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THE PROBLEM OF "EXISTENTAL CHOICE" IN EDUCATIONAL CULTURE

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Abstract

This article explores one of the fundamental issues of educational culture—the question of the student's existential choice from a socio-philosophical perspective. Drawing upon the views of classical existentialist thinkers, the study analyzes the impact of standardization and technocracy in the modern education system on individual freedom. In the author's view, true educational culture is not merely about knowledge transfer but about preparing the individual for a responsible choice of their own destiny. The article substantiates the significance of the concepts of freedom of choice and personal responsibility in the pedagogical process.

Keywords

Educational culture, existential choice, freedom, responsibility, S. Kierkegaard, J.P. Sartre, digital pedagogy, personality formation.

Introduction

It is no secret that the modern education system is increasingly transforming into a knowledge factory. The strict standardization of curricula, rating systems, and labor market demands distance the student from the fundamental philosophical question: Why am I studying? In the history of philosophy, the existentialist movement prioritizes human existence (existentsia) over essence. That is, a human being first exists, and subsequently defines themselves through their own choices.

Our observations indicate that the problem of existential choice in educational culture is more relevant today than ever. If the educational process does not provide the student with the opportunity for self-awareness and free choice, they remain merely a knowledgeable functionary. In this article, we analyze education as a process of the individual's self-creation.

The research adopted the ideas from Søren Kierkegaard's "Either/Or" and Jean-Paul Sartre's "Existentialism is a Humanism" as its methodological foundation. Additionally, Karl Jaspers' perspectives on "communication" and "freedom" in education were examined within the context of modern higher education.

According to our approach, educational culture is a space where an individual discovers their "existential truth". In this process, subject-to-subject relationships and the student's subjective experience are of primary importance.

According to S. Kierkegaard, a human being only truly experiences themselves in the moment of decision-making. In education, this implies that a student should not merely be a passive recipient of ready-made information but an individual who actively chooses values. Our analysis suggests that the modern educational system attempts to shield students from "existential anxiety" (through standardized textbooks and rigid pathways); consequently, the student's sense of "responsibility for their own destiny" gradually fades.

As J.P. Sartre argued, man is condemned to be free. Within educational culture, this freedom should empower the student to independently determine where and how to apply their knowledge.

In our personal view, within the digital educational environment, the student is increasingly becoming a "captive" of the pathways suggested by algorithms. True existential choice, however, requires stepping beyond algorithmic recommendations. The task of education is to assist the student in bearing this "burden of freedom".

K. Jaspers wrote that "Education is a meeting of souls". Existential choice occurs only through sincere communication between teacher and student.

Our observations confirm that in today's educational culture, the role of the teacher has been reduced to that of a "facilitator". However, from an existential perspective, the teacher is a "personal exemplar" who challenges the student to make their own life choices.

To address the problem of existential choice, the following changes in educational culture are essential:

1. Individualized educational trajectories: The student should define not just "how to study" but, more importantly, "why to study".
2. Critical pedagogy: Questioning established knowledge and filtering it through the prism of personal experience.
3. Existential communication: Engaging philosophically with the student's inner world and life challenges during the learning process.

Conclusion

In educational culture, "existential choice" is not merely a pedagogical method, but a fundamental condition of being human. In conclusion, we emphasize that in an era of increasing digital and technocratic pressure, the educational system must teach the student how to preserve their identity and defend their freedom. The education of the future should not turn the individual into an "object" (a thing); instead, it must empower them to become the author of their own life.

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