

# Educational Theory Review: Contemporary Perspectives

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### ABSTRACT

The examination of the review of educational theory is covered in this article. Education is a crucial procedure in determining the caliber of human resources and maximizing each person's potential. The dynamics of learning, scientific advancements, and shifting cultural demands gave rise to a variety of educational philosophies. Thus, it is crucial to analyze different educational theories in order to comprehend the pedagogical, psychological, and philosophical underpinnings of education. The purpose of this study is to evaluate the many educational ideas that have evolved over time, pinpoint the traits, benefits, and drawbacks of each theory, and assess its applicability to modern teaching methods. Through the examination of several books, scientific publications, and pertinent scholarly sources, the study employs a qualitative approach with the library research method. The analysis's findings demonstrate how several educational theories, including constructivism, behaviorism, cognitivism, and humanism, contribute differently to the explanation of the teaching and learning process. Every theory has a unique viewpoint on the roles of teachers, students, learning methods, and educational objectives. An integrative approach is required based on the characteristics of students and the learning setting because no single theory can adequately address all educational difficulties.

## I. INTRODUCTION

A key factor in influencing a country's prosperity and the caliber of its human resources is education. In today's world, education is used to develop character, skills, and life values in addition to imparting knowledge. A key component of creating a successful learning experience is educational theory. Diverse theories, including constructivism, behaviorism, cognitivism, and humanism, offer distinct viewpoints on how students learn and grow. These theories help teachers choose the best teaching strategies, tactics, and procedures. In order for educational theory to be current, developments such as global challenges and technology advancements must be updated. In reality, educational philosophy needs to be more flexible and contextual in times of crises like pandemics. Analysis of educational theory is important to understand its relevance, advantages, and implementation in current educational practices. The rise of the ideas of independent learning and differentiated learning, which put students at the center of the learning process, also has an impact on the dynamics of education today. Teachers must be able to apply the theory flexibly in accordance with each student's unique needs in addition to having a conceptual understanding of it. When using educational theory, it is crucial to take into account pupils' psychological development, social backgrounds, and differences in learning styles. The learning paradigm has shifted from traditional to more creative and cooperative due to the advancement of digital technologies including artificial intelligence, online learning (e-learning), and interactive media. In order to maintain the effectiveness of the learning process and its relevance to contemporary demands, this requirement necessitates the blending of classical education theory with contemporary methods. The significance of thoroughly studying educational theory is further reinforced by global issues including moral crises, societal transformation, and the requirements of 21st-century competences. Education must now develop

character, social skills, and critical and creative thinking abilities in addition to cognitive abilities. Consequently, education theory needs to be able to actually help with these different issues. To ensure that the educational process operates efficiently, adaptably, and sustainably in accordance with the demands of the modern period, the examination of the review of educational theory has become more crucial in light of these numerous advancements and challenges. Additionally, there has been a substantial change in the role that educators play in putting educational theory into practice. Teachers now serve as facilitators, mediators, and motivators in the learning process rather than as the exclusive source of knowledge. This necessitates more sophisticated professional capabilities, such as social, technological, and educational abilities. Therefore, in the present era, boosting the caliber of educator performance requires a solid comprehension of educational theory. Additionally, the application of educational theory is significantly influenced by the ongoing development of education policies. The theories employed must be modified in response to changes in the curriculum, national education standards, and learning assessment systems. A thorough examination of the applicability of education theory in the context of relevant policies is necessary because incompatibilities between learning policies and practices frequently lead to issues in the field.

The application of educational theory is also significantly influenced by local settings and cultural values. Because every area has unique social and cultural traits, educational theory cannot be applied consistently. In order for pupils to accept and comprehend the learning process in accordance with their surroundings, a contextual approach is crucial. It is also impossible to overlook the evaluation of educational theory's efficacy in learning practice. Many theories are seen to be ideal in theory, but they encounter a number of challenges in practice, including inadequate facilities, a lack of teacher preparation, and low student readiness. As a result, further research is required to determine how much educational theory might improve learning results. This seeks to guarantee that the theory employed is not only theoretical but also practical and capable of addressing actual demands in the field of education. Numerous new paradigms in the field of education have emerged as a result of scientific and technological advancements. In order to stay relevant to the difficulties of the twenty-first century, educational philosophies must be modified. However, social, cultural, technical, and economic shifts also have an impact on how people view the nature of learning, the role of teachers, the traits of students, and the objectives of education in general. In order to determine the degree to which traditional and modern theories are still applicable in addressing the dynamics of contemporary education, it is crucial to examine educational theory. Many schools of thought, including idealism, realism, pragmatism, constructivism, behaviorism, humanism, and socio-cultural perspectives, have contributed to the development of education philosophy throughout history. Different philosophical presumptions about human nature, knowledge, the learning process, and the goal of education are found in each theory. These divergent viewpoints enhance educational science's assets while offering substitute methods that can be used in accordance with student characteristics and the learning environment. Therefore, it is essential for educators, researchers, and education policy makers to comprehend different educational philosophies. The evolution of national education policy, cultural traits, and national ideals must all be taken into account when applying educational theory to Indonesian education. Educational theory cannot be used textually; instead, it must be adapted to meet the needs of students, the community's social conditions, and the requirements of high-quality human resource development. As a result, the analysis of education theory is to assess its applicability and relevance in Indonesian educational practice in addition to comprehending the emerging notions. According to this description, it is crucial to study the analysis of educational theory review in order to give a thorough overview of the evolution of educational theory, the traits of each approach, and its role in raising the standard of the learning process. It is anticipated that the

findings of this study will serve as a scientific reference for the creation of educational policies, enhancing the proficiency of educators, and advancing educational research. Furthermore, it is anticipated that this research will be able to bolster the theoretical underpinnings of developing an innovative, adaptable educational model that is pertinent to the demands of society in the age of globalization and digital revolution.

## II. METHODS

This study employs a qualitative methodology that combines the literature review approach with library research. This method was used since the goal of the study is to examine, evaluate, contrast, and synthesize different educational ideas that have been created by professionals using a variety of pertinent scientific sources rather than to gather empirical evidence in the field. The evaluation of secondary data in the form of books, scientific publications, proceedings, education policy documents, and prior research findings that are relevant to the research topic is the subject of literature research. By using this method, scholars can obtain a thorough grasp of the evolution of educational theory, the traits of each theory, and its applicability to modern educational practice. Behaviorism, cognitivism, constructivism, humanism, social learning theory, progressive education, critical education theory, and other educational ideas that evolve from classical to modern viewpoints serve as the study's research objects. In an attempt to comprehend the direction of educational theory development in addressing the difficulties of globalization, digital transformation, and the advancement of science and technology, the research also looks at educational notions that emerge in various cutting-edge literature. Primary and secondary data are the sources of research data. Scientific publications published in respectable national and international journals, educational theory books authored by education specialists, and scientific materials that particularly address the evolution of educational theory were the sources of primary data. Seminar proceedings, research papers, supplementary reference books, education policy documents, and other scientific publications pertinent to the research topic were the sources of the secondary data. In order to give a solid theoretical basis for the study's findings, the selection of literature sources is done purposefully based on the degree of relevance, author credibility, publication quality, and uniqueness of references. Documentation studies were used as the method of data collecting. At this point, the researcher uses keywords like "educational theory," "educational theory," "learning theory," "philosophy of education," "education development," and other terms relating to the research's emphasis to find a variety of pertinent literature. The literature was gathered from national and international peer-reviewed journals as well as a variety of scientific databases, including Google Scholar, Garuda, DOAJ, and Crossref. Additionally, a selection procedure is conducted based on the topic's appropriateness, the year of publication, the caliber of the sources, and the contribution to the study's focus. Following the identification process, every document is critically reviewed in order to fully comprehend the content of the idea under discussion. Important details from each piece of literature are then noted, categorized, and grouped according to specific themes, such as the theoretical philosophical underpinnings, key traits, developers, learning concepts, educational goals, the roles of educators and students, benefits and drawbacks, and their application in educational practice. Descriptive-qualitative analysis and content analysis methods are used in data analysis. The process of data reduction, classification, interpretation, and synthesis of different concepts found in the literature is how content analysis is carried out. The researcher chooses data that is pertinent to the study's goals during the reduction phase. Data is grouped according to related themes or features of educational theory in order to complete the categorization stage. In order to fully comprehend the evolution of educational theory, an analysis of the connections between concepts is also conducted. The final phase is called synthesis, and it involves combining different data into a methodical, rational, and thorough conceptual investigation.

The study used source triangulation to preserve its validity by comparing several references from books, scholarly publications, and earlier research findings. The researcher also critically assesses each piece of literature by taking into account the author's reputation, the publisher's caliber, the research methodology employed, and the findings' applicability to the study's main topic. This stage attempts to reduce researcher subjectivity and improve the precision of the theories' interpretation. The analysis's findings are then presented in a descriptive-analytical fashion by highlighting the connections between theories, viewpoint similarities and differences, the evolution of educational thought over time, and each theory's applicability in addressing the problems facing education in the twenty-first century. The data are presented methodically in order to provide a conceptual synthesis that may serve as a scientific foundation for future research and instructional strategies. For each chosen piece of literature, the analysis procedure is done in phases using coding techniques. The first step involves the researcher identifying the key ideas found in each library source and grouping them according to themes, such as the nature of education, educational objectives, student characteristics, the role of educators, learning strategies, educational evaluation, and theoretical implications for educational practice. In order to create a systematic conceptual mapping, the next step is to compare the perspectives of various figures and educational streams. The grouping's outcomes are then critically analyzed by relating the evolution of educational theory to societal dynamics, scientific advancements, technological breakthroughs, and 21st-century educational concerns. The researcher uses the rigor principle at every level of the study to boost the validity of the findings. Every literary source is examined critically, taking into account the coherence of the arguments, the strength of the theoretical underpinnings, their applicability to the research topic, and their contribution to the advancement of education. To prevent misunderstandings and guarantee that every conclusion is backed by many reliable scientific sources, the researcher also performs a cross-reference procedure. In order to fully explain the evolution of educational theory and support the advancement of educational studies at both the conceptual and implementation levels, the synthesis's findings are then compiled descriptively, analytically, and argumentatively.

### III. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

#### Educational theory

A collection of ideas, presumptions, and guidelines used to describe the teaching and learning process is known as educational theory. Curriculum creation, learning practices, and educational evaluation are all based on this notion. Understanding how students pick up knowledge, attitudes, and skills as well as how the learning environment affects the process is made easier with the help of educational theory. According to its etymology, theory is derived from the term *theoria*, which denotes a perspective or method of comprehending a phenomena. Educational theory is a conceptual framework used in education to describe how learning takes place, how pupils grow, and how learning strategies have to be created. According to John Dewey, education is a constant process of reconstructing experience, hence educational theory needs to be focused on students' actual experiences (learning by doing). According to Dewey, learning should involve students actively interacting with their surroundings rather than being passive. According to behaviorist B.F. Skinner, learning is a change in behavior brought about by stimuli and reactions. He created the theory of operant conditioning, which is a method of learning through rewards and penalties. According to Jean Piaget, educational philosophy needs to take pupils' cognitive development stages into consideration. Piaget identified four stages of intellectual development: sensorimotor, preoperational, concrete operational, and formal operational. According to him, acquiring knowledge is a dynamic process. Lev Vygotsky highlights how crucial social connection is to learning. He introduced the idea of the Zone of Proximal Development, which is the gap between pupils' potential and their actual ability with assistance from others. This idea demonstrates how the social and cultural

context has a significant impact on learning. According to Abraham Maslow's humanistic approach, education should aim to help people reach their greatest potential. He is well-known for his idea of the hierarchy of needs, which holds that before people can reach self-actualization, their basic needs must be satisfied. According to Carl Rogers, student-centered learning is the key to effective learning. Teachers serve as facilitators, fostering an environment in the classroom that promotes students' personal growth. Jerome Bruner is credited with creating the notion of discovery learning, which highlights that pupils will comprehend the subject matter more fully if they independently find the concept via investigation. These experts' differing viewpoints lead to the conclusion that educational theory is a scientific basis that explains the learning process from a variety of angles, including behavioral, cognitive, social, and humanistic ones. Every theory has benefits and drawbacks, thus in order for the learning process to function as best it can, several ideas must be integrated. According to behaviorist theory, learning is a change in behavior that can be seen as a result of stimuli and reactions. Repetitive activities and reinforcement are key components of learning. According to constructivism philosophy, knowledge is created by the student via experience and contact with the outside world. The development of human potential as a whole, encompassing social and emotional facets, is the main focus of humanistic theory. The goal of education is to create self-sufficient, unique individuals. These four complimentary theories serve as the cornerstone of contemporary educational practice.

### **Analysis of the Application of Educational Theory**

The analysis of educational theory's application focuses on how theory is applied in the learning process as well as how well it can address students' demands and the constantly changing difficulties of education. Numerous internal and external elements have a significant impact on how well educational theory is applied. The fit between the theory and the traits of the students is one of the key elements of this analysis. A theory that can adapt to the cognitive, emotional, and social development of students is considered effective. For instance, since Jean Piaget's theory highlights the significance of the stage of cognitive development, educators must modify their teaching strategies to accommodate students' ages and cognitive capacities. Ineffective learning can result from a mismatch between theory and the circumstances of learners. Another crucial element is the function of the learning environment. According to Lev Vygotsky's thesis, learning is greatly influenced by social contact. As a result, the social, cultural, and interpersonal interactions of pupils must be taken into account while using educational philosophy. A supportive learning environment will increase the applied theory's efficacy. Analysis must also consider the methods and strategies employed for learning. For instance, B.F. Skinner's behaviorism theory is better suited for learning that calls on habit and repetition. Conversely, the constructivist theory developed by Jean Piaget and Jerome Bruner is more applicable to problem-solving and discovery-based learning. When applying educational theory, teacher competency is crucial. Teachers must be able to apply theory in a creative and original way in addition to having a comprehensive understanding of it. Teachers with strong pedagogical abilities will be more adept at combining several educational theories into a single, productive learning process. Infrastructure and educational facilities also have an impact on how well theory is applied. For instance, resources like digital gadgets and internet connectivity are necessary to support contemporary technology-based learning ideas. The application of theory becomes subpar in the absence of this backing. The assessment of learning outcomes must be part of the analysis of how educational theory is applied. The purpose of the evaluation was to determine whether the applied theory improved the learning outcomes of the students. Adjustments or combinations with other ideas must be made if the outcomes are not what was anticipated. It is crucial to realize that there isn't a single, universal idea of education. Consequently, the eclectic approach which blends several educational ideas in accordance with the demands and circumstances of learning is the most

successful strategy. This method makes it possible to create learning that is more adaptable, fluid, and current. No single theory can be applied in isolation. Teachers must integrate different theories based on students' circumstances and learning goals. Constructivism is used in project-based learning, behaviorism is used in fundamental learning like memorizing, cognitivism is used in idea understanding, and humanistic is used in character development. Nonetheless, there is a disconnect between the field's theory and practice. Many educational establishments continue to use antiquated techniques that do not align with the advancement of contemporary ideas.

### **The Relevance of Educational Theory in the Modern Era**

In the age of digitization and globalization, educational theory needs to be flexible enough to change with the times and meet societal demands. Supporting technology-based learning, fostering the development of 21st century skills (creativity, critical thinking, teamwork, and communication), adjusting to the requirements of various pupils, and incorporating moral principles and character are a few examples of how modern education philosophy is relevant. The creation of educational policies and the administration of educational institutions to make them more efficient and flexible are also influenced by educational theory. In the age of digitization and globalization, educational theory needs to be flexible enough to change with the times and meet societal demands. Rapid advancements in science, technology, and society necessitate increasingly adaptable and creative educational institutions. As a result, educational philosophy needs to be dynamic and adaptable to the changing times rather than being static. Supporting technology-based learning is one way that contemporary educational thought is relevant. The advancement of digital technologies, including blended learning, e-learning, and artificial intelligence, has transformed education. In this sense, since technology enables students to learn interactively and contextually, John Dewey's theory which emphasizes experiential learning becomes more and more pertinent. Constructivism philosophy also provides significant support for digital learning, which allows students to use a range of online learning tools to gain knowledge through self-exploration. The development of 21st century abilities, such as critical thinking, creativity, teamwork, and communication, is greatly aided by educational theory. These abilities are desperately needed in today's workplace and to meet global challenges. Lev Vygotsky's social theory highlights the value of cooperation and interaction in the learning process, whereas Jerome Bruner's notion of discovery learning pushes students to think critically and creatively. Additionally, educational theory needs to be flexible enough to accommodate a wide range of student needs. Every person has unique learning preferences, passions, and skills. In this instance, the developmental theory of Jean Piaget provides a crucial basis for comprehending the variations in students' cognitive capacities. One way to put the idea into practice is through the evolving differentiated learning strategy, which adapts instruction to each student's requirements. Educational theory is equally vital in incorporating moral principles and character into the educational process. Education must be able to shape students' moral and cultural values in the face of globalization's problems. As part of educational objectives, the humanistic theories of Abraham Maslow and Carl Rogers highlighted the significance of personality, empathy, and self-awareness development. The capacity of educational theory to promote lifelong learning is another indication of its applicability in the contemporary times. People must always learn and adapt in a world that is constantly changing. As a result, educational philosophy needs to be able to encourage students' long-term drive to learn. Project-based learning, problem-based learning, and collaborative learning are examples of learning innovations that are supported by educational theory. These approaches represent the application of several contemporary educational theories that place a strong emphasis on students' active participation in the learning process. In addition to its capacity to explain the learning process, educational theory is still relevant today since it helps build an innovative, flexible, and future-focused educational system. Therefore, in the face of increasingly complicated times,

improving the quality of education requires an understanding of and effective use of educational theory.

#### IV. CONCLUSION

It is clear from some of the previous discussion's findings that educational theory serves as a crucial conceptual basis for planning, carrying out, and assessing the learning process. Though each theory including constructivism, behaviorism, cognitivism, and humanistics has unique traits, benefits, and drawbacks, they all significantly advance educational practices. Since there isn't a single theory that can fully address every learning requirement, the selection and application must be tailored to the student's characteristics, the learning objectives, the subject matter being taught, and the educational setting. Additionally, as science, technology, and social dynamics advance, educators must be able to combine different educational approaches proportionately in addition to being focused on a particular technique. A more efficient, creative, flexible, and student-centered learning process is made possible by an integrative approach. As a result, the examination of different educational theories not only enhances conceptual knowledge but also contributes practically to raising learning standards, teacher proficiency, and educational quality in a sustainable way. In order to produce educational policies and practices that can address the difficulties of education in the global era and digital revolution, it is necessary to continue researching education theory.

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