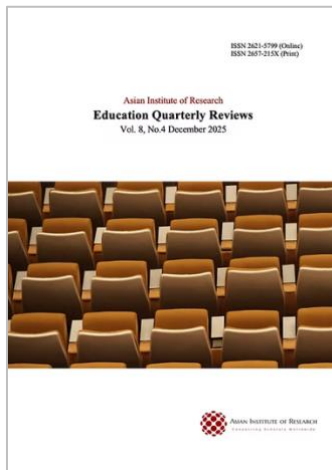




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David Hume and Education in the 21st Century: Maintaining A Balance Between Rationality, Emotion, And Morality

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Abstract

Modern educational practices are deeply rooted in the ideas of earlier philosophers. Some 18th-century thinkers have not been fully explored. One such thinker is David Hume. Hume is better known as a philosopher than an educator or educational thinker. Due to the limited research on Hume's thoughts on education, this paper examines his views on education and their relevance to the educational context of the 21st century. This study uses a qualitative, descriptive-philosophical approach using textual analysis and historical interpretation. The primary sources are Hume's original works, such as *A Treatise of Human Nature* (1739–1740), *An Inquiry Concerning Human Understanding* (1748), and *An Inquiry Concerning the Principles of Morals* (1751). The analysis is conducted by interpreting Hume's ideas within the framework of contemporary educational theory, particularly those related to experiential learning, moral education, and the integration of technology into the learning process. The results of the study show that Hume's thoughts are still very current for educational practice in this era. The influence of Hume's thinking on educational practice is evident in how his ideas are applied in various aspects of education, such as a curriculum based on real-life experiences and social morality; teachers acting as facilitators of experience and moral guides; democratic school management based on social reflection; and authentic and reflective learning evaluation. Hume inspired progressive educational figures such as John Dewey, Jean Piaget, and Carl Rogers, who emphasized experiential learning and humanistic education.

Keywords: Empirical Epistemology, Association of Ideas, Habit and Morality, Experiential Curriculum

1. Introduction

In the history of modern philosophy, the name of David Hume (1711–1776) occupies a pivotal position, particularly in the context of empiricism and skepticism. As a Scottish philosopher, historian, and economist, Hume made significant contributions to modern thinking on knowledge, morality, and education (Harris, 2018). His concepts on the origin of ideas, causal relationships, and the formation of morality through habit and experience provide a rich epistemological foundation for education, especially as it faces the challenges of globalization and technological development in the 21st century.

The 21st century is an era of knowledge revolution and digital transformation, learning is no longer limited to conventional classrooms but has shifted towards a learning system based on competency, creativity, and technology. Amid these changes, there is a need to revisit the foundations of educational philosophy to provide new direction and orientation for modern humans. Hume's thinking, with its empirical approach emphasizing experience and observation as the primary sources of knowledge, provides crucial inspiration for understanding how human learning and thinking can be constructed rationally, critically, and contextually.

Hume argued that all knowledge comes from experience, not from pure reason or innate ideas, as rationalists like Descartes believed (Hume, 1748/2007). This principle has profound implications for education: that learning must be based on concrete experience, observation, and reflection on the empirical world. In the context of modern education, this means that the learning process does not simply emphasize memorization or dogma, but rather the development of critical thinking skills, problem-solving skills, and moral and social sensitivity through direct experience.

Furthermore, Hume emphasized the importance of habits and moral emotions in the formation of human character (Hume, 1751/1998). For Hume, morality is not the result of mere rationality, but rather the result of social experience and empathy. This idea has profound relevance in modern character education, which seeks to foster social sensitivity, empathy, and moral responsibility in students. In the era of globalization, rife with digital moral and ethical challenges, Hume's thinking on morality based on social feelings becomes increasingly relevant.

Hume's major ideas are highly relevant to educational practice, yet there are rarely any specific studies linking Hume's ideas to educational practice. Therefore, this study analyzes Hume's main ideas related to education, particularly regarding empiricism, morality, and character formation. By exploring his thoughts, this study aims to reveal how Hume's thinking influences educational practice, including curriculum, the role of teachers, and school management, particularly in the 21st century.

Meanwhile, the significance of this study is: 1) theoretically, it can enrich the philosophical literature on education by demonstrating the relevance of Hume's classical thought in the context of modern education. 2) practically, the results of this study can inspire educators, curriculum designers, and educational policymakers in developing experiential learning models and moral reflection. 3) contextually, this paper is expected to connect the values of Hume's empiricism with educational practices in Indonesia, which are oriented towards active, critical, and character-based learning.

2. Research Method

This study uses a qualitative, descriptive-philosophical approach using textual analysis and historical interpretation. The primary sources are Hume's original works, such as *A Treatise of Human Nature* (1739–1740), *An Inquiry Concerning Human Understanding* (1748), and *An Inquiry Concerning the Principles of Morals* (1751). Secondary sources include modern literature discussing Hume's thinking in the context of education, morality, and epistemology (e.g., Smith, 1941; Macnabb, 1951/1966; Hendel, 1963; Belgion, 1965; MacIntyre and Alasdair, 1965; Merrill and Shahan, 1976; Mossner, 1980; Norton and Taylor, 2008; O'Brien, 2017; and Flage, 2019).

The analysis is conducted by interpreting Hume's ideas within the framework of contemporary educational theory, particularly those related to experiential learning, moral education, and the integration of technology into the learning process. Therefore, the results of this study are interpretive and reflective, rather than normative.

3. Results and Discussion

3.1. Socio-Historical Background of David Hume's Life

David Hume was born on May 7, 1711, in Edinburgh, Scotland, to an educated middle-class family. His father, Joseph Home was a respected lawyer, while his mother, Katherine Falconer, was known as a pious and highly

educated woman (Mossner, 2001). Hume grew up in a conducive social and intellectual environment during a time when Scotland was experiencing the Scottish Enlightenment (Vaccari, 2018). This period was marked by significant advances in philosophy, science, economics, and literature, involving figures such as Adam Smith, Thomas Reid, and Francis Hutcheson (Mossner, 2001).

From childhood, Hume demonstrated a remarkable talent for logical and reflective thinking. At the age of 12, he was accepted into the University of Edinburgh, where he studied Latin, Greek, logic, and philosophy. However, Hume was dissatisfied with the university's highly scholastic and speculative curriculum. He considered formal education to place too much emphasis on the rigid Aristotelian tradition and not enough space for empirical exploration of human experience (Flage, 2019). From this point, his interest in the new scientific methods introduced by Francis Bacon, Isaac Newton, and John Locke grew—all of which would later influence the foundations of his empiricist philosophy.

At a young age, Hume left university without completing a formal degree and chose to live independently as a writer and thinker. In a letter to a friend, Hume confessed that he had “fallen into an irresistible passion for thought,” and from that moment on, he resolved to dedicate his life to the pursuit of philosophical truth (Mossner, 2001).

3.2. Intellectual Journey and Major Works

Hume's intellectual journey can be divided into three main phases: the initial period of philosophical system formation (1730–1740), the period of development and clarification (1740–1758), and the period of reflection and public influence (1758–1776) (Mossner, 2001; Slavov, 2016).

Early Period (1730–1740): The Birth of Radical Empiricism

It was during this early period that Hume wrote his most monumental work, *A Treatise of Human Nature* (1739–1740), which he wrote at around the age of 26. The book consists of three main parts: *Of the Understanding*, *Of the Passions*, and *Of Morals*. Through this work, Hume sought to develop a “science of man” in a manner comparable to the scientific method Newton used in physics (Demeter, 2016).

In the *Treatise*, Hume argued that all knowledge comes from impressions and ideas. Impressions are strong, direct experiences, while ideas are weak copies of those impressions. He rejected the rationalist notion of innate ideas and asserted that the human mind is merely the result of associations of experiences. Hume also introduced the theory of habit as the basis for causality—that our belief in causality is not the result of reason, but of mental habits formed through repeated experience.

The work was initially poorly received by the public, with Hume himself writing that the *Treatise* “fell from the press with a barely audible thud” (Hume, 1739/2007). Nevertheless, the ideas in the book became the foundation of modern empiricism and had a profound influence on the philosophy of education, particularly in the concepts of experiential learning and the association of ideas.

Development Period (1740–1758): Clarification and Publication of Moral Philosophy

After the less successful experience with the *Treatise*, Hume wrote other works that were more systematic and communicative. These include: 1) *An Enquiry Concerning Human Understanding* (1748), in which he modified and simplified his empiricist theory. In this book, he introduced the concept of the myth of causation, namely, that causal relationships cannot be proven logically but are only believed through custom and experience. 2) *An Enquiry Concerning the Principles of Morals* (1751), which emphasized the importance of feeling and sympathy as the basis of morality. For Hume, morality was not the result of rational deduction, but an expression of human feelings toward the happiness and suffering of others. Both works were more accessible and widely accepted than the *Treatise*. In an educational context, these works provided a foundation for moral education that was not dogmatic but based on social experience and empathy.

In addition, Hume wrote *Essays, Moral, Political, and Literary* (1741–1777), a collection of essays addressing economic, political, educational, and cultural themes. In it, he examined the role of education in shaping a civilized civil society, emphasizing the importance of social virtue and tolerance, and criticizing educational systems that were overly theoretical and detached from social reality.

Reflection Period (1758–1776): Historian and Public Philosopher

During this period, Hume shifted from theoretical philosophy to history and economics. He wrote *The History of England* (1754–1762), a six-volume masterpiece that examined the political, religious, and social development of England from Julius Caesar's invasion to the Revolution of 1688. This work made him famous throughout England and Europe, even more so than his philosophical works.

Hume also published economic essays such as *Of Money* (1777) which inspired the economic thinking of his close friend Adam Smith. Although these fields may seem distinct from education, Hume consistently demonstrated his belief that the social and moral progress of a nation depends on customs, experience, and social justice—a principle that would later become the foundation of modern social educational theory.

Hume died on August 25, 1776, in Edinburgh, at the age of 65. He inherited a vast and complex legacy of thought that not only changed the course of modern philosophy but also influenced psychology, ethics, social science, and the philosophy of education.

Distinctive Features of Hume's Thought in the Context of Education

Across his entire works and thought, several distinctive features of Hume's thinking are relevant to the field of education:

- *Empirical epistemology.* All forms of knowledge are acquired through sensory experience and reflection on that experience. This forms the basis for the experiential learning approach developed by figures such as John Dewey (1938) and David Kolb (1984).
- *Association of Ideas.* Hume explained that the human mind operates through associations between ideas arising from sensory impressions. In education, this is relevant to the theories of connectionism and associative learning developed in modern psychology such as Pavlov (1928), Watson (1913), and behaviorists (Shanks, 1995).
- *Habit and morality.* For Hume, human moral character is formed through habits and emotional experiences. This forms the basis for practice-based character education, not moral dogma. (Handayani, Ahmad, and Indrawati, 2023).
- *Methodological skepticism.* A critical attitude toward claims of absolute truth teaches the importance of critical and reflective thinking in modern education (Alcock, 1991).
- *Sympathy and empathy.* Hume emphasized social feelings as the basis of morality; this is relevant in 21st-century education, which emphasizes emotional intelligence (Ciarrochi, et al., 2013). and empathy in collaborative learning (Yang, 2023).

Thus, Hume's life and work not only contribute to the history of philosophy but also form a profound philosophical foundation for modern educational theory and practice.

4. David Hume's Main Ideas on Education

4.1. The Nature of Knowledge and Learning According to Hume

David Hume asserted that all human knowledge is rooted in experience. He rejected the rationalist view that the human mind possesses innate ideas present from birth (Hume, 1739/2000). In his work, *A Treatise of Human Nature*, Hume distinguishes between two types of mental perception: *impressions* and *ideas*. Impressions are strong, direct experiences, such as sensations, emotions, or sensory perceptions. Meanwhile, ideas are weak copies of impressions, namely images or memories of those experiences.

This relationship between impressions and ideas is the basis for the processes of thinking and learning. According to Hume, the human brain works by associating ideas based on three main principles:

- *Resemblance* – similar ideas tend to be connected.
- *Contiguity* – ideas experienced close together are related.
- *Cause and effect* – ideas about events are often linked to their consequences.

In the context of education, this view asserts that learning is a process of associating experiences. Knowledge is not simply transferred from teacher to student but rather is formed through concrete experiences that are then associated and processed in the mind. This thinking became the basis for the experiential learning theory later developed by John Dewey (1938) and David Kolb (Kolb, 1984), which emphasizes the cycle of experience, reflection, conceptualization, and application.

Hume also emphasized the importance of habit in the formation of beliefs. Beliefs about the world—including cause and effect—are not the result of pure reason, but rather the result of habits formed through repeated experience (Hume, 1748/2007). Thus, education plays a role in developing habits of thought and action through practice, repetition, and reflection. Teachers, in this case, are not merely transmitters of knowledge, but also guides in developing good intellectual habits.

4.2. Hume and the Formation of Morality: Feelings as the Basis of Ethics

One of Hume's most important contributions to the philosophy of education lies in his theory of morality. In *An Enquiry Concerning the Principles of Morals* (1751), Hume rejected the view that morality is based on reason. He wrote, "Reason is, and ought only to be, the slave of the passions"—reason is merely the servant of feeling (Hume, 1739/2000, p. 415). In other words, human moral decisions are determined more by emotion and sympathy than by rational calculation.

Hume introduced the concept of "*moral sentiment*," or moral feeling, which is the natural human ability to feel the happiness or suffering of others. He argued that humans possess an instinct of sympathy that is the basis of morality and social life. True morality, he argued, is the result of the human ability to empathically feel the suffering and happiness of others (Norton and Taylor, 2008).

In the context of education, Hume's moral theory emphasizes that moral education should be directed at developing empathy and social habits, not simply instilling ethical norms or dogmas. Children need to be encouraged to experience, feel, and reflect on the moral consequences of their actions. This aligns with contemporary character education principles that emphasize social-emotional learning, where students learn through social interaction, collaboration, and emotional reflection (Elias et al., 1997).

4.3. Hume's Empiricism and Its Implications for the Learning Process

Hume's empirical epistemology has important implications for modern learning theory. Some of these implications are as follows.

First, Learning as an active process. Because knowledge is formed through experience, thus, learners must be actively involved in activities that allow them to observe, experiment, and reflect. Teachers function as facilitators who create an experientially rich learning environment. **Second, Contextual and meaningful learning.** Ideas are only meaningful when rooted in real experiences. Therefore, learning must be linked to the context of learners' lives to avoid abstraction or verbalization. **Third, The importance of reflection.** Experience does not automatically produce knowledge; reflection is needed to transform experience into conceptual understanding. Hume called reflection the process of associating higher ideas. **Fourth, The role of habit and repetition.** Habit is a mechanism for forming beliefs and character. In education, consistent repetition and practice form stable and deep-rooted thought structures. **Fifth, Skepticism as a tool for critical thinking.** Hume introduced a skeptical attitude towards claims of absolute truth. In education, this means fostering critical and reflective thinking skills regarding information, ideology, and authority. Students are encouraged to ask "why" and "how" rather than passively receiving information.

Thus, Hume's empirical epistemology is not only a theory of knowledge, but also a pedagogical framework that emphasizes activity, experience, reflection, and habituation in the educational process.

4.4. Hume's Views on Reason, Emotion, and Human Education

For Hume, humans are not rational beings in the absolute sense, but rather creatures who combine reason and emotion in decision-making. He rejected the rigid dichotomy between reason and feeling, asserting that the two complement each other in moral and intellectual life (Hume, 1739/2000).

In the context of education, this means that the educational system should emphasize not only cognitive or intellectual aspects, but also affective and emotional aspects. The ideal education, according to Hume's interpretation of thought, is one that fosters a balance between logical thinking skills and emotional sensitivity. Teachers not only teach concepts but also help students develop mature moral and emotional personalities.

This concept resonates strongly with the idea of "whole person education" in modern educational philosophy, which seeks to develop the full potential of human beings: intellectual, emotional, social, and spiritual (Noddings, 2013). In other words, education, according to Hume's spirit, is not a mechanistic process, but a humanizing process that fosters experience and moral sensitivity.

4.5. Education as the Formation of Social Habits

The concept of habit in Hume's philosophy relates not only to cognitive beliefs but also to social and moral behavior. He argued that human morality is formed through social habits that are repeated and reinforced by collective experience. In his essay, "Of the Rise and Progress of the Arts and Sciences" (1742), Hume wrote that a civilized society is one that successfully instills habits of rational thought and moral action through education. In the school context, the formation of these social habits is reflected in 1) the development of a work ethic and social responsibility, 2) the cultivation of empathy and fairness in social interactions, 3) the habit of reflective and critical thinking in assessing experiences.

Teachers play a crucial role in instilling these habits through role modeling and positive reinforcement. Thus, according to Hume, education is not merely the transmission of knowledge, but a process of moral and social habituation that fosters good character.

4.6. Synthesis: Education According to Hume as an Empirical-Moral Project

From Hume's overall thinking, it can be concluded that education is an empirical-moral project that combines: 1) *Empirical knowledge* – learning from real experience through observation and reflection; 2) *Sentimental morality* – cultivating sympathy, empathy, and social virtues; 3) *Intellectual and social habituation* – building belief and behavioral structures through repeated experience; 4) *Critical and reflective* – avoiding dogmatism and prioritizing rational thinking and methodological skepticism.

Hume rejected dogmatic and formalistic education. He desired an education that was lively, open to experience, and fostered moral abilities through social life. Thus, his thinking bridged the gap between empirical philosophy and modern educational theory, which emphasizes learning by doing and moral experience (Otteson, 2021).

5. The Influence of David Hume's Thoughts on Educational Practice

Hume's thought, rooted in empiricism and sentimental ethics, not only had a profound impact on the philosophy of knowledge and morality, but also laid the foundation for several schools of thought in modern education. Hume established the principle that knowledge is the result of experience, and that morality arises from feelings and social habits, not from abstract rationality. These principles became the impetus for the emergence of an educational paradigm that emphasizes experiential learning, moral reflection, and the development of social character (Stroll & Popkin, 2008).

Throughout the history of education, Hume's ideas have inspired the development of various theories and practices, such as 1) the empirical education of John Locke and his successors, 2) the progressive education of John Dewey (1938), 3) experiential learning (Kolb, 1984), 4) and character education based on emotional morality (Noddings, 2013).

Through these channels, Hume's influence extends to all aspects of the educational system: from the curriculum and the role of teachers to school management and the design of learning assessments.

5.1. Influence on the Educational Curriculum

Hume rejected the view that knowledge is acquired through innate ideas; instead, knowledge grows from concrete experience. A direct implication of this is that the educational curriculum should be oriented toward concrete experience and critical reflection on that experience.

Experiential Curriculum

Hume inspired the concept of the “experiential curriculum,” a curriculum design that places direct experience at the heart of the learning process. In this paradigm: 1) students not only learn concepts but also conduct, observe, and reflect on those experiences; 2) learning occurs through experiments, discussions, social projects, or field observations; 3) knowledge is actively constructed by students, rather than passively transferred from teachers. This idea was further developed by John Dewey in *Democracy and Education* (1916) and *Experience and Education* (1938), who viewed education as a social process in which experience forms the basis for intellectual and moral development. Dewey explicitly acknowledged the influence of Hume's empiricism on his theory of experience and reflection (Dewey, 1938).

Contextual and Interdisciplinary Curriculum

Hume's belief that ideas are formed through associations and interconnected experiences encourages an interdisciplinary approach to the curriculum. This means that knowledge should not be taught in silos within academic disciplines, but rather should demonstrate the interconnectedness of concepts, as humans naturally relate to real-life experiences.

This contextual curriculum helps students understand the relationship between science and life, making learning meaningful and applicable (Beane, 1997). Hume emphasized that social and moral experiences are part of the formation of knowledge; therefore, education should also incorporate moral, social, and cultural aspects into curriculum design.

Moral and Social Curriculum

For Hume, morality stems from moral sentiments—feelings of empathy for others. Moral education, therefore, should be directed at fostering sympathy, empathy, and social sensitivity through real-life social experiences, rather than through memorizing norms. The modern curriculum that integrates social-emotional learning (Elias et al., 1997) and character education is a form of implementation of Hume's ideas in contemporary education.

Influence on the Role of Teachers

In Hume's philosophy, teachers are not viewed as absolute authorities holding the truth, but as facilitators of learning experiences. The teacher's role is to help students form associations between experiences and ideas through reflective guidance and empathetic social interactions. Besides that, teachers also play a role as reflective practitioners (Schön, 1983; Brookfield, 2017).

5.2. Teacher as Facilitator of Experience

Hume views learning as the result of direct experience and the association of ideas. Therefore, teachers should create conditions that enable students to: 1) directly experience the phenomena being studied, 2) reflect on these experiences, 3) develop habits of critical and analytical thinking. This model of teacher is evident in the constructivist teaching approach (Piaget, 1977; Vygotsky, 1978), which views students as constructors of their own knowledge. Hume provided a philosophical basis for this view through his theory of empiricism.

5.3. Teacher as Moral and Emotional Guide

Hume places morality within the realm of emotions and sympathy. Therefore, teachers also play a role as guides in developing students' emotional sensitivity. Teachers are required to model empathy, honesty, and fairness, and to foster a classroom climate that fosters mutual respect. This concept predates the idea of humanistic education developed by Carl Rogers (1969), which emphasized the importance of positive emotional relationships between teachers and students.

5.4. Teachers as Models of Habituation

Because, for Hume, morality is formed through habit, teachers play a crucial role in shaping habits of mind and heart. Positive reinforcement (Zeiler, 1976), the practice of acting justly, and moral training in school life are concrete forms of education rooted in Hume's habit theory. In this context, teachers serve as living moral models.

Influence on School Management

Hume's thinking also has implications for educational management. He emphasized the importance of social experience, habit, and justice as the foundation for forming a civilized society. These principles can be applied in modern school management.

First, *Schools as Learning Communities*. Based on Hume's view of society as a place where morality is formed through social habits, schools can be understood as moral and intellectual communities. Schools are not merely formal institutions, but ecosystems where students learn to live together, empathize, and take responsibility. In this regard, school management needs to prioritize participatory, dialogical, and ethical values. The principles of democratic schooling developed by Dewey (1938) represent a practical application of Hume's empirical and moral spirit.

Second, *Moral Leadership in Education*. Hume rejected authoritarianism in morality and emphasized social virtue. In the context of educational leadership, this means that principals or heads of educational institutions should be moral leaders who foster a culture of empathy, reflection, and togetherness (Fullan, 2003; Heifetz, 2009). Leadership oriented toward shared experience and positive moral habits aligns with Hume's social philosophy.

Third, *Experience-Based Evaluation and Decision-Making*. Effective school management must be based on empirical evaluation, not mere assumptions or traditions. Hume's empiricist principles encourage the application of evidence-based management in education, where decisions are made based on data and reflection on experience. This is highly relevant in the modern era, which demands accountability and transparency in the management of educational institutions (Leithwood et al., 2020).

Influence on Evaluation and Assessment Processes

Hume's concept of empiricism has implications for educational evaluation systems. Hume emphasized that knowledge is only valid if it has an empirical basis; therefore, educational assessment must reflect students' actual learning experiences.

Several evaluation principles that align with Hume's ideas include: 1) Authentic assessment – assessing students' abilities in real-life situations, not simply through written exams. 2) Formative assessment – ongoing assessment that provides feedback on learning progress. 3) Reflective evaluation – encouraging students to self-assess their

learning experiences. Thus, evaluation measures not only cognitive learning outcomes but also moral, social, and emotional growth.

Hume's thinking has had a profound influence on modern educational theory and practice. Through his empiricism, he asserted that: 1) education must be rooted in experience and observation, not dogma or tradition; 2) morality and character are formed through social feelings and customs; 3) teachers, curriculum, and school management act as facilitators of moral and intellectual experiences.

In this way, Hume's philosophy became the foundation for the emergence of progressive education, experiential learning, and humanistic character education. He bridged the rational and emotional worlds into a single entity: education as a process of becoming a human being who thinks and feels ethically.

6. The Influence of David Hume's Ideas on Educational Practice in the 21st Century

Entering the 21st century, the world of education faces complex challenges: globalization, digitalization, socio-cultural change, and technological disruption that are transforming the way humans learn and interact. In this context, David Hume's classic ideas appear to have acquired new relevance.

Hume emphasized that knowledge arises from concrete experience, morality grows from social sentiment, and human virtue is formed through the constant cultivation of habits. These principles align with the modern educational paradigm, which emphasizes active, reflective, collaborative, and contextual learning (OECD, 2019). This section will examine how Hume's ideas influence and inspire 21st-century educational practices across several key dimensions: (1) curriculum and learning approaches, (2) the roles of teachers and learners, (3) school management and organizational culture, and (4) the use of digital technology in education.

6.1. Influence on Curriculum and Learning Approaches

Experience-Based and Project-Based Learning

Hume's concept of empiricism—that all knowledge is rooted in sensory experience—has found direct application in the form of Project-Based Learning (PjBL) (Bell, 2010; Kokotsaki, 2016), Experiential Learning (Kolb, 1984), and Inquiry-Based Learning in the 21st century (Chu, et al., 2021¹). In these models, students do not simply receive information, but actively act, observe, reflect, and draw conclusions. This pattern is identical to Hume's theory of the association of ideas, where empirical experience shapes thought structures and intellectual habits.

The 21st-century curriculum, which emphasizes critical thinking, creativity, collaboration, and communication (the 4Cs) (Trilling and Fadel, 2009), is rooted in Hume's empirical understanding: humans learn to think through association and reflection on experience, not simply memorizing concepts.

Values and Social Intelligence Curriculum

Hume argued that morality arises from moral sentiments, not reason. Therefore, 21st-century education, which emphasizes the importance of social-emotional learning (SEL) (Bailey et al, 2019) education for empathy, and global citizenship education, is a direct manifestation of Humean ethics. Modern curricula now focus not only on the cognitive domain but also on the affective domain—empathy, self-awareness, and social awareness (CASEL, 2020). All of this aligns with Hume's view that "reason is, and ought only to be, the slave of the passions" (*Treatise of Human Nature*, 1739/2007).

Adaptive and Flexible Curriculum

For Hume, truth is relative to experience and context. In 21st-century education, this translates into the principle of curriculum flexibility—a curriculum that adapts to student needs, social change, and technological dynamics.

Adaptive curricula such as Merdeka Belajar in Indonesia, or the Competency-Based Curriculum in various countries, reflect the spirit of empiricism: learning from concrete reality, not rigid dogma (Kim, 2015).

6.2. Influence on the Role of Teachers and Students

Teachers as Empirical Facilitators

21st-century teachers are expected to act not as centers of knowledge, but as facilitators of learning experiences. This aligns with Hume's view that humans acquire knowledge through observation and practice. Teachers function as facilitators of experiential associations, helping students build connections between theory and reality, and guiding them toward meaningful reflection (Brookfield, 2017).

This role of teacher demands: 1) the ability to design authentic learning experiences, 2) the ability to facilitate critical reflection and discussion, 3) sensitivity to students' emotional and moral dimensions.

Learners as Active Subjects

Hume's philosophy rejects innate ideas, emphasizing that each individual constructs knowledge through personal experience. In the modern context, this means that learners are active subjects in the learning process. This model is evident in student-centered learning, personalized learning, and blended learning approaches, where students are given the freedom to explore and construct meaning from their learning experiences (Anderson, 2016).

Teachers as Shapers of Moral Habits

According to Hume, morality is formed from good social habits. Therefore, 21st-century teachers also function as guides in moral habits, both in the real and digital world. Teachers must instill habits of critical thinking, honesty, and responsibility in a global and technological context (Noddings, 2013).

6.3. Influence on School Management and Organizational Culture

Schools as Moral and Social Communities

Hume views society as a place where morality is formed through social habits and feelings. In the 21st century, the ideal school is not just an academic institution, but a moral community that fosters social and collaborative character (Fullan, 2003). The organizational culture of a school should foster the values of empathy, honesty, and collective responsibility through everyday social practices, not through rigid rules. In the spirit of Hume, morality grows from practice, not from commandments.

Data- and Experience-Based Management

Hume's empiricist principles underlie the concept of evidence-based education management, which involves making decisions based on real data and the results of institutional experience. Modern school management now uses empirical analysis to determine learning strategies, evaluate curriculum, and improve quality (Leithwood et al., 2020). This approach rejects dogma and intuitive decisions, replacing them with a reflective, evidence-based process—in line with Hume's empiricist spirit.

Adaptive and Reflective Leadership

Hume viewed humans as creatures who learn through mistakes and habit. Therefore, 21st-century educational leaders must be adaptive and reflective, open to new experiences, and able to facilitate organizational learning. This type of leadership (Heifetz et al., 2009) aligns with the Humean principle of virtue formation through continually renewed moral and social experiences.

6.4. Utilizing Technology from a Humean Perspective

Although Hume lived long before the digital era, his ideas can be applied in the context of edutech and digital learning in the 21st century.

Technology as a Tool of Experience

For Hume, empirical experience is the foundation of knowledge. In digital education, technology becomes a means to expand sensory and social experiences through simulations, virtual experiments, and online interactions. Platforms such as virtual labs, game-based learning, and augmented reality provide opportunities for students to learn through multisensory experiences, reinforcing the principles of empiricism in modern learning (Johnson et al., 2022).

Technology and the Formation of Learning Habits

Hume emphasizes the role of habits in shaping moral and cognitive behavior. Technology can support the formation of learning habits through adaptive learning systems, gamification, and learning analytics that motivate students to learn consistently. However, Hume also emphasizes the importance of the moral dimension: technology should be used to strengthen social virtue, not simply intellectual efficiency.

Digital Ethics and Sentimental Morality

In the digital world, the sentimental morality proposed by Hume is becoming increasingly relevant. 21st-century education needs to develop digital empathy and ethical awareness, so that technology does not distance humans from human values. Digital ethics education—such as cyber citizenship, digital responsibility, and online empathy training—is a concrete application of Humean ethics in the digital space (Floridi, 2013).

6.5. Global Relevance and Critical Reflection

Hume's thought also has cross-cultural and global relevance: 1) In the context of global citizenship education, Hume's passion for universal empathy and social virtue can form the basis for cross-cultural ethics. 2) In the context of pluralism and democracy, Hume's view of morality as the product of social experience strengthens education for tolerance and intercultural dialogue (Appiah, 2006). 3) In the context of innovation and creativity, Hume's empiricism emphasizes the importance of experimentation, the courage to try, and learning from mistakes—essential characteristics of the 21st-century creative economy (Florida, 2019).

However, critical reflection is also necessary. Hume's empiricism, which emphasizes sensory experience, needs to be combined with a rational and transcendental approach so that education does not lose its profound moral direction (MacIntyre, 1984). Therefore, Hume's philosophy must be seen not as a closed system, but as a framework for dialogue between experience and values.

David Hume's empirical and sentimental moral philosophy offers a highly relevant foundation for 21st-century education. In a fast-paced, data-saturated digital age, Hume reminds us that experience, reflection, and moral habits remain at the heart of true education.

In summary: 1) The curriculum must be based on real experiences, flexible, and values-oriented; 2) Teachers must be facilitators of empathy and guides to moral habits. 3) School management must be based on data and social experience. 4) Technology is used to expand human experience, not replace it.

Hume helps modern education maintain a balance between rationality, emotion, and morality—the three pillars that shape the whole person in a complex global society.

7. Conclusion

The thoughts of David Hume, an 18th-century empiricist and skeptical philosopher, have made extensive contributions to various fields of science, including education. Through works such as *A Treatise of Human Nature*

(1739) and *An Enquiry Concerning Human Understanding* (1748), Hume asserted that all human knowledge stems from experience, that morality arises from feelings (moral sentiments), and that habit is the primary basis for the formation of human beliefs and actions. In the context of education, Hume's ideas have far-reaching implications. 21st-century education faces the challenges of globalization, digitalization, and a moral crisis. In this context, Hume's thoughts are relevant because they emphasize the importance of concrete experience and moral formation through social empathy. The primary objective of this discussion is to understand the relevance of Hume's empiricism and sentimental ethics to contemporary educational practice.

Hume's intellectual journey as a Scottish empiricist thinker sought to bridge Descartes' rationalism and Locke's empiricism. He argued that human reason is nothing more than a tool subject to experience and emotion. His monumental works formed the basis for modern philosophy of science and theory of knowledge. Although not specifically addressing education, Hume viewed education as a process of moral and intellectual conditioning through experience. He rejected dogmatic education that emphasized memorization and abstract logic. Instead, he proposed an education that fostered reflection, empathy, and rational thinking based on empirical evidence.

The influence of Hume's thinking on educational practice is evident in how his ideas are applied in various aspects of education, such as a curriculum based on real-life experiences and social morality; teachers acting as facilitators of experience and moral guides; democratic school management based on social reflection; and authentic and reflective learning evaluation. Hume inspired progressive educational figures such as John Dewey, Jean Piaget, and Carl Rogers, who emphasized experiential learning and humanistic education.

In the 21st century, or the digital age, Hume's philosophy remains relevant. In a world dominated by technology and data, the principles of empiricism emphasize the importance of learning from real experiences, not just simulations. The 21st-century curriculum, which focuses on competencies (4Cs), teachers as facilitators, data-driven management, and digital ethics, is a direct reflection of Hume's empirical and sentimental moral spirit. Furthermore, the use of educational technology—such as virtual labs, adaptive learning, and digital empathy training—can be seen as an application of empirical principles in the modern world.

Overall, Hume reminds us that true education must balance reason, experience, and moral feeling. In the era of globalization and artificial intelligence, this balance is crucial to prevent humans from losing their identity as rational and emotional beings.

Education that emphasizes only cognition without empathy will produce intelligent individuals without hearts; conversely, education that ignores empiricism will lose the foundation of verifiable knowledge. Thus, Hume's legacy serves as a reminder that education is the art of developing critical thinking habits while fostering a just moral sense.

7. Implications and Recommendations

1. For Curriculum Developers: Hume's principles of empiricism can be used to strengthen contextual, project-based, and experiential approaches to students.
2. For Teachers: Strengthening reflective and empathetic capacities is necessary so that teachers can become facilitators of experience and moral guides.
3. For School Management: A data-driven, participatory management system rooted in a culture of collective reflection is necessary.
4. For Digital Education: The development of educational technology needs to be grounded in Hume's sentimental moral ethics to remain humanistic and empathetic.
5. For Educational Researchers: Hume's thinking can serve as a foundation for empirical studies of educational philosophy, particularly regarding the relationship between emotions, habits, and learning.

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