

# Student Character Values of Educational Pragmatism Products

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## ABSTRACT

The school of pragmatism philosophy can solve urgent problems quickly. But on the other hand, pragmatism does not look at whether a solution to the problem is ethical or not. This study then aims to look at the critical evaluation of systems and practices of pragmatism in the world of education. This research was carried out using qualitative methods and a phenomenological approach. The results of this study then found that educational pragmatism aims to meet the urgent needs of students. In this case, an example is online learning that was carried out during the Covid-19 period, when education could still run efficiently. Unfortunately, the pragmatism of education causes its implementation to be temporary and situational only. In addition, as a process that pursues efficiency, the quality of its effectiveness is not achieved.

**Keywords:** Value, Character, Educational Pragmatism, Covid-19.

## 1 Introduction

Pragmatism is one of the schools of philosophy which is the contribution of the American nation to the world of education. Several figures who played a major role in the flow of pragmatism include Charles S. Peirce (1839-1914), William James (1842-1900), and John Dewey (1859-1952) (Thoilliez, 2019). The view of pragmatism in education is a response to the impact of the industrial revolution which developed very rapidly and led to the emergence of urbanization and migration of the American population on a large scale. The next consequence of this phenomenon is the emergence of various changes in the life of the American nation, which affect the need for an education system that can solve and solve the problems of American life quickly (Li et al., 2022).

The practice of educational pragmatism in the millennium has broadly impacted the world of education and society in various developed countries, even in developing countries, including Indonesia. The development of information technology supports this. Of course, this impact has positive and negative sides (Troell et al., 2023). One of the positive impacts of educational pragmatism is the fulfillment of human needs in solving life's problems quickly following the view of pragmatism, which prioritizes aspects of direct benefits from human actions that are considered good. But the problem is that sometimes the principle of benefit encourages people to do things that go beyond the limits of ideal moral values to realize an action's practical goals. Whether the action is good or bad is not seen from the right or wrong side, but whether the action can solve an urgent problem (Dwivedi et al., 2022). This can negatively impact the formation of student character values in the long run, which can justify any means for practical purposes. The character values of students are the result of the interaction of the learning process between educators and students, who are influenced by the situation and conditions of the educational environment (Eccles & Wigfield, 2020).

The purpose of this study is to provide a critical evaluation of the system and practice of educational pragmatism in terms of positive and negative impacts on the formation of the character values of students/educational objects.

## 2 Literature Review

### Value

Value comes from the Latin *vale're*, which means useful, capable, empowered, and valid. Value is defined as something considered good, useful, and correct according to the beliefs of a person or group of people (Wong, 2020). Regarding the definition of this value, it has been conveyed by many experts, including:

W. J. S. Poerwadarminta defines value as the characteristics or things that are important or useful for humanity (Costanza, 2020).

Muhaimin and Abdul Mujib define value as something practical and effective in human souls and actions and objectively institutionalized in society (Parinduri et al., 2020).

Meanwhile, in Sidi Gazalba's view, value is abstract and ideal, value is not a concrete object, not a fact, a matter of right and wrong that requires empirical evidence but also the desired and unwanted appreciation (Said et al., 2022).

According to Sutarjo Adisusilo, value is the quality of a thing that makes it liked, desired, pursued, valued, and useful and can make people who live it dignified (Soto-Simeone & Kautonen, 2021).

While the notion of value, according to Chabib Thoha, is the "Essence attached to something very meaningful for human life" (von Wallpach et al., 2020).

The study of value in moral philosophy can be called a very important study. This is not only its position as the initial problem in this study, but more than that, namely as a study that touches on substantial issues in ethics or moral philosophy (Szabo & Webster, 2021). Studies on this issue usually question what is "good" and "bad", or how a person "should" do "good" and worthy goals. This last characteristic specifically touches on the basis for justifying a moral decision, called "good" or "bad". In other words, the study of values in moral philosophy is not only normative but also ethical (Deml et al., 2020).

There are at least two schools of thought in value studies: naturalism and non-naturalism. For naturalism, value is several facts, therefore, every value decision can be tested empirically. Meanwhile, for non-naturalism, value is not the same as fact, meaning that facts and values are separate types and irreducible. Therefore, values cannot be tested empirically (Yaden & Anderson, 2021).

Given that value is a fact for naturalism, good behavior traits such as honesty, fairness, generosity, and others or vice versa are indicators to give someone's good or bad behavior. Whereas for non-naturalism, the value is not a fact but is normative in telling something whether it is good or bad, right or wrong, so value decisions in this group cannot be known through empirical testing; however, it can only be known through what is called the moral intuition that humans already have, namely the direct awareness of the existence of pure values such as right or wrong in every behavior, object or person (Barclay & Barker, 2020).

These values, if examined carefully, are very relevant and correlative with nature (basic human potential that is innate from birth), as explained in the previous discussion, such as religion, intellect, society, morals, art, economy, marriage, progress, justice, independence, equality, politics, love for the nation and the motherland, want to be respected and so on. These potentials can benefit human life perfectly (bring prosperity and happiness) (Santangelo, 2022).

Based on some of the definitions above, it can be concluded that value is the expectation of something useful and beneficial to humans and valued as a reference for behavior.

## **Character**

According to Samami, the character can be interpreted as a basic value that builds a person's personality, formed both due to heredity and environmental influences, which distinguishes him from other people and is manifested in his attitude and behavior in everyday life (Tomić et al., 2022). Meanwhile, Winnie understands that the term character has two meanings about character. First, it shows how a person behaves. If someone behaves dishonestly, cruelly, or anarchically, that person's bad behavior is manifested. The two terms of character are closely related to personality. A person can only be called a person of character if his behavior follows moral rules (Alim et al., 2022).

According to Gunawan, the character is an original condition within a person that distinguishes him from others. Meanwhile, Doni Koesoema states that character is the same as personality. Personality is a characteristic or style or characteristic of a person that originates from formations received from the environment (Suparno et al., 2023). According to Wiyani, a character is a quality or mental or moral strength, character, or character of an individual whose special personality is the driving force and mover and distinguishes it from others. Meanwhile, according to Alwisol, a character is a behavior description by implicitly and explicitly highlighting values (right-wrong, good-bad) (Warren & Warren, 2021).

From the explanation of the characters above, it can be concluded that character is the characteristic of a person distinguishing him from others, manifested in behavior that follows moral principles in everyday life (Gimpel et al., 2020).

According to Samami, character education is the process of making demands on students to become fully human, with character in the dimensions of heart, mind, body, and feeling and intention. The Indonesian government itself, as outlined in the National Action Plan for Character Education (RANPK), states that character education can be interpreted as values education, character education, moral education, and character education, which aims to make good and bad decisions, maintain what is good, and manifest goodness in everyday life with all my heart (Mani & Al-Salami, 2022).

According to Elkind and Sweet, defining character education is a deliberate effort to help understand humans, care, and the core of ethical/moral values. According to Scerenko in Samami, character education is an earnest effort in which positive personality traits are developed, encouraged, and empowered through example, studies (history and biographies of great sages and minds), and emulation practices (maximum efforts to realize wisdom from what is observed and learned) (Akrivou & Scalzo, 2020). According to Ratna Megawangi in Wiyani, character education is an attempt to educate children to make wise decisions and practice them in everyday life to make a positive contribution to society. So, from some of the definitions above, it can be concluded that character education is an attempt to instill character in individuals who aim to understand ethical values through various methods better so that one day they can positively contribute to society (Dennis Harrison, 2021).

### 3 Method

The method used in this study is a qualitative method with a phenomenological approach. In this case, researchers are primary data collectors as objects of research. Observation of the object of research is carried out by analyzing the concept of educational pragmatism and its relevance to the character values of the students produced. This method is done by comparing the character values of students who take the “Government Ethics and Fundamentals of Logic” course in the Government Science Study Program - Faculty of Social and Political Sciences, Islamic University '45 Bekasi before the Covid-19 pandemic, the difference is with the character values of students after the end of the Covid-19 pandemic. Online learning processes and systems in a pandemic become problem-solving, a feature of educational pragmatism in solving the Covid-19 pandemic problem, where the learning process cannot be carried out face-to-face (offline). The qualitative method in this study was carried out by observing student behavior during the Covid 19 pandemic before the Midterm Examination, After the Midsemester Examination, and during the Final Semester Examination with an oral and written Examination system. The phenomenological approach is used to analyze character values formed from outward symptoms that appear in the behavior of students who are the object of research from the perspective of educational pragmatism (Hadi, 2021).

### 4 Result And Discussion

This research is a literature study on the concept and practice of educational pragmatism (John Dewey) and its relevance to the education system in Indonesia with a case study of learning at the '45 Bekasi Islamic University during the co-19 pandemic. This study aims to explore the character values resulting from educational pragmatism to identify the positive and negative impacts. In his book entitled *Philosophical Ideas in Education*, the background to the emergence of the view of educational pragmatism can be seen through Ornstein's explanation of pragmatism in the world of education in America.

#### Background on John Dewey's Thoughts About Education

Darwin's Theory of Evolution inspired Dewey in his experiments. The philosophy of education is based on “change, process, relativity, and reconstruction of experience”. This view is contrary to the traditional view of education before. Dewey used the term “organism and environment” for education. Humans are biological and social organisms that process an impulse that functions to sustain life and develop further. Every organism lives in a habitat/environment (Hines & Fallace, 2023). In the process of life, the human organism experiences problems that threaten its existence. Humans can successfully solve these problems. According to Dewey, philosophy and experience are keywords. Experience can be defined as the interaction of the human organism with its environment. Because life depends on the ability to solve problems, then education/education becomes a means of developing problem-solving skills and methods (Särkelä, 2022).

Dewey's experiments showed that “human planning and purpose” can be realized only through action and the courage to judge its consequences. To assess these consequences, a program related to education is needed. Whether a particular educational program can be used to assess outcomes (Putri et al., 2019). While idealism, realism, and essentialism emphasize the substance of knowledge, Dewey emphasizes the methodology or process of problem-solving. According to Dewey, learning occurs when a person is in problem-solving and can be developed into a habit that can be transferred to a wider situation (Obot, 2019).

#### Philosophical Foundation of Educational Pragmatism

Epistemology involves a person, organism, and environment. A person interacts with the environment to live, grow and develop. This interaction can change the environment or even change the person. Knowledge is a

transaction between the learner/teacher and the environment (Palacios-García et al., 2022). The basis for this interaction is the concept of change. Each interaction may have some common aspects or features that can be transferred to the next interaction. So people and transactions are constantly changing too (Van Veldhoven & Vanthienen, 2022).

If reality changes continuously, then a curriculum based on permanent reality cannot be accepted by followers of pragmatism. What is needed is an “intelligent manner” (smart way). Because reality is a process of transformation between a person and the environment. Dewey emphasizes problem-solving as an effective method for responding to change. The concept of universal truth becomes untenable (Pietsch, 2022).

The concept of pragmatism over axiology is very situational. Value is relative to time, place, and circumstances. Contribution to humans and society’s growth is considered valuable, so a test and re-test of the subject’s assumed values are needed for verification. Knowledge and values are subjects for experimentation and reconstruction. The logic used in education is based on the scientific method (Boenink & Kudina, 2020).

The fundamental questions that arise will produce relatively and varied answers based on the axiology and logic of educational pragmatism. Pragmatists’ answers to questions about knowledge, education, and instruction are very different from past educational philosophies. For pragmatists, knowledge is experimentation and leads to revision/improvement. Knowledge is more focused on using knowledge than on truth as the essence of knowledge. On the other hand, earlier philosophers emphasized truth as the essence of knowledge (Kırlar-Can et al., 2021).

For pragmatists, education is an experimental process. Education is problem-solving that increases when a person interacts with his world. Dewey argues that humans experience the fastest growth when interacting with their environment reflectively and intelligently. Most of the best problem-solving methods are the scientific method (Rao et al., 2022). When facing a problem, the information needed to solve the problem comes from various sources. For example, information is needed to solve the problem of physical environmental pollution. Factors to be considered are historical, political, sociological, technological, and international. People who are educated/educated in a pragmatic sense know how to get that information used in an “instrumental” manner (Liu et al., 2020).

A pragmatist, like Dewey, sees school as a special, more developed social environment. For him, there is no barrier between school and society. The school is a community agent for selecting and simplifying the cultural elements a person needs to participate in social life. As a special environment, the school brings a person toward cultural participation. As a selective agency, schools transfer parts of ancestral culture and seek ways to improve them (Zembylas, 2021). Purification of school functions is a simplification, refinement, and balance of ancestral culture. As a simplification, schools select cultural elements and reduce their complexity into units worth studying. As purification, the school selects the elements of ancestral cultural wealth and eliminates less profitable things that can limit human interaction and growth. As a counterweight, schools integrate certain experiences into something more harmonious (Cunningham et al., 2021).

The pragmatists view “teaching and learning” as reconstructing experience based on the scientific method. Learning means acting actively as a learner, both individually/ in groups, to solve problems. These problems will vary greatly depending on changes in circumstances and environment. The important goal is for the learner to acquire a problem-solving method or process intelligently (Dorimana et al., 2022). The teacher does not dominate the learning process, but he looks for ways to act as a director or guide through his actions as a facilitator of student research. For Dewey, society and its educational system reach a new high when they provide the widest possible sharing of resources for everyone in society. Sharing will not reduce quality but will enrich quality. In Dewey’s terms, quality and equity are reciprocal and good educational things to share (Porat et al., 2023).

### **Application of the Concept of Pragmatism in the Education System**

As an example of the application of educational pragmatism, in Table 1 below, the researcher tries to display several important themes that form the basis for applying pragmatism in the education system.

**Table 1. Educational Pragmatism Based on Several Basic Themes**

Basic Theme	A	B
<b>EDUCATIONAL OBJECTIVES</b>	Promotes effective personal behavior	Deals with practical problem solving
Student character values produced	Behave effectively	Be practical and realistic
<b>SCHOOL OBJECTIVES</b>	Provide information and skills needed by students to be able to learn independently and effectively.	Teaching students to be able to solve problems, both individually/in groups, with scientific method (rational-empirical)
Student character values produced	Be independent, effective, and skilled.	Active personality, practical attitude, and scientific attitude (rational-empirical)
<b>GENERAL CHARACTERISTICS</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Knowledge is a tool for solving practical problems</li> <li>• Knowledge: benefits for the individual/social, how to realize social values</li> <li>• Effective thinking/practical intelligence: namely, the ability to solve personal problems effectively</li> <li>• Education is a means of developing personal effectiveness in solving individual/group problems against dynamic situations &amp; urgent needs</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Individuals are unique or distinctive individuals who can adapt and be dynamic to find the greatest satisfaction &amp; self-actualization</li> <li>• Social &amp; psychological pluralism: each individual is free to pursue his interests &amp; solve problems in a dynamic state</li> <li>• Cultural change can indirectly develop individual abilities to behave practically and effectively to pursue personal goals</li> <li>• The method/way of proving the truth is scientific/scientific</li> <li>• Education is more experimental and democratic</li> </ul>
Student character values produced	Rational, practical, realistic, skilled and effective, adaptive- dynamic & democratic personality	Rational-practical, realistic, skilled and effective, adaptive-dynamic, and democratic personality
<b>CHILDREN AS STUDENTS</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• In general, children become good, act effectively &amp; are enlightened based on the natural consequences of their behavior.</li> <li>• An individual is a psychological unit that is relatively autonomous and responds to situations and conditions dynamically.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Moral inequality between persons regarding intrinsic value as individuals and combined with fundamental equality in the application of practical intelligence to solving personal and social problems</li> <li>• Pay more attention to differences than to similarities in establishing educational programs</li> <li>• The individual is psychological dualism.</li> </ul>
Student character values produced	In general, positive character, autonomous/independent, and dynamic	Having an adaptive, dynamic attitude, respecting differences/pluralism, and having an individual social personality
<b>ADMINISTRATION AND CONTROL OF EDUCATION</b>	Authority is given to educators who have high skills, are committed to critical inquiry & can make changes in the presence of new, relevant information.	Teacher rights relate to the practical application of intelligence concerning solving important problems; situation-conditional, compromise relative.
The resulting character value phenomenon	Skilled, rational, and responsive to actual information, developments in environmental conditions, and situations	Practical attitude, creative, adaptive, democratic relative
<b>THE ESSENTIAL NATURE OF THE CURRICULUM</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Emphasizes personal effectiveness</li> <li>• Centers on practical problem solving</li> <li>• Emphasizes practical problem-solving procedures</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Emphasis is more or less given to practical (compulsory and elective lessons)</li> <li>• Emphasizes the intellectual &amp; practical beyond the academic ones</li> </ul>
The resulting character value phenomenon	Practical attitude, effective, adaptive, and creative or innovative in solving practical problems	Can take a choosing attitude towards alternatives, has intellectual and practical intelligence
<b>STUDY MATERIALS</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Emphasizes open and critical exploration of actual problems that are important to students</li> <li>• Emphasizes a problem-solving approach that is based on activities and</li> </ul>	Involve training in any study area: practical scientific method, social & behavioral sciences, history, most of the natural sciences, and human

	interdisciplinary groups in groups	
The resulting character value phenomenon	Have an open, critical mindset, able to solve practical problems based on the field of knowledge independently and in groups	Have rational intelligence and practical skill on scientific methods in various fields of sciences, history of humanities, and natural sci
<b>TEACHING METHODS AND EVALUATION OF LEARNING OUTCOMES</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Tend to rely on individual/group problem-solving procedures for problems faced and of interest to students themselves</li> <li>• Open and experimental. Tend to regard learning activities as a by-product of meaningful activities</li> <li>• Reducing memorization and discipline, prioritizing mastery of skills to deal with personal problems effectively</li> <li>• Learning activities are more democratically directed</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Teachers as organizers &amp; facilitator encourage activities and learning experie students</li> <li>• Tend to like tests/exams that are ba demonstrations of real-life situations classroom</li> <li>• Tends to minimize interpersonal compet traditional rankings</li> <li>• Adjust existing educational principlo practices</li> <li>• Sees the need for Guidance and Counsel psychiatric therapy, as a basic aspect of schooling which guarantees the em conditions necessary for effective learning</li> </ul>
The resulting character value phenomenon	Oriented to the main goal of learning is problem-solving: solving individual and social life problems and having a democratic and adaptive attitude toward the development of situations and conditions.	A cooperative attitude resulting from the “L by Doing” learning system and process can fun teaching-learning process because teacher’s and students’ harmonious relationship
<b>CONTROL IN THE CLASSROOM</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Train students’ responsibility for their actions in a practical sense, but not in the concept of the meaning of free will</li> <li>• More democratic &amp; objective in determining behavioral benchmarks</li> </ul>	Actions that are considered moral are the or are most intelligent (IQ, ESQ, SQ)
The resulting character value phenomenon	Have an independent attitude, democratic and objective	The value of moral goodness is measured by the value of intelligence in thinking and having social awareness, and the dynam developing situations

Conceptually, there appears to be a synergistic relevance between school functions and educational pragmatism systems toward industrial needs built democratically. The education system is designed to solve society’s problems regarding the need for labor for developing industries by encouraging the formation of trained intelligence for students.

Based on the description above, the researcher concluded that there are several main ideas which are principles of educational pragmatism and its relevance to the character values of students, which are produced as follows:

- Educational pragmatism emphasizes education oriented towards solving actual problems (problem-solving), both individual problems and group problems. The education system is more open (de-institutional).
- The values that exist in society are seen as relative and conditional. In this case, the individual determines the value, which tends to be subjective.
- The relationship between the subject and the object of education (teachers and students) is more democratic, in this case, the teacher acts as a facilitator, thereby influencing the teaching methods and the results of the evaluation of the teaching and learning process, which are organized democratically based on an agreement between educators and students (lecturers and students).

### Case Study Analysis of Research Objects Based on a Phenomenological Approach

Conceptually, educational pragmatism aims to produce positive character values for students: effective, independent, adaptive, dynamic behavior, scientific attitude, practical rationality, and democracy. However, this situation is somewhat different in practice in Indonesia, based on researchers’ observations of learning during the

Covid-19 pandemic and its impact on the quality of education after the Covid-19 pandemic ended. In general, the researcher concludes several observations on the behavior and character of students who are the object of this study as follows:

a. The learning system during the Covid-19 pandemic was designed online because of the situation and conditions of government policy, every individual in society must keep their distance to prevent the spread of the Covid-19 virus from developing more quickly. It is not possible to hold face-to-face lectures due to limited classroom space. This step is a solution/problem-solving for students' obligations to continue studying online following government policy. Likewise, lecturers, as educators during the Covid-19 pandemic, are still obliged to teach by holding lectures online to achieve the learning material targets and educational goals that have been set. Formally/normatively, online learning objectives can be achieved according to the Learning Process Plan (RPP) and Semester Learning Plan (RPS). However, in terms of quality, the online learning process cannot be said to be fully effective, even though it is achieved in terms of efficiency because it saves more energy, time, and money and follows government policy as a preventive solution to the risk of spreading the Covid-19 virus.

b. Educational pragmatism aims to produce student character/behavior values that are effective, independent, and adaptive to developing situations. In the case of the online learning system, not all student behavior shows this attitude. Fadhilah's research results show that the quality of the online learning process for most students is declining. This can be seen from comparing the scores of students' online written exams, which on average, are quite good. However, most students could not answer the questions properly and correctly when the exam system was carried out in class or orally. In short, it can be concluded that student's ability to answer exam questions is determined more by their ability/speed to download and copy and paste answers from the internet, although sometimes the answers are not relevant to the questions. But formally, almost all questions were answered. As a result of the habit of online lectures and exams, after the covid 19 pandemic ended and students had to return to face-to-face lectures, so during the Mid Semester Examination (UTS) and Final Semester Examination (UAS), most wanted an open book exam so that it was easy to get answers with a download and copy paste system from the internet or copying answers from friends or lecture material provided by lecturers.

c. The character values of students (students) that emerge from online learning do not reflect independence and scientific intelligence but only pursue practical-normative (formal) needs to fulfill active student obligations, attend lectures, collect assignments, and work on UTS and UAS questions. This can be seen from the fact that most students don't get the good marks as expected, they complain/protest to the lecturers, asking why they get bad grades, even though they always attend online lectures and submit assignments, even though the quality of the assignments is random (even doing the wrong assignments). They think that if all lecture obligations have been fulfilled (full attendance, submitted assignments, and taken midterm and final semester exams), they hope they will get good grades. But if the oral examination system is held in class and they feel they cannot answer the questions properly, they tend not to complain/protest if their grades are unsatisfactory.

## 5 Conclusion

Conceptually, the purpose of learning educational pragmatism is to meet the urgent needs of students because of its orientation towards solving actual problems; students are more independent and creative and free to develop their potential. Cases in online learning are an effort to solve problems with the situation and conditions of the Covid-19 pandemic. Normatively the learning process can still run more efficiently because it saves costs, time, and effort. However, the weakness in educational pragmatism is that values tend to be considered relative and subjective, so their applicability is only temporary and situational. Always demanding rapid changes in the education system and curriculum according to the needs of students and society. Consequently, education funding/facilities are needed that follow the urgent needs of students according to the current situation and conditions. Then the results of evaluating the practice of educational pragmatism in the case of online learning that occurred in this research object were not as expected (effective, independent, and creative). The process that occurs is only pursuing efficiency (saving time, costs, and energy) and surviving the risk of the situation and conditions of the Covid-19 pandemic. Quality-effectiveness is not achieved. Aspects of the value of student independence become dependent on the information media (internet) and available references. The ability to develop the potential for practical reasoning/intelligence decreases. The results of online learning evaluation cannot be used as a standard for students' actual academic abilities.

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