
PHILOSOPHICAL AND PEDAGOGICAL PRINCIPLES OF CHRISTIAN EDUCATION IN PAMFIL YURKEVICH'S WORKS

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Abstract

This article examines the philosophical and pedagogical concept of education within the creative legacy of the philosopher and educator Pamfil Yurkevich. The study is based on Yurkevich's literary works as well as previously published studies analyzing his philosophical and pedagogical contributions. The article addresses key issues in the pedagogy of education found in Yurkevich's creative legacy, with a particular focus on the religious foundations underlying his philosophical and pedagogical concepts. The analysis concludes that Yurkevich's philosophy of education reflects a profound understanding of upbringing and education as essential dimensions of human existence. His approach lends a synthetic character to pedagogical thought, reconciling seemingly opposing principles—namely, the alignment of educational influences with both ethical ideals and the inherent nature of humanity.

Keywords: ethical ideals, synthetic pedagogical thinking, upbringing and education, Christian education

1. Introduction

In modern conditions, the theoretical dimensions of philosophical and educational research have gained significant practical relevance. This is particularly true for the development of Russian pedagogy, where the theoretical foundations of education are enriched by the study of thinkers whose works unify the principles of philosophy and pedagogy into a seamless whole. Such integration of philosophy, as a concentrated expression of culture, with pedagogy reflects a synthesis where theoretical inquiry and practical application coexist harmoniously. This synthesis is exemplified in the works of Pamfil Danilovich

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Yurkevich, an eminent philosopher and educator. Accordingly, this study aims to deepen the understanding and systematic exploration of the pedagogical ideas articulated by Yurkevich.

Yurkevich's philosophical and pedagogical unity is rooted in his understanding of the shared objectives of philosophy and pedagogy. At its core lies the synthesis of faith and knowledge, presenting a 'holistic picture' of existence—both in general and with respect to the human condition. A key dimension of this vision is the role of upbringing and education. Yurkevich, a gifted teacher at the Kyiv Theological Academy and Moscow University, was highly regarded by his contemporaries, including the renowned Russian philosopher Vladimir Solovyov, who described him as the finest lecturer he had ever encountered [1]. Yurkevich's contributions to recognizing pedagogy as a fundamental academic discipline were transformative. His tenure at Moscow University, beginning in 1861, marked a particularly productive period in his engagement with pedagogical issues. While he produced only one philosophical work during this period [2], it centered on the urgent need to reorient education—particularly at the university level.

Yurkevich's transition to the Department of Pedagogy at Moscow University in 1864 was pivotal. Under his influence, the university's council adopted pedagogy as a compulsory subject for students in faculties tied to educational careers. His pedagogical contributions were highly valued, and he served as the dean of the Faculty of History and Philosophy from 1869 to 1873.

2. Literature review

Extensive scholarly work has explored various aspects of Yurkevich's legacy. His biography is thoroughly documented in the works of V.I. Ilchenko [3], A.T. Pavlov [4], and E.A. Tsvetkov [5]. The pedagogical contributions of Yurkevich have also attracted the attention of numerous researchers. Scholars such as B.V. Emelianov [6, 7], T.A. Muravitskaya [8], N.L. Poltoratskaya [9], and E.V. Antipova [10] have examined topics including the logical and psychological foundations of the learning process, the relationship between education and training, and the socio-political dimensions of education.

Yurkevich's philosophy of education, as an integral aspect of his holistic philosophical framework, has been studied by M.A. Sharova [11], N.M. Brunchukova [12], and S.A. Kalugina [13]. Despite this, the philosophical and pedagogical views of Yurkevich as a cohesive and organic system have yet to be explored comprehensively. This article seeks to address this gap by analyzing the philosophical and pedagogical concepts in Yurkevich's works.

The objective of this study is to analyze the philosophical and pedagogical concept of education as articulated in the creative works of P.D. Yurkevich.

3. Methods and materials

The chronological scope of this study encompasses the second half of the 19th century, corresponding to the period of scientific and teaching activity of the philosopher and educator Pamfil Danilovich Yurkevich.

This article employs a qualitative approach to examine the philosophical and pedagogical concepts of education within Yurkevich's works. The primary research methods include analysis, comparison, systematization, and generalization. These methods ensure a rigorous scientific and theoretical substantiation of the findings. Additionally, an expert survey was conducted to evaluate the reliability of the selected sources.

The method of analyzing scientific literature was employed to gather a wide range of information and contextual insights from diverse assessments and opinions. Recognizing the inherent limitations of this method—such as variations in the quality, completeness, and potential subjectivity of the selected sources—an expert survey was undertaken to ensure the reliability of the data.

4. Research stages

4.1. Selection of sources

- **Primary sources:** The literary works of Pamfil Yurkevich.
- **Secondary sources:** Articles and monographs addressing the philosophical and pedagogical legacy of Pamfil Yurkevich.

4.2. Expert survey

To ensure the reliability of the secondary sources, an expert survey was conducted with 13 specialists. The selection criteria required each expert to have at least three publications on the history of Russian pedagogy in journals indexed in databases such as the Russian Science Citation Index, Scopus, or Web of Science. Experts were contacted via email and asked to complete a questionnaire assessing the reliability and coverage of the selected sources. The questionnaire consisted of six closed-ended questions and is available upon request. The responses indicated that the selected sources were rated at a consistently high level of reliability.

4.3. Analysis and synthesis

Using the literary works of Pamfil Yurkevich and the validated secondary sources, the origins of the pedagogy of education within Yurkevich's heritage were systematically analyzed. This was followed by a detailed examination of the religious foundations underpinning Yurkevich's philosophical and pedagogical concept of education.

5. Results and discussion

5.1. The problem of education pedagogy in the works of Pamfil Yurkevich

Yurkevich addressed key pedagogical issues in several works, including '*Chteniye o Vospitanii*' (*Reading on Education*) (1865), '*Kurs obshchey pedagogiki s prilozheniyami*' (*Course of General Pedagogy with Appendices*)

(1869), and *'Idei I Fakty po istorii pedagogiki'* (*Ideas and Facts on the History of Pedagogy*) (1870). In these texts, he explored the development of an individual's inner world, emphasizing morality, free will, and spirituality. He also examined practical approaches to addressing these dimensions within the educational process.

Yurkevich posited that the purpose of education and pedagogy aligns with the purpose of human life itself; thus, both should focus on fostering personal growth and development. Yurkevich argued that education should not aim merely to make life easier for an ordinary person, but instead should focus on elevating individuals to their highest potential, fostering personal growth and self-actualization as the central goal of pedagogy [14]. These pedagogical ideas stemmed from his humanistic philosophy, which carried profound spiritual significance.

Yurkevich viewed pedagogy as the practical resolution of ethical dilemmas, particularly the formation of a moral personality, and referred to it as the 'science of education'. He believed that ethics, as the study of norms regulating moral life, establishes the objectives of pedagogy. Consequently, he defined pedagogy as the application of universal laws governing human and world development to educational goals, including the organization of instruction and didactics. Yurkevich distinguished between the *general science of education* (ethics) and its *applied counterpart* (pedagogy) [11].

Although Yurkevich's primary focus in pedagogy was moral education, his perspective extended beyond ethical concerns. He argued that the tasks of a teacher encompass fostering aesthetic, moral, and intellectual development. Yurkevich emphasized that a teacher must constantly cultivate not only intellectual rigor but also moral and aesthetic sensibilities in students. These qualities—such as a refined sense of beauty, morality, and logical thinking—are essential to the overall well-being and development of the individual [15].

In addition to focusing on individual development, Yurkevich emphasized that pedagogy must also prepare individuals for participation in society. He asserted that pedagogy should: "*embrace a person and his life from all sides—moral, aesthetic, intellectual, and religious—educating him both for his own perfection and for the majestic unions of family, state, and church*" [16, p. 167]. Yurkevich highlighted the importance of grounding educational theory not only in abstract principles but also in the realities of social conditions, political circumstances, and other factors that shape the educational process. Only by taking these considerations into account, he argued, could educational theory remain relevant and practically beneficial [5].

Yurkevich advocated for periodically rethinking the entire theory of education to adapt to the demands of real life, which invariably introduces new challenges and necessitates adjustments. He expressed deep concern over the negative trends in education during the 19th century. Reflecting on these issues, he expressed concern that the growing emphasis on vocational and practical knowledge, exemplified by polytechnic schools, lacked a deeper philosophical or moral grounding. This shift towards utility-based education was seen by him as a

challenge to the development of the ideal human character, which education should aspire to cultivate [2].

Yurkevich was particularly troubled by the state of pedagogical science, which, in his view, had become narrowly focused on practical tasks rather than serving as a comprehensive science of education [7]. Yurkevich addressed concerns that the advancement of education and science was contributing to the rise of immorality. He argued that such criticisms would persist unless education was directly and fully aligned with moral upbringing, ensuring that knowledge is always guided by ethical principles [14].

Yurkevich identified the teacher's role as both challenging and multifaceted. A critical task of the teacher, he argued, is to determine the most effective method for presenting material and striking the right balance between the sensory and the abstract. Abstract concepts, he believed, must be integrated with sensory perception to ensure thorough knowledge and clear thinking [17].

In Yurkevich's view, the future teacher must master various teaching methods to facilitate an individual approach for each student. Education, according to Yurkevich, is a complex and often unpredictable process, heavily influenced by external factors. Therefore, educators must adapt their methods to the unique abilities, inclinations, and interests of each student. For Yurkevich, achieving the goals of education also required fostering the development of willpower and engaging students in continuous mental effort.

Moreover, Yurkevich argued that the teacher must take into account students' interests, aiming to align these interests with curricular goals. He stated that teachers should focus on nurturing what naturally excites and attracts each student, thereby fostering engagement and growth. A future teacher, Yurkevich contended, should embody the ideals of self-improvement and self-education, serving as a living example for students. As he noted: "*All education is self-education*" [14, p. 76].

5.2. Religious foundations of the philosophical and pedagogical concept of education by Pamfil Yurkevich

Yurkevich's pedagogy is deeply rooted in the Christian tradition, which emphasizes the moral and spiritual nature of humanity, the freedom and intrinsic value of the human personality, and the alignment of education with divine principles [18]. Yurkevich viewed the study of humanity, grounded in God's Revelation, as the most important source of pedagogy as a science. In his perspective, education serves as a transformative process that shapes mental and spiritual states by relying on the general laws of the human psyche. The biblical assertion that humanity is created in the image and likeness of God forms the foundation for spiritual education in Yurkevich's philosophy [19].

According to Yurkevich, the spiritual basis of pedagogy must reflect Christian humanity, which he defined as an acknowledgment of the inherent dignity and unconditional rights of humanity, as well as the enduring capacity for goodness in every individual [20]. The ultimate aim of education and the teacher's work, he argued, is to cultivate a rational, creative, and moral personality—a

person fully conscious of their responsibilities toward family, society, the state, and the Church. Yurkevich emphasized that the purpose of education should align with the broader purpose of human life: self-improvement, the formation of a virtuous and moral character, the strengthening of willpower, and the fulfillment of one's moral duties [21].

Education, in Yurkevich's view, must instill selflessness, generosity, honesty, courage in fulfilling obligations, justice, and selfless love—qualities that define human dignity. His vision for pedagogy extended beyond theory to the practical application of Christian principles in education. He integrated moral, ethical, legal, psychological, physiological, logical, and aesthetic components into his Christian pedagogy, making it a comprehensive framework for holistic development [22].

Yurkevich also advocated for incorporating religious education and upbringing into schools, which he saw as essential for resolving the tensions between knowledge and faith and fostering their harmony. Yurkevich emphasized that teaching should aim to nurture faith in God and hope for His mercy, advocating for the inclusion of religious stories and teachings, such as those of the patriarchs and Jesus Christ, to guide moral development, especially in youth [23].

In essence, Yurkevich's pedagogy aims to uncover all means necessary for shaping a holistic individual - a 'Man with a capital letter'. Central to this endeavor is the study of Christian teachings and canons, which provide the moral and spiritual foundation for education.

Yurkevich believed that morality is divinely ordained and that it comes from the heart, not the intellect. While the mind may govern the soul, it is the heart that fosters true love for beauty and goodness [15]. One of Yurkevich's key works [24] focuses on the Christian foundations of morality. In this work, he concludes his analysis by addressing a significant pedagogical problem, one to which he devoted the final years of his life. This problem involves defining the tasks and goals of education in alignment with the philosophy he developed and establishing practical principles that bridge the realms of faith and science.

Yurkevich considered the impartial and meticulous study of the Bible to be a critical tool in this endeavor. He suggested that if a knowledgeable and experienced individual were to examine the educational principles derived from biblical teachings, they would uncover numerous practical guidelines that integrate religious faith with scientific understanding. He criticized the prevailing separation between faith and knowledge, arguing that the expectation to approach them differently creates an unsustainable divide, particularly in societies with diverse beliefs [24].

Yurkevich also observed that, beginning with Plato, pedagogy had been understood as a science imbued with religious grandeur. This view encourages educators to reflect on the origins of evil and warns against the naive belief that evil in the human heart can be overcome solely through rational education and spiritual upbringing. According to Yurkevich, the ultimate goal of education is to nurture an intelligent and virtuous individual—someone who knows what is good and actively seeks to embody it.

He argued that the inherent anarchy of a child's soul must be transformed into its positive opposite: a structured constitution of character. Using an analogy, Yurkevich suggested that this constitution must be governed by an 'aristocracy of moral convictions', which in turn submits to the 'monarchy' of a singular, unconditional life goal. He described the progression of education as moving from *order* (the foundation), to *nobility* (the middle), to *godlikeness* (the pinnacle), with the ultimate aim being the awakening, development, and strengthening of this hierarchy within the individual [14, p. 199].

Yurkevich also viewed pedagogy as a synthetic science, encompassing the knowledge and principles of ethics, psychology, physiology, and other human sciences. He argued that the state of development of these disciplines determines the prominence of particular pedagogical approaches and directions.

No matter how successful theoretical pedagogy may become, it remains ineffective if the teachers and educators responsible for its implementation lack moral refinement. This deficiency lies in their inability to grasp the essence of moral principles or the unique significance of the Christian religion. It manifests in their failure to distinguish between good and evil, truth and falsehood, and the seeds of moral depravity versus the foundations of virtue in the lives of children. According to Yurkevich, the question of what constitutes good and what kind of education fosters this good in the human heart is timeless, transcending disciplines such as science, philosophy, politics, and religion [11]. Yurkevich dedicated himself to drawing the attention of educators to this vital issue.

Dividing pedagogy into two major branches—the theory of teaching and the theory of education—Yurkevich placed greater emphasis on the latter in his works. He proposed that the true criterion of a family, society, or state is the extent of their commitment to raising the next generation. Reflecting on ancient history, Yurkevich critiqued the view of child-rearing as a mere obligation, a 'tax' that citizens owed to the state. Christianity, he argued, fundamentally altered this perception by creating the family unit and elevating the care for children to the status of a sacred moral duty. As Yurkevich stated, "*The upbringing of children is a service to humanity—a service, in performing which, we give to God. God—this moral truth was unknown to ancient education*" [14, p. 8].

Christian pedagogy, according to Yurkevich, seeks to instill in the pupil qualities that reflect immortality: wisdom, love, truth, and holiness. At its core, the concept of Christian humanity acknowledges the enduring power of goodness in the human heart and its ultimate triumph over evil. Education grounded in Christian principles, and rooted in love for humanity, becomes the highest expression of humanism.

In Yurkevich's pedagogical framework, upbringing holds greater significance than training. While training equips students with accurate knowledge, upbringing instills the virtues that must be nurtured from childhood through institutions such as the family, church, and state. Schools, as artificial constructs, derive their moral vitality from their connection to these holistic institutions and should work collaboratively with them.

Yurkevich emphasized that the immediate goal of education is the balanced development of all the student's capacities. Each ability should be cultivated to a level of excellence that aligns with the overarching purpose of human life [25]. In Yurkevich's view, the individual must be seen as a rational being, a member of the moral organism, and a unique personality. The ideal individual should not only know and love goodness but also possess the strength to practice it.

The foundation of Yurkevich's science of humanity lies in two primary forces of the human spirit: the head (representing reason and the theoretical dimension of the spirit) and the heart (the seat of will, emotions, and moral or practical aspects of the spirit). True education, he argued, depends on the harmonious integration of these forces. As Yurkevich observed, "*The world, in its beauty and significance, is revealed first to the depths of the heart and from there to human thought*" [25].

In pedagogical practice, it is essential to employ diverse methods to develop all cognitive abilities, guiding the child toward both a holistic understanding of the world (through emotions and sensations) and a fragmentary comprehension (through the intellect). The pedagogy of P.D. Yurkevich, rooted in his philosophical worldview, contrasts cold intellectualism and abstract notions of duty with the warm and vital commandment of love—a heartfelt humanity symbolized by cordiality. For Yurkevich, the goal of education aligns with the ultimate goal of life: the cultivation of the human spirit.

In Yurkevich's philosophical understanding, the spirit represents the essence of humanity, capable of being educated, which makes both human existence and its improvement possible. Yurkevich emphasized that the ultimate purpose of human existence lies in the pursuit of truth, goodness, and a divine-like nature. He viewed societal structures such as the state, the church, and social institutions as mere instruments that must validate their existence by genuinely and unconditionally serving humanity, following the example of the Son of God [25]. Humanity, in Yurkevich's view, is inherently godlike, containing an indelible spark of the divine spirit, which is in constant development and improvement. However, he emphasized that education should remain natural, serving as a supportive aid to the individual's self-education.

Unlike many proponents of moral and Christian pedagogy, Yurkevich devoted a significant portion of his *Course of General Pedagogy* to the 'pedagogical care for the student's body'. He believed that the essence of the soul and its connection to the body is far richer and more complex than traditionally assumed. According to Yurkevich, the body is not merely a vessel but an integral organ of the soul, inseparable from its continuous composition and arrangement [15]. He acknowledged the relationship between the body and the health of the spirit, cautioning against the simplistic assumption that a healthy body automatically cultivates a healthy spirit. However, he also asserted: "*A weak and sick body is the first and greatest temptation for the spirit, no matter how healthy the spirit may be*" [25, p. 181].

Yurkevich placed special emphasis on the role of the family and parents in the Christian education of the child. For him, education is a collaborative effort involving the family, school, church, and society, with the family occupying the

foremost position [26]. The family has always been, and remains, the natural environment for the child's upbringing: "*The child is reborn to moral life under the influence of the family spirit*" [15, p. 48]. The moral atmosphere within the family, the education and upbringing of the parents, their health, social status, and traditions—all these factors play a critical role in the early development and upbringing of the child.

Yurkevich regarded family education as foundational in shaping an individual's personality. He underscored the mother's crucial role, highlighting her unmatched influence in shaping a child's development. He noted that a mother's image, deeply embedded in a child's soul, serves as the most powerful educator, often guiding their emotions, tendencies, and character throughout their life [14].

5.3. Adapting Yurkevich's Ideas for Global Education

Pamfil Yurkevich's educational philosophy emphasizes the moral, intellectual, and spiritual development of individuals. While his pedagogical ideas remain influential within religiously oriented education, their application in contemporary global contexts presents both opportunities and challenges. Yurkevich's focus on moral character formation and spirituality aligns well with education systems that incorporate religious values, but his framework may require adaptation in secular and pluralistic societies where inclusivity and practical skills are prioritized.

Yurkevich's emphasis on moral and spiritual development is deeply rooted in Christian tradition. His view that education should cultivate an individual's moral consciousness and align with divine principles resonates in societies where religion plays a central role in schooling. In regions such as Eastern Europe, Latin America, and parts of Africa, where Christian influence is significant, his approach could complement existing systems that emphasize ethical and character education [27, 28].

However, in multicultural and secular societies, the exclusive reliance on Christian values in education may conflict with contemporary principles of religious neutrality and inclusivity. Countries like the United States, Canada, and India implement educational policies that seek to balance diverse religious and philosophical perspectives [29], making the direct application of Yurkevich's pedagogy more complex.

As we mentioned, Yurkevich envisioned teachers as moral and spiritual guides responsible for shaping students' ethical development. This approach is still relevant in educational traditions that emphasize teacher-student mentorship and moral instruction, such as in Japan [30], parts of Africa [31], and Southeast Asia, where educators play a formative role beyond academics.

In contrast, educational models in Scandinavia, Western Europe, and North America emphasize student-centered learning, critical thinking, and autonomy. In these systems, teachers act as facilitators rather than moral authorities, guiding students in independent exploration rather than imposing ethical or religious doctrines [32, 33]. This shift challenges the application of Yurkevich's model in

these contexts, as contemporary pedagogy increasingly prioritizes secular, inquiry-based learning.

Yurkevich's holistic approach, integrating moral, intellectual, and spiritual education, shares similarities with alternative educational models such as Montessori and Waldorf, which stress the development of the whole person. His ideas appear to align with global education initiatives like UNESCO's Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) and Human Rights Education (HRE), which promote respect for human dignity, equality, and ethical development [34].

However, we can assume that in countries with highly technocratic education systems—such as South Korea, China, and parts of Western Europe—education is primarily viewed as a means to develop workforce-ready skills. In such environments, the emphasis on moral and spiritual formation may be secondary to economic and technological imperatives [35]. Yurkevich's pedagogical approach may require modifications to remain relevant in these settings.

Yurkevich advocated for integrating religious education into schooling to harmonize faith and knowledge. His framework aligns with educational practices in Islamic countries, India, and Latin America, where religious teachings remain integral to curricula. In these contexts, his emphasis on the unity of faith and education could strengthen existing models of moral instruction.

Conversely, in secular nations, particularly in Europe, where education is increasingly detached from religious institutions, his perspective may be perceived as incompatible with policies that separate church and state. In such societies, integrating religious teachings into public education could lead to debates over inclusivity and religious pluralism.

Yurkevich emphasized the interconnected roles of family, school, and religious institutions in fostering a child's moral development. In societies with strong religious and family-centered traditions, such as the Middle East and parts of South America, this model aligns with prevailing cultural and educational norms. His philosophy underscores the importance of collaboration between home and school in shaping a child's values and ethical outlook.

However, in multicultural and secular societies, where family structures, religious beliefs, and educational philosophies vary widely, achieving this unity can be challenging. Education systems in pluralistic societies often emphasize individual rights and diversity, making it difficult to implement a single, faith-based moral framework [36].

While Yurkevich's educational philosophy provides valuable insights into moral and spiritual education, its direct application in diverse global contexts requires adaptation. His emphasis on ethical development aligns with many character education initiatives worldwide, but his Christian-centric framework may be less relevant in secular or religiously plural societies. To maintain its relevance, his pedagogy must be contextualized within broader educational debates that balance moral instruction with inclusivity, academic freedom, and practical skill development.

6. Conclusion

The works of Pamfil Yurkevich offer a profound philosophical and pedagogical concept that emerges from a deep philosophical understanding of upbringing and education as essential dimensions of human existence. The reconstruction of Yurkevich's concept provides pedagogical thought with a synthetic character, enabling the reconciliation of seemingly opposing principles: the alignment of pedagogical influences with both ethical ideals and the complexities of human nature.

Yurkevich's philosophical and pedagogical legacy holds significant relevance for contemporary humanitarian knowledge. It provides valuable insights into fundamental principles of humanism, addressing critical issues such as balancing universal and national priorities within the education system. His ideas also contribute to the development of new philosophical and pedagogical frameworks aimed at reshaping professional perspectives on teaching, aligning them with a renewed vision of education.

The scientific contribution of this research lies in the reconstruction and actualization of Yurkevich's philosophical and pedagogical concept, highlighting its enduring relevance and applicability to modern educational theory and practice.

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