



The Nature of Humanity and Education: A Critical Pedagogical Literature Review on the Nature of Humanity as Homo Educator

Fitri Dwi Indriyani¹, Rusdiono Muryanto²

^{1,2} Indonesia University of Education

Bandung, Indonesia

E-mail: ¹ fitridwiindriyani26@upi.edu, ² rusdionomuryanto@upi.edu

Abstract -Humans are beings with the potential to develop through the process of education. From a critical pedagogical perspective, humans are not merely viewed as objects of education, but also as active subjects capable of shaping consciousness, culture, and civilization. This study aims to examine the nature of humans as homo educator through a literature review approach. This study discusses the concept of human nature according to several figures in education and philosophy, its implementation in education in Indonesia, as well as the roles of teachers and students as learners. The research method used is a literature review, analyzing various books, scientific journals, and academic documents related to the philosophy of education and critical pedagogy. The results of the study indicate that humans, as homo educator, possess the ability to educate and be educated simultaneously. Indonesian education needs to develop humanistic, dialogic, and critical approaches so that students can become free, reflective, and principled individuals. Teachers serve as facilitators of learning, while students are active agents who construct knowledge through experience and social interaction

Keywords: The Nature of Humanity, Critical Pedagogy, Indonesian Education, Philosophy of Education.

I. INTRODUCTION

Education is a fundamental human need that is inseparable from social life and the development of civilization. From birth, humans undergo an educational process through interactions with family, environment, culture, and society. In the philosophy of education, humans are understood as beings with intellectual, moral, spiritual, and social potential that can be developed through the learning process. Therefore, education is not only viewed as a process of transferring knowledge but also as a process of humanizing humans (humanization). The concept of humans as beings capable of both educating and being educated is known as homo educator. This concept positions humans as active subjects in education who possess the ability to think, reflect on experiences, and develop knowledge throughout their lives.

From a critical pedagogical perspective, Paulo Freire (1970) criticized the traditional education system, which treats learners merely as passive recipients of information. Freire referred to this model as "banking education" an approach that views students as "empty vessels" to be filled with knowledge by teachers. According to Freire, ideal education must be dialogical, humanistic, and liberating, thereby fostering critical awareness of social reality. Education aims not only to produce academically intelligent individuals but also people capable of critical thinking and social transformation. Therefore, education must help people develop in accordance with their nature and potential. Meanwhile, Aristotle viewed humans as zoon politicon—social beings who require education to live in society and build a moral life.

In Indonesia, the philosophy of education that humanizes human beings was first developed by Ki Hajar Dewantara (1936). Ki Hajar Dewantara asserted that education aims to guide all the natural strengths inherent in children so that they may achieve the highest possible level of well-being and happiness. This concept

demonstrates that human beings possess potential that must be developed through humanistic education that respects the freedom of learners. Ki Hajar Dewantara's educational principles position the teacher as both a role model and a companion in the learning process.

This perspective is increasingly relevant in the context of modern educational development today. Globalization, advancements in digital technology, and social changes demand that education produce individuals who are not only academically excellent but also possess critical thinking, creativity, collaboration, and strong character. However, the reality of education still reveals learning practices that are overly focused on academic grades, rote memorization, and cognitive achievement alone. This situation has the potential to lead to the dehumanization of education, namely the loss of human values in the learning process.

The concept of "homo educator" views human beings as creatures who have a responsibility to educate, guide, and develop the potential of their fellow human beings. In the context of Subang Regency, there are several strategic issues related to the roles of teachers, parents, the government, and the community as educators. From the "homo educator" perspective, key educational issues in Subang Regency include: 1) High dropout rates due to economic and social factors; 2) Strengthening literacy, numeracy, and character education; 3) Fostering environmental awareness through the Adiwiyata program; 4) Implementing eco-pedagogy in the classroom; And 5) Strengthening collaboration between schools, families, the government, and the community. These issues demonstrate that the role of humans as educators is not carried out solely by teachers in schools, but also by families, the community, the business sector, and the government in shaping a generation of Subang residents who are of good character, knowledgeable, and environmentally conscious.

Based on the above discussion, a study of the

nature of human beings as homo educator is essential for understanding how education should be carried out. This study aims to examine the nature of humanity from a critical pedagogical perspective, the position of humans as homo educator within the Merdeka Curriculum, its implementation in Indonesian education, and the roles of teachers and students as learning beings. This study is

expected to provide a theoretical contribution to the development of humanistic education that humanizes people and is relevant to the needs of Indonesian education in the modern era.

II. RESEARCH METHOD

This study employs a literature review method. This method involves collecting and analyzing various scholarly sources, such as books, journals, academic articles, and official documents related to the philosophy of education, critical pedagogy, and the concept of human nature as homo educator. The data were analyzed using a descriptive-qualitative approach by examining the ideas of educational figures and their implementation in the context of Indonesian education.

III. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

1. Nature of Humanity from the Perspective of the Philosophy of Education

The nature of human beings is a fundamental topic in the philosophy of education. Human beings are viewed as creatures endowed with reason, morality, free will, and social abilities. According to Aristotle, humans are zoon politikon social beings who live in communities and require education to develop their potential. Meanwhile, Jean-Jacques Rousseau (1762) argued that humans are inherently good, but their social environment often influences their moral development. Therefore, education must help humans develop naturally in accordance with their inherent potential.

According to Ki Hajar Dewantara (1936), the purpose of education is to guide all the natural potentials within children so that they may attain the highest possible level of well-being and happiness. This concept suggests that humans possess potential that must be developed through humanistic education. The essence of humanity is also linked to the ability to think and exercise critical awareness. This is reinforced by Paulo Freire (1970), who emphasizes that humans are conscious beings capable of bringing about social transformation. Education must foster critical awareness so that people do not become trapped in oppression and social injustice.

One example of an educational approach that fosters critical awareness among both teachers and students is eco-pedagogy. In the context of Subang Regency's current situation, the application of eco-pedagogical theory is highly relevant, as the region faces challenges such as industrialization, port development, changes in land use, and a decline in certain aspects of the community's local wisdom. Therefore, education must not only produce students who are academically intelligent but also capable of becoming agents of social and environmental change.

The eco-pedagogical model offers an education that connects knowledge, critical awareness, local wisdom, and concrete action, thereby enabling students to become citizens who are responsible for environmental sustainability (Fatahidin, 2020).

2. The Concept of Humans as Homo Educator

The term "homo educator" refers to humans as educators. Humans not only receive education but also possess the ability to educate others. In social life, the educational process occurs naturally through interactions within the family, school, and community. In line with what Langeveld (1980) stated, humans are pedagogical beings who possess the ability to both educate and be educated. Every individual can become an educator because humans possess experiences, values, and knowledge that can be passed on to the next generation.

The concept of homo educator also emphasizes that education is not solely the responsibility of teachers in schools. Parents, the community, and the social environment all play a role in the process of shaping human character. From this perspective, education is understood as a lifelong process (lifelong education). Furthermore, as homo educators, humans have a moral responsibility to cultivate human values such as empathy, tolerance, honesty, and social responsibility. Based on the above, education focuses not only on academic aspects but also on character development and social awareness.

3. Critical Pedagogy in Understanding Human Nature

Critical pedagogy is an educational approach that emphasizes critical awareness and the liberation of humans from various forms of oppression. The leading figure in critical pedagogy is Paulo Freire through his work **Pedagogy of the Oppressed** (1970). Freire criticized the "banking" model of education, in which teachers merely transfer knowledge to students in a one-way manner. This implies that education should take place through dialogue between teachers and students. Teachers are not the sole source of knowledge but rather learning partners who help students understand social reality. The concept of critical pedagogy views humans as active and reflective subjects. Education must also help students develop the ability to think critically, solve problems, and make decisions independently. In this way, humans can become agents of social change.

It is therefore clear that, in the context of human nature, critical pedagogy asserts that humans have the freedom and responsibility to shape their own lives. Education does not merely produce academically intelligent individuals, but also people who are conscious of human values and social justice.

4. Implementing the Concept of Human Beings as Homo Educator in Education in Indonesia

The implementation of the concept of humans as homo educator in Indonesian education can be seen through learning approaches that position students as active participants. The Merdeka Curriculum, for example, emphasizes project-based learning, creativity, and character development. Indonesian education is currently shifting toward humanistic and constructivist approaches. Teachers are no longer the center of

learning (*teacher-centered*), but rather act as facilitators who help students discover knowledge independently.

This concept aligns with Ki Hajar Dewantara's philosophy through the following principles: 1) *Ing ngarso sung tulodo* (leading by example), 2) *Ing madya mangun karso* (fostering enthusiasm), and 3) *Tut wuri handayani* (providing encouragement from behind). In practice, the implementation of humanistic education in Indonesia can be carried out through the following: 1) Collaborative and dialogic learning, 2) Strengthening character education, 3) Developing literacy, 4) Experience-based contextual learning, and 5) Appreciation for cultural diversity and students' potential.

However, this implementation still faces challenges such as a learning culture that is overly focused on grades (numbers), a lack of freedom of thought among students, and an evaluation system that tends to emphasize cognitive aspects. Some of the alternatives for addressing these challenges include: 1) the implementation of the *ecopedagogical* model in teaching and learning, 2) the implementation of *ethnopedagogical* principles in teaching and learning, and 3) the implementation of *Pancawaliuya* character education in schools starting in 2025 by the West Java provincial government.

5. The Role of Teachers in Understanding the Nature of Humans as Learners

Teachers play a strategic role in shaping individuals of character and critical thinking. From a critical pedagogical perspective, teachers are not merely instructors, but also mentors, motivators, and facilitators of learning. According to John Dewey (1916), teachers must create learning experiences that are democratic and relevant to students' lives. Teachers need to understand that every student has different potential and characteristics. The teacher's role in understanding the nature of humanity includes: 1) Guiding students' intellectual and moral development, 2) Fostering students' critical awareness, 3) Developing humanistic and dialogic learning, 4) Serving as a role model in attitude and behavior, 5) Helping students discover the meaning of learning in real life. Based on this, teachers must also respect students' freedom of thought and create a safe and inclusive learning environment. In this way, education can become a process of humanizing humanity.

6. The Role of Students as Learners

Students are the central figures in the educational process. In the concept of "homo educator," students do not merely receive information but actively construct knowledge through experience and social interaction. According to Lev Vygotsky's (1978) constructivist theory, knowledge is constructed through social interaction and the cultural environment. Therefore, students must be actively engaged in the learning process. The role of students as learners includes: 1) Developing critical thinking skills, 2) Actively asking questions and engaging in discussions, 3) Possessing a lifelong motivation to learn, 4) Developing moral and social values, and 5) Participating in solving social problems.

Based on this, students who understand their true

nature as learners will have the awareness to continue to grow and learn from life experiences.

7. The Role of Humans as Homo Educator in the Merdeka Curriculum

The Merdeka Curriculum positions humans as the central subject in the educational process. From the perspective of *homo educator*, humans are viewed as beings with the potential to learn, grow, and educate both themselves and others. This concept aligns with the learning paradigm of the Merdeka Curriculum, which is centered on the learner (*student centered learning*). The Merdeka Curriculum grants teachers the freedom to design learning experiences tailored to the needs, interests, and characteristics of their students. This curriculum emphasizes the development of students' competencies, character, and creativity through flexible and contextual learning.

In the context of *homo educator*, the Merdeka Curriculum views learners not merely as recipients of information, but as individuals who actively construct knowledge through learning experiences. This aligns with the ideas of Paulo Freire (1970), who rejected "banking" education and emphasized the importance of dialogue between teachers and students. The role of humans as *homo educators* in the Merdeka Curriculum is reflected in the following characteristics: 1) Humans as Subjects of Learning, 2) Humans as Lifelong Learners, 3) Humans as Social and Collaborative Beings, and 4) Teachers as *Homo Educators*. In the Merdeka Curriculum, teachers are not only tasked with delivering content but also serve as educators who guide students' character development and self-awareness. Teachers are given the freedom to choose teaching methods that suit the needs of their students.

Based on the above, the Merdeka Curriculum has, philosophically speaking, demonstrated an effort to restore the essence of education as a process of humanizing human beings. Education aims not only to produce individuals who are academically intelligent, but also individuals who are critical, creative, collaborative, and of good character.

IV. CONCLUSION

Based on the discussion and results of the literature review above, the researcher draws the following conclusions: 1) The essence of humanity as *homo educator* indicates that humans possess the capacity to educate and be educated throughout their lives. Education is not merely a process of transferring knowledge, but a process of humanizing individuals through the development of intellectual, moral, social, and spiritual potential; 2) Critical pedagogy positions humans as active agents who possess the awareness and ability to bring about social change. In the context of Indonesian education, the implementation of this concept can be realized through humanistic, dialogic, and experience-based learning. 3) Teachers play the role of facilitators and mentors in developing students' potential, while students are active agents who construct knowledge independently. By understanding the essence of humans as learners, education can produce a generation that is critical, creative, of good character, and capable of facing the challenges of the times, and 4) The Merdeka Curriculum provides teachers with the freedom to create

learning experiences tailored to the needs, interests, and characteristics of students. This curriculum emphasizes the development of students' competencies, character, and creativity through flexible and contextual learning.

Recommendations:

1. Teachers need to understand that students are individuals with diverse potentials, experiences, and characteristics. Therefore, learning should not only focus on the delivery of content but also on the development of students' character, creativity, and critical thinking.
2. Schools need to foster a humanistic, democratic, and inclusive educational culture. The learning environment should provide a sense of safety, respect, and opportunities for every student to develop according to their potential.
3. The government needs to strengthen the implementation of the Merdeka Curriculum by ensuring equitable educational quality across all regions of Indonesia. Support for facilities, teacher training, and the strengthening of educational literacy are crucial in realizing an education that humanizes humanity.
4. This study is limited to a literature review; therefore, further empirical research is needed to examine the implementation of the homo educator concept in educational practice directly.

REFERENCES

- Aguiar, D. R. C. (2021). The pedagogy of the oppressed in contemporary school: Challenges and perspectives. *Revista e-Curriculum*, 19(1), 174–196. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.23925/1809-3876.2021v19i1p174-196>
- Anas, Z. (2022). Kurikulum Merdeka: Pembelajaran dengan paradigma baru dan berdiferensiasi. Kementerian Pendidikan, Kebudayaan, Riset, dan Teknologi. URL: [Pembelajaran Berdiferensiasi Kurikulum Merdeka](https://bpmpkaltara.kemdikbud.go.id/2022/02/20/kurikulum-merdeka-pembelajaran-dengan-paradigma-baru-dan-berdiferensiasi?utm_source=chatgpt.com)
- Cumura, L., & Petrovic, V. (2021). Paulo Freire: From critical consciousness to the pedagogy of the oppressed. *KNOWLEDGE - International Journal*, 55(5), 959–964. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.35120/kij55059591>
- Dewey, J. (1916). *Democracy and education*. Macmillan. URL: [Internet Archive - Democracy and Education](https://archive.org/details/democracye-ducati00dewerich?utm_source=chatgpt.com)
- Freire, P. (1970). *Pedagogy of the oppressed*. Continuum. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1177/2332649219870138>
- Kementerian Pendidikan, Kebudayaan, Riset, dan Teknologi. (2022). Kurikulum Merdeka. URL: [Kurikulum Merdeka Kemdikbud](https://kurikulum.kemdikbud.go.id/kurikulum-merdeka?utm_source=chatgpt.com)
- Kementerian Pendidikan, Kebudayaan, Riset, dan Teknologi. (2022). Profil Pelajar Pancasila. URL: [Profil Pelajar Pancasila](https://pusatinformasi.guru.kemdikbud.go.id/hc/id/articles/6822691864857-Profil-Pelajar-Pancasila?utm_source=chatgpt.com)
- Ki Hajar Dewantara. (1936). *Pendidikan*. Majelis Luhur Persatuan Taman Siswa. URL: [Majelis Luhur Taman Siswa](https://tamansiswa.or.id?utm_source=chatgpt.com)
- Langeveld, M. J. (1980). *Pedagogik teoritis sistematis*. Jemmars. URL Referensi: [Google Books - Pedagogik Teoritis Sistematis](https://books.google.com?utm_source=chatgpt.com)
- Noddings, N. (2013). *Caring: A relational approach to ethics and moral education*. University of California Press. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1525/9780520957343>
- Rousseau, J. J. (1762). *Emile, or on education*. Basic Books. URL: [Project Gutenberg - Emile](https://www.gutenberg.org/ebooks/5427?utm_source=chatgpt.com)
- Suparlan. (2015). Filsafat pendidikan Ki Hajar Dewantara dan sumbangannya bagi pendidikan Indonesia. *Jurnal Filsafat Pendidikan*, 12(2), 45–58. URL: [Garuda Kemendikbud](https://garuda.kemdikbud.go.id?utm_source=chatgpt.com)
- Thomas, D. P. (2009). Revisiting pedagogy of the oppressed: Paulo Freire and contemporary African studies. *Review of African Political Economy*, 36(120), 253–269. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1080/03056240903083268>
- Tilaar, H. A. R. (2002). *Pendidikan, kebudayaan, dan masyarakat madani Indonesia*. Remaja Rosdakarya. URL: [Google Books - H.A.R. Tilaar](https://books.google.com?utm_source=chatgpt.com)
- Torres-Olave, B. (2021). Pedagogy of hope: Reliving pedagogy of the oppressed. *Educational Review*, 73(1), 128–130. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1080/00131911.2020.1766207>
- Undang-Undang Republik Indonesia Nomor 20 Tahun 2003 tentang Sistem Pendidikan Nasional. URL: [UU Sisdiknas 2003](https://peraturan.bpk.go.id/Home/Details/43920/uu-no-20-tahun-2003?utm_source=chatgpt.com)
- Vygotsky, L. S. (1978). *Mind in society: The development of higher psychological processes*. Harvard University Press. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.2307/j.ctvjf9vz4>