The Philosophical Foundation of Western Higher Education: A Critical Review of Theory and Practice

M. Abdul Aziz[1]

Philosophy of education especially higher education is central to making a discipline or subject rational regarding its study as well as its implication in human society. In this regard, the research is an attempt to examine the philosophical foundation of higher education as stated in the major western-liberal philosophies e.g. Idealism, Realism, Thomism, and Pragmatism. It also figured out the strengths and weaknesses of the philosophical basis of the western education system. The study argues that every philosophical endeavor represents the rational ground, which is universal in nature. Besides, the philosophy by and large espouses a value-laden system, which is based on ethics and morality. Although western liberal philosophies on higher education are Universalist, they are value-free or value-neutral as opposed to rationality. In fact, value-free educational philosophy devalues life as a whole and fails to accomplish the desired goals of a graduate.

INTRODUCTION

Education is a basic human right (Datzberger, 2018). As education is associated with human beings, the philosophy of education is a must in terms of its practice in human life. As in all branches of philosophy, what philosophers of education do, and should do, is a matter of great concern and debate, especially among philosophers themselves. In fact, philosophy is typically possessed with reflection on its own objectives and techniques relating to that there is a continuing debate. Simultaneously, the philosophy of education is, at times presumed – beyond the discipline – to be a matter of offering complicated conceptual definitions, articulating an individual manifesto or a social group's collective educational principles. According to Enslin (2010), the philosophy of education is "one of a number of rival schools of thought or 'isms', such as empiricism and rationalism, or, perhaps, of applying the wise reflections of great thinkers, such as Plato or Rousseau". Likewise, a number of systematic philosophies have been developed in western civilization. Idealism, Realism, and Thomism represent three of the major philosophies that have had a long history in ancient and medieval periods in the area of classical philosophies. In contrast to these traditional philosophies, John Dewey's Pragmatism emphasizes the educational process as a transaction between the person and the environment (Gutek, 1997). However, they remain vital philosophies that guide current educational processes and provide substance to various curricular designs. However, the creation of a new social order by preparing the people is also another crucial meaning of education according to George Counts (1889-1974). Therefore, it is valuable for educators to recognize the various philosophies of education and to identify curricula and methods in their relationship to certain philosophical positions. The study is analytical, qualitative research applying philosophical criticism approaches of educational research. It mainly analyzed the core philosophies of western liberal education practiced in American and European top universities including Harvard University, Cambridge University, Oxford University, University of Oslo, etc. It has also utilized the approaches of historical criticism in analyzing the evolution of western philosophies of education from its core ideas like idealism, realism, liberalism, and constructivism. Then, it figured out the strengths and weaknesses of educational approaches practiced in the universities of Europe and the USA.

This study largely involves library research and document analysis. The primary sources of references are the indications from the writings of classical scholars. The secondary sources are official documents, journals, and articles, especially the books and articles of modern and contemporary scholars.

Education and Philosophy of Education

Education is a learning process that aims to build a rational life for humans through dissemination. It develops cognitive skills in man and makes him sufficient to face changing circumstance. As Halman & Draulans (2006) explain, "education means increasing cognitive skills, developing a more critical attitude toward authority, and placing an increasing emphasis on personal autonomy and individual judgment, and, consequently, results in lower levels of religiosity." Education is a venture purely connected to the main socio-cultural values of the group (Brickman, 1963). Thus, education covers and indicates almost all phenomena of human life.

[1]Bangladesh Institute of Islamic Thought, aziz@iiitbd.org, orcid.org/ 0000-0001-5833-5370

A philosophical foundation is instrumental to establish a discipline or subject rational and empirical. As learning/education produces philosophy, it (learning/education) also needs to have a philosophy. Educational philosophy or philosophy of education is the area of philosophy that deals with philosophical questions relating to the nature, scope, objectives, and problems of education. The practitioners of practical philosophy look into both inner to the mother discipline of philosophy and outer educational practice, as well as psychology, cognitive science more generally sociology, and other disciplines (Siegel, 2009). In addition, an educational philosophy plays a scholarly riddle helping teachers as they choose the methodologies of teaching, the system of classroom management, textbooks, field tours, and so on (Robert, Castelli, & Castelli, 2000).

The major problem of the philosophy of education evolves rounds its aims and objectives i.e. what are the ideal aims and guiding principles of education? Not only this, evaluating educational efforts, institutions, practices, and products has been the problem in the case of the philosophy of education. But more recently, teaching, learning, and curriculum appear in the process of indoctrination, which is hindering to cope up education with its core philosophy.

Main Branches of Philosophy of Education

Branch	Metaphysics: What is the nature of reality?	Epistemology: What is the nature of knowledge? How do we come to know?	Axiology: What values should one live by?
Educational Examples	*–Do you think human beings are basically good or evil? –What are conservative or liberal beliefs?*	*–How would an anthropologist look at this classroom? A political scientist? A biologist? –How do we know what a child knows?*	*–Is morality defined by our actions, or by what is in our hearts? –What values should be taught in character education?*
Sub-branches	**–Ontology** What issues are related to nature, existence, or being? *Is a child inherently evil or good? How might your view determine your classroom management?* **–Cosmology** What is the nature and origin of the cosmos or universe? *Is the world and universe orderly or is it marked by chaos? What would one or the other mean for a classroom?*	**Knowing based on:** **–Scientific Inquiry** **–Senses and Feelings** **–From authority or divinity** **–Empiricism** (experience) **–Intuition** **–Reasoning or Logic** What reasoning processes yield valid conclusions? **–Deductive:** reasoning from the general to the particular *All children can learn. Bret is a fifth grader. He has a learning disability. Can Bret learn?* **–Inductive:** reasoning from the specific to the general. *After experimenting with plant growth under varied conditions, stu-dents conclude plants need water and light*	**–Ethics** What is good and evil, right and wrong? *Is it ever right to take something that does not belong to you?* **–Aesthetics** What is beautiful? *How do we recognize a great piece of music? Art? Can there be beauty in destruction?*

Source: Cohen, L. M. (1999). Philosophy of Education, *OSU - School of Education.* https://oregonstate.edu/instruct/ed416/PP1.html

Western-Liberal Philosophy of Higher Education

Philosophy of education refers to the philosophical study of education and the discussion about its problem (Noddings, 2018). The philosophy of education is essential because it explains how educational theories are placed in their respective domain. By inspecting the philosophy of education, learners are able to understand why and how theories match or counter each other. Knowing philosophy is, thus, helping to instruct and criticize the theoretical development of education. Knowledge gathered from philosophy provides a

rationalization for teaching methodologies; divulges and challenge statement about the character of the teaching, and presents a language for an educational argument. For this purpose, western-liberal philosophies are very dominant to place the philosophy of education in a pioneering form with a view to making the educational system or educational curriculum rational and need-based (Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy, 2008). These philosophies are as follows:

Idealism

Idealism is one of humankind's oldest and most enduring systems of thought. Generally, idealism is derived from the Greek word 'ideal' meaning 'to see'. The conception depicts that the reality of everything lies in ideas, thought, and mind but not in material things. Idealists are conceived to embody the world as it might, should, or ought to be, apart from pragmatists, who emphasize the world as it right now is (Dash, 2000). It proclaims the spiritual nature of the human being and the universe. It's a philosophy that asserts that reality is essentially spiritual or ideational and that the good, true, and beautiful are permanently part of the structure of a related, coherent, orderly, and unchanging universe. The belief is that the world and human beings are part of an unfolding universal spirit which has long been a cosmic principle in traditional religions such as Hinduism and Buddhism (Lopez, 2008).

In ancient Athens, the Sophists claimed that ethical principles were relative to a given time and place, and given circumstances. Socrates disputed this form of situational ethics, claiming that what was true, good, and beautiful was the same throughout the world (Martin, 2016). Rejecting the Sophist's materialistic opportunism and moral relativism, Socrates embarked on a quest to discover the universal principles of truth, justice, and beauty that governed all humankind (Ramose, 2014). Socrates asserted that human beings should seek to live lives that were morally excellent. Rather than training people in a particular vocation or professional skill as the sophists claimed was necessary, Socrates argued that genuine education aimed to cultivate knowledge that every person needed as a human being (Demirci, 2012). It was the kind of education that cultivated morally excellent people who acted according to reason. Socrates' assertion that there should general education for every free human being provides a strong argument for liberal education and against vocational training. Probing questions would stimulate the learner to discover the truth that was in his or her mind by bringing latent concepts to consciousness (Rust, 2011).

Socrates' basic epistemological goal was that human beings define themselves in terms of the criteria of universal truth. Through rigorous self-analysis, each person should seek the truth that is universally present in all members of the human race. As a teacher, Socrates asked probing questions that stimulated his students to investigate the perennial human concerns about the meaning of life, truth, and justice. Through dialogue, Socrates and their students dealt with basic and comprehensive definitions (Firey, 1999). Socratic education involved discipline- that is, a close personal relationship between teacher and student designed to create within the student's character an ethical predisposition to discover and use the truth to order and govern his or her life (Biesta & Stengel, 2016). In the past, this kind of ethical development was called character formation. Contemporary educators refer to it as modeling. That is, the teacher personifies desirable character traits and dispositions that are worthy for a learner to imitate (Townsend & Bates, 2007).

The origins of Idealism in Western thought are generally traced to the ancient philosopher Plato, the famous student of Socrates. Whereas Socrates raised fundamental questions about reality, knowledge, and human nature, Plato went beyond his teacher in seeking to provide fundamental answers. He founded an academy in Athens in 387 B.C. and wrote a number of philosophical works that have established the foundations of Western philosophy (de Laet & Herrmann, 1996). Plato based his metaphysical beliefs on the existence of an ideal, hence unchanging, worlds of perfect ideas, such as a universal and timeless concept of truth, goodness, justice, and beauty. Plato attacked the Sophist's relativism and reliance on sensory perception. In contrast, he asserted that human beings were good and honorable when their conduct conformed to the ideal and universal concepts of truth, goodness, and beauty (Jessop, 1930).

Plato's epistemology, or theory of knowledge, was based on the concept of "reminiscence" or recollection by which human beings recalled the truths that were latently but subconsciously present in their minds. Reminiscence implied that every human being possessed a soul, which prior to birth had lived in a spiritual world of perfect forms or ideas (Rousseau, 1981). With the shock of birth-which in actuality was the imprisonment of the psyche in a material flesh-and-blood body-this knowledge of perfect ideas was

repressed within the subconscious part of the mind. Genuine knowledge, according to Plato, was immaterial, intellectual, and eternal as were the perfect forms on which it was based (Gutek, 1997).

Plato wrote about politics almost 2500 years ago. It was then dominated by the Church for many hundreds of years and then put through the Reformation and the Renaissance. It then transgressed through the faculties of law, history, and philosophy before being recognized as a discipline in its own right in the twentieth century. Its roots have not been allowed to spread of their own free will. Even, as an important branch of higher education, the roots of modern political science have been carefully nursed to avoid contact with the value-laden system as followed by Muslims; instead, they have been directed to the ancient Greeks, the medieval Church, back to the feudal system, and later to Europe. However, in the ancient ages, Plato and Aristotle took reason as their guide to prescribe a system of government where the good man will be a good citizen. In the middle age, Western thinkers took faith as the basis of their writings by providing knowledge. Most European political thinkers took religion as their guide to prescribe the best political education and system. In summary, western liberal philosophy has all been contrived to serve the purposes of western civilization in terms of education or higher education, which are, according to Rene Guenon, heretic and diabolical due to the result of the Renaissance (Waterfield, 2002). It does not fit in within the framework of the value-stricken system; rather it counters the view of life, mind, and history recommended in different religions.

However, the ideas of the perfect forms were still there and could be brought to consciousness. However, knowing requires effort. In Idealism, knowing is the recognition or reminiscence of latent ideas that are pre-formed in the mind. By reminiscence, the human mind may discover the ideas of the Macrocosmic Mind in its own thoughts. Through intuition, introspection, and insight, the individual looks within his or her own mind and finds a copy of the absolute that is already present in the mind (McCrea, 2010). The challenge of teaching and learning is to bring this latent knowledge to consciousness. The learner has to be ready and willing to learn, has to discard false opinions, and has to seek truth in a conscious fashion.

The ultimate philosophy of idealists is self-realization. It is a long time process, that conflates the efforts of the home, church, and educational institutions. Christian idealist believes the aim includes ultimate union with god. The cultivation of the mind and the seeking of knowledge are the responsibility of educational institutions (Pennock, 1998). The behavioral pattern of the individual seeks also proper attention. The idealist has no business with the development of others' competence of a student including physical fitness, social efficiency, and vocational skills.

Realism

Similar to Idealism, Realism is one of the Western world's most enduring philosophies in the educational system (Tanaka, 2005). Gutek (1997) defines Realism as a philosophical stance, which emphasizes the presence of an objective state of reality and the prospect of human beings achieving knowledge concerning that reality. In contrast to Idealists, Realists assert that objects exist regardless of our perception of them (Bunge, 1993). Realism is mainly founded on the concepts of Aristotle (Tanaka, 2005), who established the Lyceum, a philosophical school, in Athens in 334 B.C, and wrote about philosophical matters such as metaphysics, logic, and ethics (Egerton, 2001). For Aristotle, education can be regarded as a means of assisting human beings in the quest for their happiness. He believed that the education curriculum ought to suit to the nature of human growth (Tanaka, 2005). While Plato was concerned with an abstract world of perfect forms or ideas (Lindsay, 2011), Aristotle used common sense to investigate a world full of natural and social phenomena (Gregoric, 2007). Aristotle developed a metaphysical system that involved the unity of actuality and potentiality. Whereas actuality is complete and perfect, potentiality has the capability of being perfected (Cohen, 2016).

The metaphysical proposition of Realism is that we live in an objective order of reality that exists independent of and external to our minds. Objects, that is, material things, exist in time and space, and we can come to know something about them through our knowing process that involves sensations and abstraction. An object consists of two dimensions- matter and form (Trusted, 2003).

The Aristotelian metaphysical system is a pronounced predilection to dualism- the tendency to view reality to be composed of two constituent elements. Dualism means that two related entities exist, neither of which

can be reduced to the other. For example, the mind and body are two separate entities. Metaphysical dualism asserts that the two essential components of reality, while related, remain distinct. Thus, Aristotle viewed existence as the unison of the two elements of actuality and potentiality, of form and matter (Gutek, 1997). Aristotle saw a basic duality in human nature in that human beings possess an immaterial soul or mind as well as a material body (Miller, 1993). Similar to animals in the lower order, human beings have appetites and physical needs that must be satisfied if they are to survive. Unlike animals, the human mind or intellect gives them the power to think. A truly educated person exercises reason to guide his or her ethical conduct or political behavior.

According to a Realist, knowing is to have knowledge about an object (Devitt, 2018). Cognition, or knowing, involves an interaction between the human mind and the world outside the mind (Prawat & Floden, 1994). Such an interaction is between the human senses and the energy emanating from the object. For a Realist, knowing is a twofold process involving sensation and abstraction (Buras, 2005). This process corresponds to Realists' conception of a dualistic universe composed of material and structural components. Whereas sensation has to do with the matter, abstraction relates to form or structure. Realist epistemology has been referred to as a 'spectator theory', which means that they are observers of reality. As a systematic spectator, the Realist is concerned with discovering the essential plan or design of the universe, of human beings, and of society which involves scientific methods and deals with principles and laws.

Thomism/Theistic Realism

The development of Theistic Realism by Thomas Aquinas (1225-1274) can best be understood in the context of the scholastic movement that began in A.D. 1100, it reached its zenith in the thirteenth century. Scholasticism, the body of philosophical doctrines articulated by religious scholars, developed when many of the ancient Greek classics, including the philosophical works of Aristotle, were rediscovered and studied in Western schools and universities, especially the University of Paris (Bedell, 1971). Scholastic philosophers such as Anselm of Canterbury (1033-1109), Bernard of Clairvaux (1091-1153), Peter Abelard (1079-), Albertus Magnus (1200-1280), and Thomas Aquinas sought to create a synthesis of Greek rationalism, especially Aristotle's philosophy, and Christian doctrines.

As the primary medieval educational agency, the church, through its teachers and its schools, transmitted the teachings of the Christian doctrine to Western men and women. According to medieval scholars, the church's divinely sanctioned teaching authority rested on its sacred scripture and inspired doctrines (Pelikan, 2008). In the tradition of medieval scholasticism, Aquinas was both a theologian and philosopher. Using both faith and reason, he sought to answer questions dealing with the Christian conception of God, the nature of the universe, and the relationship between God and humans. A philosopher-theologian, Aquinas devoted his life to reconcile the claims of faith and reason (Wood, 2020).

Collins concluded three main tasks for theistic realists in the context of the philosophical and social climate of the 1960s. The first one is the clarification of the role of religion in then-contemporary thought and society. These roles include the strength of the church, the massive acceptance of religious faith, and the openness of the philosophical climate. He understood the essence of exploring the proper definition of the secularization process as it decoded the myth of law and philosophy in society (Collins, 1970).

The second one is the integrative analysis, whether religious studies have broad implications over the other disciplines. This is also to examine the findings of social and psychological sciences about the meaning of human life and the influence of religion on this meaning. In the end, a personal interaction must be there between religious faith and life on the segment of the theologian. However, the examination is needed for any contribution to "the active relationship between man and the living spiritual reality wherein he seeks fulfillment" (1967, p. 443). The last one is doctrinal. It is needed to reformulate the doctrinal theories in the orient of cultural and methodological studies. It is also expected to come through the outcome of the integrative analysis. How we alter our doctrines or ideas, is not meant through this but rather emphasizing on reformulation process of the doctrine and application in academic disciplines and in life (Clinton, 1988).

Pragmatism

Whereas the origins of Idealism and Realism date back to ancient Greece, pragmatism developed in twentieth-century America. Recent philosophical debates in the United States are more concerned with

redefining pragmatism by providing vast conceptual and pragmatic transformations (Margolis, 2002). While the older traditional philosophies rested on an antecedent view of reality where truth was a priori or prior to and independent of human experience, the pragmatists contended that truth was a tentative assertion derived from human experience. Rejecting the metaphysical speculation of the older philosophies, Pragmatists such as Charles S. Peirce (1839-1914), William James (1842-1910), George Herbert Mead (1863-1931), and John Dewey (1859-1952), believed that philosophy needed to be applied to solve human problems. Dewey emphasized a changing and evolutionary universe where the human situation was not to transcend experience but rather to use it to solve human problems. Rejecting dualistic epistemologies, Dewey emphasized a continuum of human experience that related rather than separated thinking and acting, fact and value, and intellect and emotion (Dewey, 1998).

The formulation of Pragmatism also coincided with a period of energetic social, political, and educational reform known as the progressive movement, from the late 1890s to the entry of the United States into World War I in 1917. The pragmatic outlook, which argued that problems, if capable of definition, were also capable of solution, fitted the social reformist attitude of progressive Americans. However, Pragmatism, especially John Dewey's Experimentalist version, was a philosophy that challenged existing systems of thought and education (Bernstein, 1961). It sought to replace absolute and immutable doctrines with the experimental inquiry. It argued that the scientific method, broadly conceived, was a method of experimental and social intelligence. Dewey's work (1998) in philosophy and education emphasized the social role of the school as one of the important agencies working to generate a community. From Dewey's educational philosophy came the emphasis on experience, activity, and problem-solving that helped to reshape our thinking about education and schooling.

Contribution of Muslims to Western Philosophy of Education

The Greek philosophies and schools of thought realism, liberalism, theistic realism, and existentialism are considered the basis of western education. For a long time, western scholars have been accused of hesitating to acknowledge the contribution of Sino-Japanese civilization or Hindu culture. The Islamic civilization though is acknowledged to have a little bit of contribution by western scholars, but not sufficient enough. This is to be noted that western ideas, philosophies, and knowledge resources were preserved and recalibrated by Muslim scholars between 750 and 1350 BC. According to Nakosteen (1964), the Arabic language was an international language for a long time. Many Muslim rulers opened the library open for the public leading to the paving of Islamic scholasticism. Greek and Hellenistic education and learning was not ended with the termination of the school of Athens, which was founded by Justinian in 529. The education and learning have just rerouted through the Syrian Nestorian Scholarship to make contact with Persian and Hindu thoughts and then Islamic thoughts. Almost every branch of knowledge including medicine, philosophy, geography, history, technology, pedagogy, and other disciplines evidence Islamic scholasticism. Many Muslim philosophers are still considered the pioneer of modern philosophical discourses like Avicenna, Al-Ghazzali, Biruni, Tabari, Nasir-al-Din, Abu-Wafa, Al Battani, and Omar Khayyam. The resources of Western education and philosophies after the emergence of Islam have been translated and interpreted widely into the Arabic and Persia language. The Madrasah, Halqah, Muktab, palace, mosque, and the literary salon was then the canter of Muslim education. The library was also open for all who would want to gather or explore higher education, and knowledge. The Persia language was at that time mostly resourced language and belonged to many translated books and literature from Greek and Latin languages. Western universities still suggest a large number of books, materials, and literature mainly got translated from Persian and Arabic languages. The European and Western Universities provide their course on Greek philosophy based on books mainly translated from Arabic or Persia. Muslim Aristotelian science remained pivotal in the curriculum of the University of Parish until the 16th century. Scholarship based on Muslim and Hellenistic civilizations is still the core doctrine of western science and technology education. The Canon of Medicine a book, written by Avicenna is still considered the bible of medical education. Many western scholars like Roger Bacon, and Albertus Magnus lectured on Muslim contribution to western scholarship and acknowledged their debts.

DISCUSSION

Strengths of the Western Education System

Creativity

Creativity is considered the key outcome of the western education system. It empowers students to explore and accommodate the existing ideas and knowledge with their own. Formal education "represents both a right and need" (Carnoy, 2004). It has given more priority to accepting freely creative and original thinkers instead of conformists and stereotypes (Rogers, 1970). However, it is many times criticized for ruling out "conformists" and "stereotypes". This was a long-time allegation against the school as it killed the creativity of the students (Kaila, 2005). The growing pressure to drive education toward the requirements of national prospects, professional fields, and the economy has inspired the government to frame a creative education (Grainger, 2004). Though there are some barriers to reaching towards creative society, one of them is excessive focus on knowledge acquisition (Davies, 2002). It is always difficult to presume the knowledge requirements in near future (Parnes, 1970). Sufficiency in knowledge is also no longer possible through the education system (Guilford, 1975; Scoffham, 2003). So it is better to put the students in practicing knowledge like acquisition and exploration.

Rationalism

Rationalism in according to Encyclopedia Britannica is "the western philosophical view that regards reason as the key source and test of knowledge" (Brand n.d.). The rational principle is always fundamental, particularly in mathematics, logic, ethics, and metaphysics. Pythagoras was the first Western philosopher who stressed rationalist insights. He first explored and summed up metaphysical rationalism as he said, "All is Number". Later seen by Galileo between the 15th century and 16th century, the rationalist vision of Pythagoras was modified as he said that the world is governed through mathematically formulable news. However, rational insight was preceded by Greek philosophical ideas including Socrates, Plato, and Aristotle. Plato greatly admired the reasoning of geometry as he said, "Let no one unacquainted with geometry enter here." He imagined the forms as more actual than the sensible things that are not visualized. He has given more priority to his philosophical notion than the invisible essence. The successor of Plato, Aristotle thought of the work of reasoning in the same way as Plato. However, he did not see the forms as independent as Plato saw. His unique thought regarding rationalism is the syllogistic logic, rational explanation. For example, Aristotle asked, why anyone does think Socrates will die. Then he answered, Socrates is human and human is mortal. So he will die. Thus western education encourages the scholarship to work on rationalism as it is followed by economic rationalism, the core discourse of liberalism.

Critical Thinking Skill

In according to John Dewey, a renowned American philosopher, critical thinking skill is active, persistent, and careful consideration of any belief or supposed form of knowledge in light of the grounds that support it, and the further conclusions to which it tends. (Dewey 1910; 1933) However, Dr. Win Aung 2015 responded to the question, of whether critical thinking, the concept is coined by the West or not. He said that the contribution of the West in developing the concept of 'critical thinking is evident always.

But the contribution of the Eastern scholars is not acknowledged in such a manner as it deserves. He admitted the skills of critical thinking are not merely an aspect of education, but rather a matter of culture. In a western pluralist society, critical thinking is overwhelmingly welcomed. But in many authoritarian cultures where critical thinking is a matter taboo. So, the Western adoption of critical thinking is inspired by their pluralist culture along with their education curriculum. Therefore, educators aggress that critical thinking, the imperative skill for the generation in the 21st century, has given advantages to western nations.

Communication skill

Group tasks given by the teacher in the western education system encourage them to be much more extroverted and communicative. This skill contributes to building up networking and communication. From the historical age, western education encourages diversity and plurality. Thus, it has enabled its students to know about others. The assigning of the students to accomplish the collective work also indicates that.

Learning Approach
Active learning

The Western way of the learning process is not teacher-centric, but rather more students centric. The teacher has a minimal role in students in the classroom. The student in the class is asked to accomplish a task practically or solve a problem. Many times teacher gave the group-based tasks to the students. Then the students need to accomplish the task by consulting among their groups. The students have been given the freedom to express their abilities and talent by analyzing and solving problems on their own. However, in this way of learning, students have a broad spectrum to play their roles alongside their teacher. The accomplishment of group-based work on one side encourages the student to be independent, and confident and at the same time prompts them to adapt to group activities. Accommodation and tolerance to others' thinking are also encouraged through this active learning process. The most precious contribution of this is to introduce the students meaningfully to their cognitive knowledge in practical life. However, this process is spontaneous making learning more effective and convenient.

Problem-solving orientation

In western countries, students are asked to articulate different social problems through discussion in the classroom. Usually, they talk about their familial, social, national, or global problem in groups or in the classroom and what they have felt or suffered. Then the group members or the students of the whole class think to find out the possible solution. The solution is also presented to all for further exploration of durability, and consequences. However, with the aggregation of everyone's opinion, the proposed solution is usually accepted. Thus the way, everyone can learn about resolving their problem. Which increases the understanding among different origin fellow students. As a whole, they believe every student is the representative of their society. So understanding among the representative may play a crucial role to spread the message of peace. The most crucial outcome of this way of learning is practicality and effectiveness. Students practice resolving their problems through discussion, exploration, and aggregation.

Student-centeredness

The student got a central position in designing the framework of western education. The priority is given to students in framing the way of learning, designing the curriculum, and modifying objectives. However, the teacher usually plays the role of the moderator of the learning process. The group-based tasks are always encouraged to accomplish in order to educate the learners on practicality and creativity. Students have the freedom to express and implement their own ideas. In this process, students are highly encouraged to play their leadership role in the tasks given for learning and innovation.

Teaching Approach

Facilitator

Students are given the freedom to manage their way of the learning process. They have full control over the discussion and the way of their thinking. The teacher will facilitate their tasks in their own ways like helping them to think, and learn by providing more insights and information.

Evaluation and assessment

The most exclusive part of the western education system is offering encouragement only. The student if they make any mistake, the teacher intends always to return the interest of the students to the lesson. The evaluation is also done through pre and post-evaluation tests. The indicators of their evaluation are the capability to think, learn and understand the lesson.

Teacher-student relationship

In the western education system, the teacher is always acting as the associate of students to learn, explore, or innovate something. The relationship between teacher and student is always friendly so that students can explain or express their ideas and problems freely. However, this is unlikely in eastern education where the teacher is considered the absolute server of knowledge. The students get the scope to say about their ideas if the teacher allows them to do.

WEAKNESS

Unclear philosophical motion

In western civilization, there is hypocritical nature has been apparent when it talks about morality, ethics, and idealism. Colonial history witnessed the atrocities, racism, and suppression of colonized nations. At the same, they teach in their education sharply against the dehumanization, disregard, and maltreatment from state actors. So, when it comes to example, it eloquently avoided the motion of its colonial history, rather emphasizing the backdrop of eastern civilization. These hypocritical natures of western scholarship lead the philosophical motion into undetermined and unspecified. It consistently supports imperialism through glorification the of imperial ideas and philosophies, on the other hand, argues to establish equity, peace, and justice. So, the unclear philosophical motion of western education, or scholasticism is become the major criticism against this.

Paradoxical Evolution

The philosophical motions of western education mainly idealism, realism, and liberalism were based on ethical values. Even in according to McMinn (1960) Plato was a theologian philosopher. However, Aristotle was more realistic not such a theologian philosopher. Therefore, later Thomas Aquinas who believed in divine knowledge as the key source of law also is considered a key philosopher by western scholars. But after the European renaissance and industrial revolution, the West swiftly turned its philosophical motion from ethics to rationalism. It has excluded theology education almost. I have failed to make a sound combination between spiritual and worldly education. As a result, the critic argues to have a paradox in the western education system from its original philosophical education.

Justification of Western imperialism

Many oriental political scientists including Edward Said accuse western scholasticism as more biased as it justifies their political and economic unjust across the world. Said argued that the western scholar eloquently ignored the glory and civilized contribution of the eastern nations. Instead, they always propagate colonial history as the journey of progress for colonized nations. Though as a colonial power, the European nation has led horrendous atrocities, barbarism, suppression, and discrimination over the Asian and African nations. Colonial power has attempted to destroy many civilizations founded by eastern nations including the Chinese, Muslim, Japanese, and Korean. Despite all of that malpractice of colonial power, the western scholar highlighted some development programs, which were mostly taken to facilitate their own rulings. After the industrial revolution, capitalism has been also the main agenda of western education where soft power increased through spreading western ideas of democracy, human rights, civil rights, etc. Economic expansion and cultural western cultural appropriation is also major agenda of their present education system, as the critic argues.

Concluding Observations

By applying the philosophical method, the study attempts to find the nature and stance of liberal western philosophy toward education or higher education. To this end, the study investigates four western-liberal philosophies e.g. Idealism, Realism, Thomism, and Pragmatism. The study concludes that the western theory of knowledge relies upon thinking, which emerges from the rational and secular traditions of the Greeks and Romans. It also emerges from the metaphysical speculation of thinkers who subscribe to the evolutionary view of life and the psychoanalytical account of human nature. Greek philosophy holds that there is segregation between knowledge of the Supreme Being and that of the physical world. Modern value systems have emerged from contact with previous western civilizations, which include secular democratic systems, civic work ethics, and the westernized concepts of individual freedom. The distinctive western political principles such as individual autonomy, participatory democracy, freedom of speech, and gender equality are universal; but not universally applied to the higher learning process because all these principles are value-neutral or value-free as assumed by secularists. However, the research was mainly content based, failed to carry the real reflections of the scenario of the educational philosophies and approaches to the people. The views and values of orientals might also have influenced the researcher in building arguments.

So, in further, muti-faceted, multi-cultural views if placed, the research argument could be much stronger and different.

Declarations

Conflict of Interest

No potential conflicts of interest were disclosed by the author(s) with respect to the research, authorship, or publication of this article.

Ethics Approval

The formal ethics approval was granted by the research team of the International Islami University, Malysia.

Funding

No specific grant was given to this research by funding organizations in the public, commercial, or not-for-profit sectors.

Research and Publication Ethics Statement

The study was approved by the research team's university ethics committee of the International Islami University, Malaysia. Hereby, I as the author consciously assure that for the manuscript is fulfilled:

- This material is the authors' own original work, which has not been previously published elsewhere.
- The paper reflects the authors' own research and analysis in a truthful and complete manner.
- The results are appropriately placed in the context of prior and existing research.
- All sources used are properly disclosed.

Contribution Rates of Authors to the Article

There is no significant contribution of any particular individuals, or ogranization to authorize.

REFERENCES

Bedell, G. (1971). Theistic realism and monistic idealism. *The Thomist: A Speculative Quarterly Review*, *35*(4), 661–683.

Bernstein, R. J. (1961). John Dewey's metaphysics of experience. *The Journal of Philosophy*, *58*(1), 5–14. doi:10.2307/2023564

Biesta, G. J. J., & Stengel, B. S. (2016). Thinking philosophically about teaching. *Handbook of Research on Teaching*, *5*, 7–67.

Brickman, B. (1963). The meaning of "Philosophy of" education. *The Journal of General Education*, *15*(3), 212–220. Retrieved from https://www.jstor.org/stable/27795881

Bunge, M. (1993). Realism and antirealism in social science. *Theory and Decision*, *35*(3), 207–235.

Buras, J. T. (2005). The nature of sensations in reid. *History of Philosophy Quarterly*, *22*(3), 221–238.

Cohen, S. M. (2016). *Aristotle's metaphysics*. Retrived from: https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/aristotle-metaphysics/

Clinton, S. M, (1988) Realistic theism and the foundation of spiritual life. *Journal of the Evangelical Philosophical Society*, *11*, 1-8. Retrived from: http://www.toi.edu/Resources/Realistic%20Theism2.pdf

Collins, R. (1971). Functional and conflict theories of educational stratification. *American Sociological Review*, *36*(6), 1002-1019.

Dash, B. (2000). Foundation of educational thought & practice. *Kalyani Publishers* / Lyall Bk Depot.

Datzberger, S. (2018). Why education is not helping the poor. Findings from Uganda. *World Development*, *110*, 124–139.

De Laet, S. J., & Herrmann, J. (1996). History of humanity: From the seventh century bc to the seventh century ad. *UNESCO*, 3.

Demirci, F. (2012). Socrates: The prophet of life-long learning. *Procedia-Social and Behavioral Sciences*, 46, 4481–4486.

Devitt, M. (2018). A naturalistic defence of realism. *In The Problem of Realism* (pp. 20–42). Routledge.

Dewey, J. (1998). The essential dewey, Volume 1: Pragmatism, education, democracy, by Larry A. Hickman (Editor), Thomas M. Alexander (Editor), Indiana University Press.

Egerton, F. N. (2001). A history of the ecological sciences, part 2: Aristotle and theophrastos. *Bulletin of the Ecological Society of America*, *82*(2), 149–152.

Enslin, P. (2010). Philosophy of education: Overview. Retrieved from https://wenku.baidu.com/view/047a9de54afe04a1b071de45.html?re=view

Firey, T. A. (1999). Socrates' conception of knowledge and the priority of definition. *Virginia Tech*.

Gregoric, P. (2007). Aristotle on the common sense. *Oxford University Press*.

Gutek, G. L. (1997). Philosophical and ideological perspectives on education. *New York: A Viacom Company*, Second Edition

Grainger, T., Barnes, J., & Scoffham, S. (2004) A creative cocktail: Creative teaching in initial teacher education. *Journal of Education for Teaching*, 30, 243-253. doi:10.1080/0260747042000309475

Hayes, D. (2004). Understanding creativity and its implications for schools. *Improving Schools*, 7, 279-286. doi:10.1177/ 136548020-4048930

Gibson, H. (2005). What creativity isn't: The presumptions of instrumental and individual justifications for creativity in education. *British journal of educational studies*, 53(2), 148-167.

Hussain, Z. (2004). Synergy of east and west for greater creativity. In: M. Fryer (Ed.), Creativity and Cultural Diversity, *England: The Creativity Centre Educational Trust Press.* (pp. 90-97).

INCA (2009). Primary education: An international perspective. Retrieved from: www.inca.org.uk/pdf/probe_singapore.pdf

Jeffrey, B. (2005). The redress of creative teaching and learning through specialist programmes and strategic partnerships. Paper given at the creativity in education seminar series. *University of the West of England.*

Jeffrey, B. (2006). Creative teaching and learning: Towards a common discourse and practice. *Cambridge Journal of Education, 36,* 399-414. doi:10.1080/03057640600866015

Kaila, H. (2005). Democratizing schools across the world to stop killing creativity in children: An Indian perspective. *Counseling Psychology Quarterly*, 18, 1-6. doi:10.1080/09515070500099728

Loveless (2002). Literature review in creativity, new technologies and learning. Retrieved from: www.future lab.org.uk/research/lit_reviews.htm

MOE (2009). Desired outcomes of education. Retrieved from: http:// www.moe.gov.sg/education/desired-outcomes/

NACCCE, (1999). All Our Futures: Creativity, Culture and Education. Retrieved from: www.cypni.org.uk/downloads/alloutfutures.pdf

Ncsl (2004). Developing creativity for learning in the primary school: *A practical guide for school leaders*. Retrieved from: www.ncsl.org.uk/media-1d7-d8-developing-creativity-in-the-primary-school.pdf

Nesta (2009). Barriers to the realisation of creative ideas. *National Endowment for Science, Technology and the Art.*

Oral, G. (2006). Creativity of Turkish prospective teachers. *Creativity Research Journal*, 18, 65-73. doi:10.1207/s15326934crj1801_8

O'Donnell, S., & Micklethwaite, C. (1999). Arts and creativity in education: An international perspective. Internet Available: www.inca.org.uk/pdf/1999_creativity_and_arts.pdf

Halman, L., & Draulans, V. (2006). How secular is Europe? *The British Journal of Sociology, 57*(2), 263–288.

Jessop, T. E. (1930). The metaphysics of Plato. *Journal of Philosophical Studies*, 5(17), 36–50. Retrieved from https://www.jstor.org/stable/3745342

Lindsay, P. (2011). Abstract teaching for a concrete world: A lesson from Plato. *PS: Political Science & Politics*, 44(3), 605–610.

Lopez, D. S. Jr. (2008). Buddhism and science, A guide for the perplexed. *Chicago: University of Chicago Press.*

Margolis, J. (2002). Reinventing pragmatism: American philosophy at the end of the twentieth century. *Cornell University Press.*

Martin, J. L. (2016). The birth of the true, the good, and the beautiful: Toward an investigation of the structures of social thought. *In Reconstructing Social Theory, History And Practice* Emerald Group Publishing Limited. (pp. 3–56).

McCrea S. M. (2010). Intuition, insight, and the right hemisphere: Emergence of higher sociocognitive functions. *Psychology Research and Behavior Management,* 3, 1–39. https://doi.org/10.2147/prbm.s7935

Miller, T. C. (1993). The duality of human nature. *Politics and the Life Sciences, 12*(2), 221–241.

McMinn, J. (1960). Plato as a philosophical theologian. *Phronesis, 5*(1), 23-31. Retrieved from: www.jstor.org/stable/4181661

Noddings, N. (2018). Philosophy of education. *Routledge.*

Pelikan, J. (2008). The Christian tradition: A history of the development of doctrine, *Volume 3: The Growth of Medieval Theology*. University of Chicago Press. (600-1300) (Vol. 3).

Prawat, R. S., & Floden, R. E. (1994). Philosophical perspectives on constructivist views of learning. *Educational Psychologist*, *29*(1), 37–48.

Pennock, R.T. (1998). The prospects for a theistic science. *Perspectives on Science and Christian Faith*, 50, 205–209.

Ramose, M. (2014). Dying a hundred deaths: Socrates on truth and justice. *Phronimon, 15*(1), 67–80.

Robert, S., Castelli, V. L., & Castelli, P. A. (2000). Social foundations of American education (2nd ed.). *Carolina Academic Press.*

Rousseau, M. F. (1981). Recollection as realization-remythologizing Plato. *Review of Metaphysics, 35*(2), 337.

Rust, M. M. (2011). The utility of liberal education: Concepts and arguments for use in academic advising. *NACADA Journal*, *31*(1), 5–13.

Siegel, H. (2009). The Oxford handbook of philosophy of education. *Oxford University Press*.

Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy (2008). Philosophy of Education. Retrieved from: https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/education-philosophy/

Tanaka, M. (2005). A note on philosophy of education from the viewpoint of realism. *Nagasaki International University Review, 5*, 45–51.

Townsend, T., Bates, R. (2007). *Teacher education in a new millennium: Pressures and possibilities*. In: Townsend, T., Bates, R. (eds) Handbook of Teacher Education. Springer, Dordrecht. https://doi.org/10.1007/1-4020-4773-8_1 Trusted, J. (2003). Physics and metaphysics: Theories of space and time. *Routledge.*

Waterfield, R. E. (2002). René Guénon and the future of the West: The life and writings of a 20th-century metaphysician. *Sophia Perennis.*

Wood, A. (2020). Thomas Aquinas on the immateriality of the human intellect. Washington. *DC: Catholic University of America Press.*