

## RELEVANCE OF REALISM IN THE CONTEMPORARY EDUCATIONAL SYSTEM

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### Abstract

*Realism remains a prominent educational philosophy in contemporary educational systems, emphasizing the objective existence of reality and the importance of empirical evidence in knowledge acquisition. Originating from the works of ancient philosophers and evolving through figures like John Dewey and Jean-Jacques Rousseau, realism advocates for a curriculum grounded in factual knowledge across disciplines such as mathematics, sciences, and history. In today's educational landscape, realism informs teaching practices that prioritize critical thinking, problem-solving skills, and practical application of knowledge. This philosophy integrates advancements in technology, promoting experiential learning through digital tools and interactive simulations. However, realism faces challenges, including criticisms of its potential to overlook creativity, cultural diversity, and ethical considerations in education. Addressing these concerns requires a balanced approach that combines realism with inclusive educational practices and interdisciplinary learning. Moving forward, realism continues to shape educational policies and pedagogical strategies, aiming to prepare students for global citizenship and lifelong learning in a rapidly evolving world*

**Keywords:** Realism, Philosophy, Education, Contemporary,

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### 1. INTRODUCTION

Realism in education is a philosophical perspective that emphasizes the objective reality of the world and the importance of factual knowledge as the foundation for learning. Rooted in the works of philosophers such as Aristotle and John Locke, realism asserts that reality exists independent of human perception and that knowledge is derived from empirical evidence and scientific observation. In educational contexts, realism promotes the teaching of subjects such as mathematics, science, and history, focusing on their concrete facts and principles rather than speculative or abstract theories. This approach aims to equip students with practical skills and a comprehensive understanding of the world around them, preparing them to engage critically with societal issues and make informed decisions based on evidence.

Central to the realist philosophy of education is the belief in the existence of an external world that is knowable through empirical investigation and rational inquiry. Educators following this perspective emphasize the development of critical thinking and logical reasoning skills, encouraging students to analyze phenomena objectively and draw conclusions based on observable evidence. Realism also underscores the role of education in fostering a sense of curiosity and intellectual independence, as learners are encouraged to question assumptions and seek verifiable truths. By grounding education in the principles of realism, educators aim to cultivate a well-rounded understanding of the natural and social sciences, preparing students not only for academic success but also for active participation in a complex and evolving global society.

**RELEVANCE OF REALISM IN THE CONTEMPORARY EDUCATIONAL SYSTEM***Swaroop.P.K.\*<sup>1</sup>, Aadil Hussain Mir\*\*<sup>2</sup>***Importance of understanding realism in today's educational context.**

Understanding realism in today's educational context holds significant importance as it provides a robust framework for fostering critical thinking, empirical reasoning, and practical knowledge application among students. In an era increasingly characterized by rapid technological advancements and complex global challenges, realism offers a grounding in objective truth and evidence-based learning. This perspective equips learners with the essential skills to navigate a data-rich world where distinguishing fact from opinion and making informed decisions are paramount. Moreover, realism emphasizes the importance of foundational subjects such as mathematics, sciences, and history, which form the bedrock of modern education. By prioritizing these disciplines, educators can ensure that students acquire a deep understanding of fundamental principles and theories that underpin various fields of study and professional practices.

This approach not only enhances academic proficiency but also cultivates a mindset geared towards problem-solving and innovation, essential for addressing contemporary societal issues like climate change, healthcare disparities, and technological ethics. Furthermore, realism encourages a rigorous and disciplined approach to learning, promoting intellectual rigor and resilience in students. By grounding education in empirical evidence and logical inquiry, educators can foster a culture of intellectual curiosity and lifelong learning, preparing individuals to adapt to evolving circumstances and contribute meaningfully to their communities and workplaces. In essence, understanding realism in today's educational context ensures that learners are equipped with the knowledge, skills, and ethical grounding needed to navigate and thrive in a complex, interconnected world.

**Early origins and development of realism in educational philosophy.**

The origins of realism in educational philosophy can be traced back to ancient times, with roots in the philosophical traditions of both Western and Eastern civilizations. In Western thought, realism finds its foundations in the works of ancient Greek philosophers such as Plato and Aristotle. Plato, in his dialogues such as "The Republic," emphasized the pursuit of knowledge through rational inquiry and the importance of uncovering universal truths. His theory of Forms posited that abstract concepts like justice and beauty exist independently of human perception, laying a groundwork for later developments in philosophical realism. Aristotle, a student of Plato, further developed these ideas by advocating for the systematic study of the natural world and the empirical observation of phenomena. His emphasis on empirical evidence and logical reasoning marked a departure from Plato's more abstract approach, contributing to the emergence of a more grounded form of realism that focused on the tangible world and its observable properties.

In the medieval period, realism continued to evolve within the context of Christian theology and scholasticism. Scholars like Thomas Aquinas integrated Aristotelian principles with Christian doctrine, emphasizing the compatibility between faith and reason. This synthesis contributed to the development of a nuanced realism that sought to reconcile philosophical inquiry with religious teachings, influencing educational practices in monastic schools and early universities across Europe. Outside the Western tradition, realism also flourished in Eastern philosophical thought, particularly in ancient Chinese and Indian philosophies. In China, thinkers such as Confucius and Mozi emphasized the importance of practical knowledge and moral education, advocating for the cultivation of virtues and social harmony. Similarly, Indian philosophers like Gautama Buddha and Natarajan emphasized the empirical study of the mind and the pursuit of enlightenment through direct experience, contributing to a pragmatic form of realism rooted in introspection and personal transformation. Overall, the early origins and development of realism in educational philosophy reflect a rich and diverse intellectual history that spans across cultures and epochs, laying the groundwork for contemporary approaches to knowledge acquisition, critical thinking, and ethical inquiry in education.

## 2. METHODOLOGY

Since the research is qualitative in nature. Therefore the researchers have used books, articles, journals, magazines and biographies of different authors. Hence secondary sources were used in order to collect the data relevant to this study.

### **Key proponents of realism**

Key proponents of realism in educational philosophy include John Dewey and Jean-Jacques Rousseau, both of whom made significant contributions to shaping modern educational practices and theories:

**John Dewey:** An influential American philosopher, psychologist, and educational reformer, Dewey is often regarded as one of the founders of pragmatism and progressive education. His educational philosophy, often referred to as instrumentalism or pragmatic realism, emphasizes the importance of learning through experience and experimentation. Dewey believed that education should be practical and relevant to students' lives, promoting active engagement with the world rather than passive reception of knowledge. He advocated for hands-on learning, critical thinking, and problem-solving skills as essential components of a well-rounded education. Dewey's ideas have had a profound impact on curriculum development, pedagogical practices, and the democratic ideals of education.

**Jean-Jacques Rousseau:** A Genevan philosopher and writer, Rousseau's educational philosophy is prominently featured in his work "Emile, or On Education." Rousseau emphasized the natural development of the child and the importance of education in nurturing individual talents and virtues. He advocated for an educational approach that respects the child's natural curiosity and inclination towards learning through direct experience. Rousseau's concept of "negative education" suggests that educators should provide minimal interference in a child's learning process, allowing them to explore and discover knowledge independently. His ideas challenged traditional educational practices of his time and laid the groundwork for later educational reforms that prioritize the holistic development of the individual. These thinkers, Dewey and Rousseau, exemplify different facets of realism in educational philosophy, from Dewey's emphasis on experiential learning and practical application of knowledge to Rousseau's focus on natural development and individual autonomy in education. Their ideas continue to influence educational theory and practice, shaping contemporary debates on curriculum design, pedagogical methods, and the role of education in fostering intellectual and moral growth.

### **Core Principles of realism in Education**

The core principles of realism in education center around the belief that reality exists independent of human perception and that knowledge is derived from empirical evidence and scientific observation. Here are the key principles that define realism in educational philosophy

**Existence of an Objective Reality:** Realism posits that there is an external world existing independently of human minds. This objective reality is knowable through empirical investigation and rational inquiry. Educators following realism believe in teaching students about this external reality rather than focusing on subjective interpretations or idealized concepts.

**Focus on Facts and Truth:** Realism emphasizes the importance of teaching factual knowledge and truths that are verifiable and based on evidence. This involves teaching subjects such as mathematics, sciences, history, and other disciplines where objective facts and principles are foundational

**Empirical Observation and Experimentation:** Central to realism is the use of empirical observation and experimentation as methods to acquire knowledge about the world. Educators encourage students to

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engage directly with phenomena, conduct experiments, and analyze data to develop a deeper understanding of natural and social phenomena.

**Development of Critical Thinking:** Realism promotes the development of critical thinking skills among students. By emphasizing rational inquiry and logical reasoning, educators aim to cultivate students' ability to evaluate information, draw conclusions based on evidence, and make informed judgments.

**Practical Application of Knowledge:** Realism advocates for the practical application of knowledge in solving real-world problems. Educators seek to connect theoretical learning with practical experiences, preparing students for challenges they may encounter in their future careers and societal roles.

**Integration of Science and Humanities:** Realism supports the integration of scientific knowledge with humanistic perspectives. Educators strive to provide a well-rounded education that includes both scientific understanding and appreciation for cultural, ethical, and historical dimensions of human experience

**Preparation for Active Citizenship:** Realism views education as essential for preparing individuals to actively participate in civic life and contribute meaningfully to society. This includes fostering a sense of responsibility, ethical awareness, and social consciousness among students.

**Contemporary Applications of Realism in Education.**

In contemporary educational contexts, realism continues to shape teaching practices and curriculum development in various ways, emphasizing practical knowledge acquisition, critical thinking, and empirical reasoning. Here are some key contemporary applications of realism in education

**STEM Education:** Realism strongly influences STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics) education by emphasizing the importance of scientific inquiry, empirical observation, and mathematical reasoning. STEM curricula focus on teaching students foundational principles and skills in these disciplines, preparing them for careers in fields such as engineering, medicine, computer science, and environmental sciences.

**Experiential Learning:** Realism promotes experiential learning approaches where students actively engage with real-world phenomena through hands-on activities, fieldwork, and laboratory experiments. This method allows students to apply theoretical concepts in practical settings, enhancing their understanding and retention of knowledge.

**Evidence-Based Teaching:** Educators practicing realism rely on evidence-based teaching strategies that prioritize the use of empirical evidence and data-driven instructional methods. This approach ensures that instructional practices are grounded in research and proven effective in fostering student learning outcomes.

**Integration of Technology:** Realism encourages the integration of technology in education to facilitate access to information, data analysis, and collaborative learning. Educators leverage digital tools and resources to support empirical research, simulations, and virtual experiments, providing students with opportunities to explore and analyze complex concepts in innovative ways.

**Critical Thinking and Problem-Solving Skills:** Realism fosters the development of critical thinking and problem-solving skills among students by challenging them to evaluate evidence, analyze

information, and draw logical conclusions. Educators design learning activities that encourage students to apply analytical thinking in addressing real-world challenges and making informed decisions.

**Career Readiness and Practical Skills:** Realism aligns education with the demands of the modern workforce by emphasizing the acquisition of practical skills and competencies that are directly applicable to professional settings. This includes skills in data analysis, technical proficiency, and the ability to innovate and adapt to evolving technological and societal changes.

**Interdisciplinary Approaches:** Realism supports interdisciplinary approaches to education, where students explore connections between different disciplines and integrate knowledge from various fields to solve complex problems. This approach encourages holistic learning experiences that prepare students for multidimensional challenges in their personal and professional lives.

Overall, contemporary applications of realism in education aim to equip students with the knowledge, skills, and attitudes necessary to thrive in a globally interconnected world driven by scientific advancement, technological innovation, and societal change. By grounding education in empirical evidence and practical application, realism continues to shape educational practices that promote intellectual growth, personal development, and active citizenship.

### **Challenges and criticism**

**Overemphasis on Empirical Knowledge:** Critics argue that realism may prioritize factual knowledge and empirical evidence at the expense of creativity, imagination, and critical reflection. This approach could limit students' ability to think abstractly or explore ideas that cannot be easily quantified or observed.

**Narrow Focus on STEM Disciplines:** Realism's strong emphasis on STEM disciplines (Science, Technology, Engineering, Mathematics) may neglect the humanities and arts, potentially undervaluing subjects that cultivate empathy, cultural understanding, and ethical reasoning

**Standardization and Testing:** The emphasis on measurable outcomes and standardized testing in realist education can lead to a "teaching to the test" mentality, where educators prioritize content coverage over deep understanding and critical thinking skills.

**Inflexibility in Curriculum:** Realism may be criticized for promoting a rigid curriculum that prioritizes established knowledge over emerging fields or interdisciplinary approaches. This can hinder innovation and adaptation to evolving societal needs and technological advancements.

**Critique of Objectivity:** Some critics challenge the notion of an objective reality, arguing that knowledge is socially constructed and influenced by cultural, historical, and ideological factors. Realism's emphasis on objectivity may overlook the subjective experiences and perspectives of diverse learners

### **Relevance to Diverse Learners**

Realism may struggle to address the needs and backgrounds of diverse student populations, including those from non-Western cultures or marginalized communities. The curriculum and teaching methods may not always resonate with students' lived experiences or encourage inclusive learning environments.

### **Ethical Considerations:**

Realism's focus on empirical evidence and practical knowledge may not adequately address ethical dilemmas or issues of social justice, which are increasingly important in contemporary education.

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**Future directions and innovations of realism**

Looking ahead, realism in education is poised to evolve in response to emerging trends and innovations that shape modern learning environments. Several future directions and innovations are likely to influence the development of realism in educational philosophy

**Integration of Technology:** Realism will continue to leverage advancements in technology to enhance learning experiences. Virtual reality (VR), augmented reality (AR), artificial intelligence (AI), and interactive simulations will be used to facilitate immersive and experiential learning, allowing students to engage with complex concepts in realistic and interactive ways.

**Interdisciplinary Approaches:** There will be a growing emphasis on interdisciplinary education that bridges traditional disciplinary boundaries. Realism can facilitate connections between STEM disciplines, humanities, social sciences, and arts, promoting holistic understanding and innovative problem-solving approaches.

**Global and Cultural Perspectives:** Realism will incorporate diverse global perspectives and cultural contexts into educational curricula and practices. This includes promoting cross-cultural understanding, addressing global challenges, and integrating indigenous knowledge systems into educational frameworks

**Critical Digital Literacy:** As information becomes more accessible and abundant, realism will emphasize the development of critical digital literacy skills. Students will learn to evaluate, analyze, and synthesize information from digital sources critically, distinguishing between credible sources and misinformation.

**Personalized and Adaptive Learning:** Realism will embrace personalized learning approaches that cater to individual student needs, interests, and learning styles. Adaptive learning technologies will be utilized to provide tailored educational experiences and support student autonomy in knowledge acquisition.

**Ethical and Social Responsibility:** There will be an increased focus on ethical reasoning, social responsibility, and sustainability within the framework of realism. Educators will integrate discussions on ethical dilemmas, social justice issues, and environmental stewardship into curricular content, fostering a sense of civic engagement and global citizenship among students.

**Continued Emphasis on Practical Skills:** Realism will maintain its commitment to equipping students with practical skills and competencies that are relevant to the workforce. This includes skills in problem-solving, critical thinking, collaboration, communication, and digital fluency, preparing students for diverse career pathways in a rapidly changing global economy.

**3. CONCLUSION**

Realism remains a foundational and influential educational philosophy in the contemporary educational system, emphasizing the importance of objective truth, empirical evidence, and practical knowledge acquisition. This philosophical perspective has shaped curriculum development, pedagogical practices, and educational policies globally, aiming to equip students with critical thinking skills, scientific literacy, and problem-solving abilities essential for success in a complex and interconnected world. Throughout its evolution, realism has adapted to incorporate advancements in technology, interdisciplinary approaches, and global perspectives, ensuring relevance and responsiveness to modern educational challenges. By promoting experiential learning, integrating digital tools, and fostering ethical awareness, realism continues to prepare students not only for academic achievement but also for active citizenship and lifelong learning.

However, realism is not without its critiques and challenges, including concerns over its potential to prioritize standardized testing, overlook diverse perspectives, and undervalue the humanities. Addressing these criticisms requires a balanced approach that integrates realism with other educational philosophies, promotes inclusivity, and adapts to the evolving needs of learners in a culturally diverse and rapidly changing society. In essence, realism in the contemporary educational system underscores the ongoing quest for knowledge, truth, and meaningful learning experiences that empower individuals to contribute positively to their communities and navigate the complexities of the modern world with confidence and competence. As educators and policymakers continue to refine and innovate educational practices, realism will likely remain a cornerstone philosophy that bridges theoretical understanding with practical application, guiding students toward intellectual growth and societal engagement.

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