



Research Paper

From Naturalism to Its Educational Implications

Fatemeh Akbari¹ , Hakimeh Sadat SHarifzadeh^{*2} , Ramazan Mahdavi Azadboni³ ¹ M.A. in Philosophy of Education University of Mazandaran. fa582809@gmail.com² Associate Professor, Department of Educational Sciences University of Mazandaran. hakimehsharifzadeh@gmail.com³ Professor, Department of Philosophy and Islamic Theology University of Mazandaran. dr.azadboni@yahoo.com[10.22080/jepr.2026.30357.1302](https://doi.org/10.22080/jepr.2026.30357.1302)**Received:**

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Abstract

This study explores the philosophical foundations of scientific naturalism with a focus on its ontological and epistemological dimensions, as well as its educational implications for goals, principles, and methods of instruction. Employing a descriptive-analytical method, the research is qualitative and theoretical in nature, and data have been collected through documentary and library sources. The findings reveal that, from the standpoint of scientific naturalism, phenomena can be understood solely through the natural laws governing the universe. The educational implications of this perspective orient education toward an objective, empirical, and rational approach that emphasizes the scientific method, critical thinking, and engagement with nature. This approach enables learners to comprehend the world through evidence and reasoning. Nevertheless, an exclusive reliance on scientific naturalism within educational systems may create challenges in harmonizing with cultural and spiritual values. Therefore, a balanced educational framework requires integrating this view with the cultivation of moral and humanistic values.

***Corresponding Author:** Hakimeh Sadat Sharifzadeh**Address:** Department of Educational Sciences
University of Mazandaran.**Email:** hakimehsharifzadeh@gmail.com**This article is extracted from a Master's thesis.**



Extended Abstract

1. Introduction

Understanding philosophical schools of thought and their educational implications is one of the most significant issues that every educational system must be fully aware of in order to enhance its effectiveness. Accordingly, this study seeks to introduce a philosophical approach known as Naturalism, to explain its philosophical foundations, identify its educational implications, and address the existing gaps in various levels of education, thereby contributing to the improvement and reform of the educational system.

From the naturalistic point of view, empirical science is considered the only valid basis for understanding the physical, social, and moral worlds, and everything is regarded as part of nature. This leads to the rejection of metaphysical propositions and inevitably exerts a considerable influence on educational systems.

The main research question addressed in this study is: Given the acceptance of this philosophical school, what educational implications arise regarding aims, principles, and methods of education? Accordingly, the research questions are as follows:

1. What are the philosophical foundations of Naturalism in terms of ontology and epistemology?

2. What are the educational implications of Naturalism in terms of aims, principles, and methods?

2. Research Method

The method used in this study is descriptive-analytical. This means that the researcher first describes and explains

existing ideas, conditions, and phenomena, and then analyzes them.

The analytical approach here refers to exploring the relationships between various concepts and recognizing conceptual structures and networks—essentially, dissecting and analyzing ideas and their interrelations.

The method proceeds in three stages:

1. Description: The phenomenon under study—Naturalism—is first described. Data concerning its nature are selected, organized, and summarized.

2. Analysis: The collected information is categorized, and the relationships between different subjects are examined and analyzed.

3. Conclusion: Based on a chain of evidence and logical relationships between the concepts, an acceptable conclusion is drawn and presented.

3. Findings

In ontological Naturalism, reality or natural being is equivalent to empirical knowability; what can be discovered through natural and empirical science is considered real. Hence, everything that exists can and should be studied scientifically, and whatever is empirically investigable is regarded as real.

From an epistemological standpoint, Naturalists believe that human senses are the most reliable—and indeed the only—means of acquiring knowledge. In their view, only sensory experience provides valid information. Therefore, the external world can be understood through the senses and experience, and the knowledge gained through this process is reliable and trustworthy.

According to the naturalistic approach and its educational goals, certain



principles can be derived: education should be consistent with nature. Given this approach's emphasis on scientific and empirical methods, students should think and experience for themselves, and teachers must take this into account. Furthermore, the learner's interests and motivations should be considered, as this promotes personal growth in critical thinking, creativity, freedom, and natural development. It also emphasizes physical development and the fulfillment of learners' natural needs, requiring stronger cooperation between home and school.

4. Conclusion

Overall, the central aim of Naturalism is to emphasize the scientific method as the basis for educating and training individuals in society. From this perspective, education must foster

reasoning, reflection, and analysis, leading to sound judgment and decision-making.

Education in this view, based on its pedagogical implications, emphasizes the cultivation of the senses and all aspects of human existence through scientific and empirical methods. Children's education should be sensory and experiential in nature—their senses and bodies (hands, feet, eyes, and their natural being) are regarded as their first teachers. Hence, careful observation and direct interaction with nature are key educational methods in this approach.

The fundamental result of this research indicates that education should be based on scientific and empirical methods aimed at actualizing the innate potentials embedded in human nature, fostering their growth in harmony with natural and inherent tendencies.



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