



Implications of The Philosophy of Materialism on Education in Indonesia

Arba'iyah Yusuf¹, Vivid Rohmaniyah^{2*}

¹Universitas Islam Negeri Sunan Ampel Surabaya, Indonesia

²Universitas Muhammadiyah Malang, Indonesia

Corresponding author: vivid.media19@gmail.com

Article Info

Revised January 5, 2024
Accepted February 1, 2024

Abstract

The philosophy of materialism is a school of thought that emphasizes that the main reality in life is material. The implications of this philosophy for education in Indonesia include various aspects, ranging from the curriculum, teaching methods, to the purpose of education itself. In an education system influenced by materialism, the orientation of learning focuses more on pragmatic aspects and material outcomes, such as technical skills and economic achievement, compared to the development of moral and spiritual values. As a result, there is a paradigm shift in education that focuses more on utilitarian aspects and the reduction of human values. This article will analyse the impact of materialism philosophy on education in Indonesia and offer a critical perspective to find a balance between material and spiritual aspects in the education process.

Keywords: Curriculum; Education; Human Values; Materialism Philosophy.

This is an open-access article under the [CC BY](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/) license.



How to Cite: Arba'iyah Y., and Rohmaniyah, V. (2025). Implications of The Philosophy of Materialism on Education in Indonesia. *Indonesian Journal of Teaching and Learning*, 4(1), 54-61. doi: <https://doi.org/10.56855/intel.v4i1.1350>

1. Introduction

Philosophy has a fundamental role in shaping the way humans perceive reality, including in the realm of education. One of the influential schools of philosophy in the

history of thought is materialism. Materialism is an understanding that emphasizes material or physical aspects as the only reality that exists, excluding metaphysical or spiritual aspects (Rahmawati et al., 2023). In the context of education, the philosophy of materialism can have an impact on various aspects, ranging from educational goals, and teaching methods, to the curriculum developed in schools.

In Indonesia, education has a strategic role in shaping the character of the nation by the values of Pancasila. However, with globalization and modernization, materialism has begun to influence various aspects of life, including education. Education that should be oriented towards character development and spirituality has begun to shift towards pragmatism and utilitarianism, which focuses on material results alone (Tofiqurrohman, 2019). Materialism in education can be seen from the increasing orientation towards academic success measured quantitatively, such as test scores and school rankings (Rahmawati et al., 2023). Education, which is supposed to be a means of forming a whole person, is more focused on achieving technical skills that have high economic value. As a result, the moral and ethical aspects of education are often neglected.

In addition, an education system that overemphasizes material aspects often creates unhealthy competition among students. Materialism-oriented education tends to judge success based on economic achievement and position, rather than on the quality of character and social contribution. This has led to a shift in values in society, where a person's success is measured more by their financial aspects than their integrity and morality (Husna, 2015). The education curriculum in Indonesia has also been influenced by the philosophy of materialism. In various educational policies, there is a tendency to emphasize cognitive aspects and work skills, while affective and spiritual aspects often receive less balanced attention. Curricula that emphasize academic competence and work skills make education a tool to achieve economic success.

On the other hand, the development of technology and information has further strengthened the dominance of materialism in education. With technological advances, education is increasingly oriented towards effectiveness and efficiency, often at the expense of human aspects and noble values in the learning process (Alfiansyah, 2023). An education system that focuses too much on mastering technology without being balanced with strengthening character can give birth to a generation that is intellectually intelligent, but poor in social and spiritual aspects. The implications of the materialist philosophy in education can also be seen in the mindset of teachers and educators. Education that is too results-oriented often causes teachers to emphasize academic achievement rather than shaping student character. Learning models that are mechanistic and pay little attention to the psychological and emotional aspects of students are a consequence of the dominance of materialist thinking in the world of education (Rahman, 2022; Sugianto et al., 2022).

The philosophy of materialism in education can also have an impact on the lack of social awareness among students. When education is only seen as a tool to get jobs and wealth, the spirit of cooperation, solidarity, and concern for others is eroded (Alika K et al., 2023). This has the potential to produce a generation that is individualistic and lacks empathy for their social environment. However, it cannot be denied that the philosophy

of materialism also has a positive impact on education. In some aspects, materialism encourages the development of more advanced science and technology, so that education can be more oriented towards innovation and productivity (Kosat, 2021). However, the main challenge is how to balance material progress with spiritual and moral values that must still be maintained in the education system. In facing this challenge, a more holistic approach to education is needed, which not only emphasizes cognitive aspects and skills but also pays attention to affective and spiritual aspects. Value-based education, which combines science and moral wisdom, is the main key to overcoming the negative impact of materialism in education (Setiadi, 2021).

The philosophy of materialism has a significant influence on education in Indonesia. This influence can be both positive and negative, depending on how the education system adopts and balances material and spiritual aspects in the learning process. Therefore, further studies on the impact of materialism in education are important to ensure that the education system continues to run under the noble values of the Indonesian nation.

2. Methods

This research uses a qualitative approach with an analytical descriptive method. Data were collected through a literature study that included books, scientific journals, and relevant education policy documents in the last five years. Data analysis was conducted using content analysis techniques to understand the extent of the influence of the philosophy of materialism on the education system in Indonesia.

The research subjects included various literatures that discuss the philosophy of materialism, education policy, and the implications of materialism in education. The data was categorized based on the main themes, which included the purpose of education, teaching methods, curriculum, as well as the impact on students and educators.

To increase the validity of the research, source triangulation was conducted by comparing various references from journals, academic books, and related research reports. The researcher also conducted a critical analysis of each source to ensure the objectivity and accuracy of the data collected. The results of this research are expected to provide a comprehensive picture of how the philosophy of materialism affects education in Indonesia and offer recommendations for the development of a more holistic and balanced education system between material and spiritual aspects.

3. Results and Discussion

Our findings showed that there are three results of the study on the implications of materialist philosophy on education in Indonesia: implications for learning approaches, implications for the map of education in Indonesia, and implications for the 2022

3.1.1. National Education System Bill

The scientific approach is said to be an implication of the philosophy of materialism. This is because scientific learning begins with observing. The stage of observing is the main part of the implications of the philosophy of materialism where learning is truly

based on the work of the five senses and then on the mind (Malaka, 2022). The philosophy of materialism states that matter exists first, and then ideas or thoughts arise after witnessing matter. In other words, the philosophy of materialism recognizes that substance determines ideas, not the other way around. For example, if someone imagines a table and chair because they exist objectively, could that person think of a table and chair before forming a table and chair, and that person would imagine a material forming them? That is what underlies the materiality of something (Pohan & Dafit, 2021).

The scientific approach leads to students having idealistic abilities, which are not only in the cognitive aspect but also in the affective aspect as well. This is different from the beliefs of materialism philosophy where idealistic ability is not a benchmark. The idealistic state expected by the scientific approach can be found in the philosophy of idealism rather than the philosophy of materialism. The philosophy of idealism believes that education to humanize humans is in line with the goals and praxis of education. According to Suropto (Suropto, 2012) in his research on the philosophy of idealism and its implementation in education, idealism emphasizes the importance of the superiority of the mind over material things. This leads to the reasoning stage in the scientific approach. That the excellence of the mind is prioritized over the material.

In addition to idealism, the scientific approach also leads to the philosophy of paternalism, education that prioritizes the way back to the past, namely restoring the values and principles that have become a firm view of life in ancient times. The return of these values and principles of life can be done through education (Riyanti, 2019) The application of learning with paternalism must also see that the learning we apply in modern times is not all relevant to learning in the past. If we still use learning from the past, then we must correlate it with the development of the current era so that it remains relevant.

3.1.2. Education in Indonesia Can not Leave Religion Behind

Indonesia is famous for the various religions adhered to by its citizens, for this reason, it is necessary to have religious and religious education that we must introduce to the next generation of the nation. However, what happens if religion must be eliminated in the circulation of education in Indonesia? In the Education Roadmap 2020-2035 that was discussed some time ago, the draft did not mention the phrase religion. This then drew a lot of criticism from various circles. It has been explained that the development of religious education is the implementation of Government Regulation Number 55 of 2007 concerning Religious Education and Religious Education (Astawa, 2021). Religious and religious education both have equally strong legal powers. Religious schools are directly supervised by the Ministry of Religious Affairs, while public schools are directly supervised by the Ministry of Education.

Looking at the phenomena that occur today, many perpetrators of crimes and criminal acts are still students. The perpetrators of criminal acts are no longer dominated by adults but teenagers have also committed many crimes. Teenage crime is no longer at the level of juvenile delinquency, but at the criminal level such as theft, sexual abuse, fraud, and even murder. The role of adolescents who are expected by

everyone to continue the development and progress of this nation is in fact many who commit acts that violate the law (Sitorus et al., 2022; Putra, 2016). Many consider that the criminals who come from among teenagers, the religious knowledge taught at school is not well absorbed by students. For this reason, religious and religious education in institutions must be emphasized.

Religious education must be presented in educational institutions both formal and non-formal. Some reasons that explain the importance of religious and religious education must be present in the learning process (Setyowati, 2022; Wahab, 2003), namely: Religious education conceptually is a logical consequence of the chosen philosophy of education and the form of individual that is aspired to, religious education legally is a demand in realizing the 1945 Constitution article 31 paragraph 3, religious education in human rights emphasizes that for every student is guaranteed the continuity of religious life by several International Conventions so that there is no reason at all for every student to be free from religious education, religious education must be provided by teachers of the same religion, religious education in schools guarantees the transformation of religious values as a whole in the course of religious life for each individual.

3.1.3. Education in Indonesia is Not Fully Influenced by the Philosophy of Materialism

The philosophy of materialism is one of the ideas in philosophy that states that things that can be said to really exist or that are really seen are material. If applied to all aspects of education, there will certainly be various pros and cons. The thought of materialism philosophy will certainly be difficult to accept if it is used as a foundation in building an education in Indonesia (Supriyatno, 2019). The implication of materialism philosophy in education is education that has luxurious facilities to support learning. The more luxurious and quality the facilities owned by the institution, the better and better the quality of education it produces. The materialism philosophy argues that the success of students can be seen from the large fees paid to the education provider institution, and the luxury of the facilities provided.

Materialism is an ideology in philosophy that states that things that can be said to truly exist are material (Rahmasari, 2021; Syahrur, 2023). Basically, all things are made up of matter and all phenomena are the result of material interactions. Matter is the only substance that provides a single explanation of reality. Everything that exists is a manifestation of the source, namely matter. In the world of education, the material needs of educators also need to be considered by institutions or communities that organize education. One of the causes of the low quality of education in Indonesia is the low welfare of educators and the low facilities obtained by students, especially in the outermost and deepest regions of Indonesia. The elimination of teacher professional allowances in the Sisdiknas Bill has the impact of not being included in the 2023 Priority National Legislation Program (Prolegnas). This has implications for the characteristics of the philosophy of materialism, that everything that exists comes from the source, namely material. Education can be better if the government pays attention to educators' allowances and provides proper learning facilities.

The implication of materialism philosophy on education in the context of the bill is about teacher professional allowances. The provision of teacher professional allowances, the main objective is to improve the welfare of teachers, improve the quality and professionalism. In this case, it is performance and produces dignified teachers. Teacher motivation determines the achievement of these goals (Nilwana & Publik, 2015) Teacher quality and professionalism must be continuously developed and improved. In some cases, the honorarium received by honorary teachers cannot meet the primary needs of their families. Thus, it is necessary to provide allowances for other welfare. The Sisdiknas Bill does not emphasize the provision of professional allowances for teachers, which the law needs to explicitly address as it already does in the 2003 Sisdiknas Law.

Another implication of materialism philosophy in the Sisdiknas Bill is about facilities. The availability of educational facilities in the form of schools provides an opportunity for individuals to obtain services from available facilities as a form of fulfilling the need for education (Umasangadji, 2015). The existence of adequate facilities in supporting learning will produce higher quality students. Learners can explore further and deeper by utilizing the various facilities available at school. From there it will certainly change the mindset or way of thinking of students more critically and more creatively.

From the two things above, there are principles of education that are organized as a systematic unit. Among them are learner-oriented, upholding the truth, democratic, equitable, nondiscriminatory, inclusive, and supporting lifelong learning. None of these principles lead to religion, so the Sisdiknas Bill reaped many pros and cons from various parties so that it was not included in the 2023 Priority National Legislation Program (Prolegnas). Through the teaching of religion, then taught by teachers who are of the same religion can make students have faith, devotion, and noble character.

4. Conclusions

The philosophy of materialism has a significant impact on the education system in Indonesia. Its influence can be seen in the orientation of education that emphasizes pragmatic and material aspects, such as job skills, economic achievement, and academic success measured by concrete results. As a result, education tends to neglect the development of moral, ethical, and spiritual values that are also important in the formation of students' character. If not balanced with a more holistic approach, the dominance of materialism in education can cause a shift in values that has the potential to erode the essence of humanity in the learning process. Therefore, efforts are needed to balance material achievement-oriented education with spiritual and moral values to produce individuals who are not only intellectually competent, but also have strong ethical and social awareness.

Acknowledgments

Many thanks to the Islamic State University of Sunan Ampel Surabaya, and Malang Muhammadiyah University, all those who helped who cannot be mentioned one by one. Especially for Dr. Arbaiyah Yusuf, MA as the first author, but God has other wills. This

paper has not yet been completed, but God has told her to return to his presence. Hopefully, this writing will become a charity for her.

Conflict of Interest

This article is written to add to the author's insight in terms of writing in the academic world. There is no special interest in this research, everything is purely from the author's ideas after seeing the phenomena of education that occur today in Indonesia.

References

- Alika K, H., Andriany, J., Oktavia, S., Agustina, R., Nursusanti, A., & Wahyuni, A. (2023). Meretas Filsafat Pendidikan Materialisme-Naturalisme dalam Konteks Pendidikan Dasar. *Madako Elementary School*, 2(1). <https://doi.org/10.56630/mes.v2i1.60>
- Husna, A. N. (2015). Orientasi Hidup Materialistis dan Kesejahteraan Psikologis. *Seminar Psikologi & Kemanusiaan, February 2015*.
- Kosat, O. (2021). Louis Althusser: Marxis Struktural. *Lumen Veritatis: Jurnal Filsafat Dan Teologi*.
<https://www.journal.unwira.ac.id/index.php/LUMENVERITATIS/article/view/1113>
- Malaka, T. (2022). *Madilog: materialisme, dialektika, dan logika*. books.google.com.
https://books.google.com/books?hl=en&lr=&id=gNpXEAAAQBAJ&oi=fnd&pg=PA126&dq=filsafat+materialisme&ots=ZIVMH4K6aS&sig=_ne7E1aaaiJ6bDTqRPHjwLGIDMQ
- Nilwana, A., & Publik, M. A. (2015). Tunjangan Profesi Guru (TPG) dan Motivasi Menuju Pendidikan Bermartabat dan Profesional : Studi Kebijakan Publik Di Propinsi Sulawesi Selatan Indonesia. *KNAPPPTMA Ke-5*.
- Pohan, S. A., & Dafit, F. (2021). Pelaksanaan Pembelajaran Kurikulum 2013 di Sekolah Dasar. *Jurnal Basicedu*, 5(3). <https://doi.org/10.31004/basicedu.v5i3.898>
- Puji Alfiansyah, R. (2023). Manfaat Dari Dunia Teknologi Informasi Dan Komunikasi Dalam Pendidikan. *Jurnal Sosial Teknologi*, 3(6).
<https://doi.org/10.59188/jurnalsostech.v3i6.741>
- Rahman, F. (2022). The Role of Ismuba Subjects in Strengthening Progressive Muhammadiyah Student Profile at Cikampek's Muhammadiyah Vocational School of Information and Technology. *Edusoshum: Journal of Islamic Education and Social Humanities*, 2(2). <https://doi.org/10.52366/edusoshum.v2i2.44>
- Rahmasari, L. S. (2021). *Integrasi Agama Dan Sains (Konsep Kosmologi Menurut Harun Yahya Dan Kritiknya Terhadap Materialisme)*. repository.ar-raniry.ac.id.
<https://repository.ar-raniry.ac.id/id/eprint/16020/>
- Rahmawati, S., Yusuf, A., Tasyirifiah, T., & Zahra, S. (2023). Implementasi Filsafat Materialisme dalam Pendidikan Abad Ke-21. *Educatio*, 18(2).
<https://doi.org/10.29408/edc.v18i2.24776>
- Riyanti, A. (2019). Parenialisme sebagai Landasan dalam Pembelajaran Bahasa Indonesia. *Jurnal Filsafat Indonesia*, 2(2). <https://doi.org/10.23887/jfi.v2i2.21282>

- Setiadi, O. (2021). Muhammadiyah and Civil Society: Critical Network, Patterns of Criticism, and Challenges. *Walisongo: Jurnal Penelitian Sosial Keagamaan*, 29(2). <https://doi.org/10.21580/ws.29.2.11557>
- Setyowati, N. (2022). Interkoneksi agama, sosial dan budaya dalam pendidikan Islam. *Journal of Islamic Education and Innovation*. <http://journal2.uad.ac.id/index.php/jiei/article/view/6086>
- Sitorus, P., Sibuea, S. P., Samosir, M. I., Sianipar, V. W., Sianipar, F., Siallagan, O. M. B., Kristina, M., & Simangunsong, Y. I. R. (2022). Bimbingan Belajar Dan Pembinaan Karakter Profil Pelajar Pancasila Pada SD Negeri 010074 Asahan. *Jurnal Abdimas Mutiara*, 3(2).
- Sugianto, R., Darmayanti, R., & Humaidi, M. N. (2022). Muhammadiyah Education's Readiness in The Society 5.0 Era. *Al'Adalah*, 25(1). <https://doi.org/10.35719/aladalah.v25i1.155>
- Supriyatno, H. (2019). Materialisme dan moralitas Pendidikan. *Bhirawa Online*.
- Suripto. (2012). Filsafat Idealisme dan Implimentasinya dalam Pendidikan. *Al Furqan Jurnal : Studi Pendidikan Islam*, 1(1).
- Syah Putra, R. (2016). Kriminalitas Di Kalangan Remaja (Studi Terhadap Remaja Pelaku Pencabulan Di Lembaga Pemasyarakatan Anak Kelas Ii B Pekanbaru). In *JOM FISIP* (Vol. 3, Issue 1).
- Syahrur, M. (2023). *Epistemologi Qurani: Tafsir Kontemporer Ayat-ayat Al-Quran berbasis Materialisme-Dialektika-Historis*. [books.google.com. https://books.google.com/books?hl=en&lr=&id=ua-pEAAAQBAJ&oi=fnd&pg=PA2&dq=filsafat+materialisme&ots=kgpHVxkA3q&sig=JX XPAkjmECeDSW8eM7f9aIlW1QQ](https://books.google.com/books?hl=en&lr=&id=ua-pEAAAQBAJ&oi=fnd&pg=PA2&dq=filsafat+materialisme&ots=kgpHVxkA3q&sig=JX XPAkjmECeDSW8eM7f9aIlW1QQ)
- Temon Astawa, I. N. (2021). Pendidikan Agama dan Keagamaan dalam Menunjang Mutu Pendidikan di Indonesia. *Jurnal Penjaminan Mutu*, 7(2). <https://doi.org/10.25078/jpm.v7i2.2776>
- Tofiqurrohman, H. (2019). Pendidikan Multikultural dan Relevansinya dengan Pendidikan Agama Islam. *Jurnal Kependidikan*, 7(2). <https://doi.org/10.24090/jk.v7i2.3080>
- Umasangadji, M. S. (2015). Analisis Kebutuhan Dan Penempatan Prasarana-Sarana Fasilitas Pendidikan Di Kecamatan Wori. *Spasial*, 2(3).
- Wahab, R. (2003). Posisi Pendidikan Agama dalam RUU Sisdiknas. *Dibahas Dalam Seminar Nasional Yang Diselenggarakan Oleh HMJ-PAI, Fak. Tarbiyah IAIN Sunan Ampel Surabaya*.