of education is a means to enhance courage and shape intelligence, aiming to instill a democratic way of life and develop it. Education is a reliable force to break old habits and rebuild new ones. The core curriculum (Suryadarma & Fitriyanto, 2020) for John Dewey involves learning as the search for knowledge, constituting a continuous process. In this process, there is a continuous struggle to form theories within the context of experimentation and thought. To understand the educational methods in John Dewey's thinking, we must strive to understand the weaknesses inherent in the education system itself.



Conclusion (خاتمة)

The four fundamental concepts in John Dewey's philosophical thinking that color his views in the field of education—experience, growth, transaction, and inquiry—are integral to his philosophy. A key concept overall and not just in his philosophy of education is "experience."

Experience is the complex and multifaceted result of active human interaction as conscious, growing beings with their ever-changing environment throughout history.

For Dewey, a democratic life in society is achievable if it becomes a good habit in the world of education. He emphasized that the core idea of democracy is a shared way of life. Democracy, according to him, is a belief, a fundamental principle that must be systematically elaborated and implemented in the form of social and political rules. In connection with this, Dewey emphasized the importance of academic freedom in the educational environment. Indirectly, he stated that academic freedom is necessary to develop democratic principles in schools based on interaction and cooperation, founded on attitudes of mutual respect and appreciation, fostering creative thinking to find and implement solutions.



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