

Research Article

## The Concept Of Perennialism Education And The Flow Of Essentialism

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**Abstract.** Materialistic, atheistic and skeptical lifestyles have an impact on the emergence of hedonistic, individualistic lifestyles, therefore this problem is a challenge that requires a solution. One solution to this problem in the education sector is to instill personality or build character through a perennialist approach. The philosophy of perennialism has a concept that is at odds with materialism and mechanics. Perennialism has a concept of holistic and cyclical character development that is in accordance with the goals of education, fostering noble morals and making human beings noble. Nowadays, education faces quite serious challenges. Advances in information and communication technology are like a double-edged sword, which on the one hand brings convenience but on the other hand offers deadly poison. Challenges in the world of education are becoming increasingly difficult with the increasingly heavy onslaught of foreign culture and increasingly rapid technological advances. There are basic things that must be applied in education in Indonesia, one of which is the application of essentialism theory in education. The philosophy of essentialist education starts from

truths that are considered to have been proven for centuries. In the concept of essentialism, education aims to continue cultural heritage and historical heritage through core knowledge that has been accumulated and has survived over a long period of time.

**Keywords:** Concept, Education, Perennialism, Essentialism

## **INTRODUCTION** \_

The development of information technology, human population, the emergence of multi-dimensional crises, and finally hacking the world of education are part of the nation's current problems. Various social deviations and disgraceful behavior both in the school environment and in society often occur, such as cases of immorality, drugs, brawls, and others. This phenomenon is also influenced by materialistic, atheistic and skeptical lifestyles, finally a hedonistic, individualistic and permissive lifestyle emerges. Perennialism is one of the results of ancient philosophical thought which still has relevance to current developments and can be actualized throughout the ages.

The perennial approach aims to develop students' intellectual development through absolute and universal knowledge. The concept of education through a perennialist approach can be accepted in educational institutions to overcome the moral crisis, by emulating past generations. Perennialism emerged as a counter to the view of progressivism which has the mission of emphasizing change for something new. Perennialism emerged because the world situation was full of chaos, bad human behavior and disorder, especially moral, intellectual and socio-cultural decline. Perennialism improves and saves it for the benefit of humans, especially the next generation.

Education is a topic of discussion that will never be discussed. This is based on the fact that education is an important factor in the development of a country. Nowadays, education faces quite serious challenges. Advances in information and communication technology are like a double-edged sword, which on the one hand brings convenience but on the other hand offers deadly poison. Challenges in the world of education are becoming increasingly difficult with the increasingly heavy onslaught of foreign culture and increasingly rapid technological advances.

Education in Indonesia seems to have lost its identity because it adopts too much foreign culture. Local traditions and culture which should be the characteristics of the Indonesian nation are increasingly sinking and being replaced by foreign cultural products. This action must be taken immediately so that the quality and level of education in Indonesia continues to improve. There are basic things that must be applied in education in Indonesia, one of which is the application of essentialism theory in education.

## DISCUSSION

### The Principles of Perennialism Theory in Education

Perennialism comes from Latin, namely from the root word *perennis* or *perennial* (English) which means growing continuously through time, living continuously from time to time or eternal (Teguh Wangsa Gandhi HW: 2011: 163). Perennialism is an ancient philosophical discourse that can be claimed to have remained current throughout the ages. The concept in perennialism is different from materialist and mechanical concepts, while perennialism has a holistic and cyclical character.

As part of a philosophical school, perennialism has a structure and unity which is the result of the idea that humans should behave well, firmly and straightly. The perennialism approach is a method of instilling solid, strong and eternal values of human goodness in students so that they can understand and believe in a noble life and are able to implement them in everyday life.

Perennialism is a school of educational philosophy supported by the philosophy of idealism, at first glance it is almost the same as Islamic boarding school education. The concept of perennialism in education is a cultural legacy from past generations to new generations, namely in the form of eternal values not limited by time and space. In the Islamic boarding school environment, the goal of perennialist education is definite and eternal because it comes from God, namely to shape the character of students at all times.

Perennialism in education is a cultural heritage from past generations for new generations, namely in the form of eternal values that are not limited by space and time, aiming to shape the character of students at all times. The ontology of perennialism contains the understanding of individual objects, essence, accident and substance. The axiological view is that human behavior originates from the potential of the human person himself as a nature of both positive and negative potential.

Perennialism has a view of value issues based on supernatural principles, namely accepting eternal universals. The main problem with supernatural principles is behavior, so humans as subjects have the potential for goodness. As a solution for educational institutions by choosing a method that is able to instill the doctrine of the glory of life, character and religion, namely through the perennialism approach. The benefits of a perennial approach in education are:

1. Universal truth, not influenced by place, time and personality. Education is an effort to seek understanding of the truth, while the truth itself is natural and absolute.
2. Freedom of thought to develop education.
3. Efforts to inherit the culture and thoughts of previous figures or scholars.

## **The Relevance of Perennialism to Modern Education**

The basic principle of perennialist education is to bring students closer to discovering and internalizing eternal truths, because eternal truths contain universal and permanent properties. This truth can only be obtained through intellectual training which makes the mind well organized and systematic. In the world of Islamic educational philosophy, eternal truth is not only obtained through intellectual training, but through intuitive training.

Adherents of perennialism agree that "training and developing thinking (mental discipline) is one of the highest obligations of learning, or a priority in the learning process. Therefore, educational theories and programs are generally focused on developing thinking abilities (Teguh Wangsa Gandhi HW: 2011: 180).

Perennialism views education as a process of returning to the present situation. Perennialism has made influential contributions, both in the form of theory and practice, to contemporary culture and education. Perennialism addresses education in the 21st century and remains relevant to the principles of education, namely the principles of thinking and independence, but aims to uphold human glory .

It was explained that the vision for learning in the 21st century is systemic and holistic to strengthen education in society so that it repents. It is understood that holistic is an educational philosophy derived from thought. That basically an individual can find identity, purpose and meaning in life through his relationship with society, spiritual values. and the natural environment, so historically, holistic education is actually nothing new.

For perennialists, truth values are universal and eternal. This is the goal of true education. Therefore, the aim of education is to help students prepare and internalize eternal values of truth in order to achieve wisdom and goodness in life. Schools for perennialists are regulations which are a place where students become acquainted with the best results from socio-cultural heritage. School is the main place in education that prepares students to become golden through their minds by providing knowledge.

### **1. The position of the next generation of students**

Perennialists argue that students are the subject and core of the implementation of education, and teachers are only tasked with helping to awaken the hidden potential of students so that they become active and real, not forming or giving abilities to students.

### **2. The Role of the Teacher as a Central Figure**

Man must use it to direct his innate nature, in accordance with determined goals. Humans are free, but they must learn to refine their minds and control their appetites. If a child fails in learning, teachers should not be quick to place the blame on an unpleasant environment, or on a series of unfavorable psychological events. Teachers must be able to overcome all these distractions, by taking the

same intellectual approach to all students. And no child is allowed to determine what educational experience he or she wants.

### 3. Method

The main educational methods or learning models used by perennialists are reading and discussion. Learning methods essentially focus on the learning process. The highest demands in learning, according to Perennialism, are practice and mental discipline. Learning methods must lead to these guidelines. According to Teguh Wangsa, learning guidance can refer to basic theories in learning according to perennialism, such as learning coaching, the principle of independence of thought, learning to think, learning as preparation for life, learning through teaching, and teachers continuing to develop potential.

### 4. Application of Perennialism Theory in the Curriculum

According to perennialists, the curriculum must emphasize intellectual growth in the arts and sciences. Hutchins' perennialist curriculum is based on three assumptions about education.

- a. First, education must promote the ongoing human search for truth. Any truth will always be true wherever it is. Truth is universal and timeless.
- b. Second, because the work of the mind is intellectual and focuses on ideas, education must also focus on ideas, processing human rationality, which is an important function of education.
- c. Third, education must stimulate students to think deeply about significant ideas.

## **The Relevance of Perennialism to Education in Indonesia**

Perennialism addresses education in the 21st century and remains relevant to the principles of education, namely the principles of thinking and independence, but aims to uphold human glory. It was explained that the vision for learning in the 21st century is systemic and holistic to strengthen education in society so that it repents. Perennialism is a trend in education that was born in the twentieth century. Perennialism comes from the word perennial which means eternal, eternal or always. Perennialism was born as a reaction toward progressive education. Perennialism opposes the view of progressivism which emphasizes change and something new. The path taken by perennialists is to go backwards, by reusing general values or principles that had become a strong and steadfast way of life in ancient and medieval times. In education, perennialists are of the view that in a world that is uncertain, full of chaos and danger, there is nothing more useful than certainty in educational goals and stability in the behavior of educators.

According to the perennialist view, education must focus more of its attention on an ideal culture that has been tested and is strong. Perennialism views education as a way back or a process of returning humans to their current condition as in an ideal culture. In this era of modern life, many crises have arisen in various areas of

human life, especially in the field of education. To restore this crisis situation, perennialism provides a way out, namely a return to past culture which is considered quite ideal and has proven its resilience.

### **The Basics of Essentialism Theory in Education**

Essentialism is one of the schools in educational philosophy. The emergence of this understanding was a reaction to the absolute and dogmatic symbolism of the Middle Ages. Thus, a systematic and comprehensive concept regarding humans and the universe was developed, which met the demands of the times. According to Brameld, essentialism is a school that was born from the combination of two schools in philosophy, namely idealism and realism. In education, the school of Essentialism views that education which is based on the basic view of flexibility in all forms can be a source of views that change, are easily shaken and lack direction, are uncertain and less stable. Therefore, education must be based on values that can bring stability and have been tested by time, long-lasting and values that are clear and selected.

The school of philosophy of essentialism is a school of philosophy that wants humans to return to the old culture. They think that the old culture has done a lot of good for humanity. What they mean by old culture is one that has existed since the first human civilization.

Essentialism is education that is based on cultural values that have existed since the beginning of human civilization. Essentialism emerged during the Renaissance with main characteristics that were different from progressivism. The main difference is in providing a basis for education that is full of flexibility, open to change, tolerant and has no connection to certain doctrines. Essentialism views that education must be based on clear and long-lasting values that provide stability and selected values that have a clear order. Idealism and realism are philosophical schools that form a style of essentialism. These two schools meet as supporters of essentialism, but do not merge into one and do not give up their main characteristics in themselves.

The role of the teacher in the essentialism school is that the teacher is a person who controls knowledge and classes under the influence and supervision of the teacher. So, initiative in education is emphasized on teachers, not on students.

The educational principles adopted by essentialism are as follows:

1. Education must be done through hard work, because education does not just emerge from within the student.
2. Initiative in education is emphasized on teachers, not students.
3. The initiative of the educational process is the assimilation of predetermined subjects.
4. Schools must maintain traditional methods that are linked to mental discipline.
5. The ultimate goal of education is to improve general welfare, which is a real democratic demand.

6. Traditional methods that are linked to mental discipline are the preferred methods in the educational process at school.

### **The Relevance of Essentialism to Modern Education**

Essentialism is an educational theory that wants the foundations used in the education system to be things that are essential. These essential things are time-tested, guiding, and have been passed down from generation to generation (Hafid: 2015). Furthermore, Hafid (2015) stated that essentialism requires that the foundation of education be rooted in essential values, namely those that have been tested by time, are guiding and have been passed down from generation to generation, taking the renaissance era as the beginning.

The essentialist view in Islamic education is considered appropriate because the general aim of essentialism is to form a happy person in this world and the hereafter. The content of education is determined based on the importance of the effectiveness of personality development which includes knowledge that must be mastered in life and is able to move human desires.

Essentialism emerged as a reaction to opposition to various flexible educational problems. According to essentialists, an educational curriculum that is easily changed will become unstable and inconsistent. This theory assumes that the best thing to use as a basis for education is to return to an old culture whose existence has been proven. There are several advantages to the theory of essentialism, namely:

1. Helps to return subject matter to the educational process and
2. Change is a reality that cannot be changed in social life (Thaib: 2015).

Essentialists firmly support a curriculum of subject matter that is differentiated and organized according to their internal logical or chronological principles. In other words, they doubt the term innovative or process approach to learning (constructivism). This process positions students to construct and create their own knowledge collaboratively.

There are several things that constitute the principles of essentialist philosophy, namely:

1. Education must emphasize the importance of discipline,
2. The initiative in education must belong to the teacher, not to the students,
3. The essence of the educational process is the assimilation of predetermined subject matter,
4. Schools must maintain traditional methods relating to mental discipline, and
5. The ultimate goal of education is to improve general welfare (Khobir quoted by Abas: 2015).

Basically, the essentialist educational philosophy starts from truths that are considered to have been proven for centuries. In the concept of essentialism, education aims to continue cultural heritage and historical heritage through core

knowledge that has been accumulated and has survived over a long period of time. Essentialists argue that schools must train, teach or educate students to be able to communicate clearly and logically. The core skills of the curriculum must be reading, writing, speaking and arithmetic. In addition, schools are responsible for paying attention to students' mastery of these skills, because curriculum implementation requires adequate media, facilities and environmental support.

According to the philosophy of essentialism, school education must be practical and provide logical teaching and be able to prepare students for skills in life. In this case, schools may not influence or determine social policy.

### **The Relevance of Essentialism to Education in Indonesia**

The basic things that must be applied in education in Indonesia, one of which is the application of the theory of essentialism in education. The philosophy of essentialist education starts from truths that are considered to have been proven for centuries. This view seeks to emphasize basic education with basic reading, writing and arithmetic skills. This school also prioritizes past culture which has proven its efficacy to be re-applied in the education system.

Despite the perception that essentialism theory is a traditional or conservative theory, in reality this theory has given rise to many successes in education. In the concept of essentialism, education aims to continue cultural heritage and historical heritage through core knowledge that has been accumulated and has survived over a long period of time. The application of essentialism theory can anticipate the decline in literacy skills to improve the quality of education in Indonesia.

### **CONCLUSION**

Perennialism views that the current reality must be returned to the past. Because perennialism adheres to eternal or timeless values or norms. Perennialism is a philosophical flow that is integral, comprehensive and a solution so that humans have a good, firm and straight attitude. Examples of implementing the concept of character education, noble morals, safety in this world and the hereafter. Philosophy is needed to provide solutions to educational problems.

Various problems in education in Indonesia, ranging from the lack of literacy skills to the decline in the quality of education, can be anticipated by applying the theory of essentialism in the education system in Indonesia. In Indonesia, educational policy makers need to increase their intensity in studying these philosophical schools in order to take advantage of them for overall educational progress. Being aware of weaknesses along with considering the advantages of perennialism and essentialism is a wise action. This action must be taken immediately so that the quality and level of education in Indonesia continues to improve

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