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Social Education Dimensions and Components and Their Educational Implications from the Perspective of Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz

ABSTRACT

The present study aimed to identify the dimensions and components of social education from the perspective of Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz and to analyze its educational implications within a comparative framework emphasizing rationality, justice, and the common good. This study employed a qualitative directed content analysis approach grounded in philosophical-educational inquiry. Data were collected through documentary analysis of Leibniz's principal philosophical works, including *Monadology*, *Discourse on Metaphysics*, *Theodicy*, and selected philosophical correspondences. Textual units related to ontology, anthropology, epistemology, ethics, and social order were extracted and analyzed using MAXQDA software through open, axial, and selective coding procedures. The analysis process resulted in the extraction of 51 primary codes and several organizing and overarching themes concerning metaphysical foundations, rational selfhood, justice, collective harmony, and social responsibility. To ensure trustworthiness, the study applied peer review, repeated recoding, reflexive analysis, and Holsti reliability testing. The findings revealed that Leibniz's philosophical system provides a coherent framework for theorizing social education despite its highly metaphysical structure. Five overarching dimensions of social education were identified: metaphysical foundations of social education, anthropological foundations, epistemological foundations, ethical-social foundations, and educational aims and implications. The results indicated that the individual, as a self-active monad harmonized with the whole, constitutes the basis of social order. Social education in Leibniz's thought is directed toward the awakening of reason, the transition from sensory perception to reflective rational awareness, and the cultivation of justice as "wise benevolence." The analysis further demonstrated that social harmony emerges not through external coercion but through the internal rational coordination of autonomous individuals. Moreover, justice was conceptualized as a socially preservative moral duty oriented toward the common good and extending responsibility toward future generations. Comparative interpretation also showed substantial convergence between Leibnizian rational ethics and the ethical-social teachings of Nahj al-Balagha regarding justice, moral responsibility, collective welfare, and the integration of reason and ethics in social life. The study concluded that Leibniz's philosophy possesses significant potential for reconstructing a comprehensive model of contemporary social education grounded in rationality, ethical responsibility, and collective harmony. In this framework, education is not merely a mechanism for social adaptation but a transformative process aimed at cultivating rational self-awareness, social responsibility, and benevolent justice. The integration of Leibnizian rationalism with the justice-oriented ethical framework of Nahj al-Balagha can contribute to the development of a balanced educational paradigm that simultaneously promotes individual perfection and social cohesion while responding to contemporary moral and social crises.

Keywords: Social Education, Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz, Nahj al-Balagha, Justice, Common Good, Ethical Rationality

Introduction

Social education is one of the central concerns of educational philosophy because it connects individual development with collective life, moral responsibility, justice, and the common good. In contemporary societies, education is no longer

understood merely as the transmission of knowledge or the development of technical skills; rather, it is increasingly viewed as a formative process through which individuals learn how to live with others, recognize social obligations, participate in collective life, and contribute to the moral and rational improvement of society. From this perspective, social education is concerned with the formation of persons who are not only cognitively competent but also ethically responsible, socially aware, and capable of constructive coexistence. This issue has become particularly significant in the present age, in which many societies face challenges such as excessive individualism, weakening social solidarity, moral fragmentation, declining civic responsibility, and the erosion of shared meanings. Accordingly, philosophical inquiry into the foundations of social education can provide a deeper understanding of how education may cultivate harmony between the self and society, freedom and responsibility, individuality and collectivity, and rationality and morality (1, 2).

Within Islamic educational thought, social education has often been analyzed as a process rooted in moral formation, justice, responsibility, and the regulation of human relations according to divine and ethical principles. Studies on social education in *Nahj al-Balagha* indicate that this text presents a comprehensive moral-social framework in which human development is inseparable from justice, respect for rights, responsibility toward others, and participation in the improvement of society (3, 4). In this view, social education is not limited to behavioral adjustment but includes the cultivation of inner moral dispositions that enable individuals to act responsibly in family, community, and political life. The emphasis on justice, moderation, advice, exemplary conduct, and moral accountability in *Nahj al-Balagha* has made it an important source for theorizing social education in Islamic educational studies (5, 6).

Earlier studies in Islamic educational literature have emphasized that social education begins in childhood and is shaped by family, moral modeling, religious instruction, and the internalization of social virtues. Ramezani and Heidari argued that the *Qur'an* and *Nahj al-Balagha* provide practical methods for children's social education by emphasizing role modeling, moral advice, responsibility, and respect for others (7). Similarly, research on Islamic-Iranian lifestyle has shown that Imam Ali's educational conduct offers a multidimensional model of life in which personal morality, family relations, social responsibility, and political ethics are integrated into a unified educational pattern (8). Such studies suggest that social education in Islamic thought is not merely a socialization mechanism but a value-oriented process aimed at forming human beings who can live justly, responsibly, and meaningfully within society.

Recent Islamic educational studies have further expanded this discussion by examining the conceptual, spiritual, cultural, and developmental dimensions of social education. Eslami Mehr and colleagues proposed a staged model of education based on Islamic viewpoints, emphasizing that human development proceeds through ordered phases in which affection, discipline, responsibility, and moral awareness must be cultivated in accordance with the learner's developmental needs (9). Esmaeili and Kavousi presented a model of cultural education based on the religious teachings of *Nahj al-Balagha* and showed that cultural and social formation are deeply connected to faith, moral values, and the organization of social behavior (10). In a related line of inquiry, Pishro and colleagues examined the individual and social principles of human education in *Nahj al-Balagha* and emphasized the inseparability of personal refinement and social responsibility (11). These works collectively show that Islamic approaches to social education are based on the integration of moral self-cultivation and social commitment.

Further developments in this field have introduced the necessity of social education as a response to moral decline, social disorder, and the weakening of communal responsibility. Najafi and Shahrajabian emphasized the necessity of social education from the viewpoint of Ayatollah Javadi Amoli and argued that social education is essential for preventing ethical deterioration and guiding human beings toward their social and spiritual vocation (12). Naseri Karimvand and colleagues identified components of spirituality-oriented social education in *Nahj al-Balagha* and showed that social education grounded in spirituality can strengthen cooperation, right-orientation, and social harmony (13). Shokri and colleagues also presented a

conceptual model of Imam Ali's educational perspective, demonstrating that social education can be organized across cultural, political, legal, economic, and moral dimensions (14). These findings show that social education is not a marginal topic but a foundational component of educational philosophy and social ethics.

More recent studies have attempted to systematize the components and methods of social education in Islamic and educational contexts. Kohnpour and colleagues, through a systematic study, identified major conceptual components of social education and emphasized that ethical orientation, social participation, wise encounter, and value-based harmony are central to the formation of socially responsible individuals (2). Sharifi and colleagues examined methods of social education based on the Holy Qur'an and highlighted the importance of reason, affection, brotherhood, respect, and ethical communication in building socially balanced individuals (15). Karami also analyzed strategies of social education from the perspective of Nahj al-Balagha and emphasized the role of parents, moral instruction, behavioral modeling, and the integration of cognitive, affective, and behavioral dimensions in social formation (16). These studies indicate that social education requires a multidimensional model capable of combining knowledge, morality, affection, and practical behavior.

Alongside Islamic educational thought, the philosophy of Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz offers a rich but less explored foundation for theorizing social education. Leibniz is generally known as a rationalist philosopher, mathematician, metaphysician, and theorist of monads, pre-established harmony, and the best possible world. However, recent scholarship has increasingly shown that his philosophy has ethical, social, political, and educational implications that go beyond abstract metaphysics (17, 18). Leibniz's famous principle of "theoria cum praxi" indicates that theoretical reason and practical life are not separate domains; rather, philosophy must contribute to the improvement of human life, the ordering of society, and the advancement of the common good (18). From this standpoint, Leibniz's metaphysics can be read as a foundation for social education because it links individuality, rational order, moral responsibility, and universal harmony.

Leibniz's theory of monads is especially important for social education because it provides a philosophical account of individuality without reducing social life to atomistic isolation. Each monad is unique, internally active, and expressive of the universe from its own perspective. This means that the individual has intrinsic dignity, inner activity, and a unique standpoint, yet this individuality is not opposed to harmony with the whole. Zimmer's interpretation of Leibniz as a thinker of "unity in diversity" is particularly relevant here because it shows how Leibnizian philosophy can reconcile plurality and order, difference and harmony, individuality and universality (19). Similarly, Cai's account of Leibniz's intellectual heights highlights the vastness of Leibniz's rational project and its attempt to connect mathematics, metaphysics, knowledge, and order within a unified worldview (20). In educational terms, this suggests that social education should not suppress individuality but should cultivate individuals in such a way that their unique capacities contribute to a rational and ethical social order.

Leibniz's thought also has a significant cross-cultural and civilizational dimension. Horyna's study of Leibniz's engagement with Chinese philosophy demonstrates that Leibniz was not confined to a narrow European intellectual horizon; rather, he sought dialogue across cultures and regarded philosophical exchange as a pathway toward broader human understanding (21). Laerke's analysis of Leibniz in Europe further shows that Leibniz's intellectual project was shaped by European networks of knowledge, communication, and social exchange, which gives his philosophy an inherently dialogical and social character (22). Borowski's historical study of Leibniz as a savant also confirms that Leibniz's intellectual formation occurred within a dense network of social, scientific, and cultural relations (23). These interpretations support the view that Leibniz's philosophy can be used to formulate a theory of social education grounded in communication, intellectual cooperation, and the pursuit of shared truth.

The ethical dimension of Leibniz's philosophy is particularly relevant for the present study. Dong's interpretation of Leibniz as a virtue ethicist shows that Leibnizian ethics is not reducible to abstract rationalism; rather, it includes virtue, moral character,

benevolence, and the orientation of the person toward the good (24). Aiello's study of empathy and sensitivity to others' pleasure and pain further emphasizes that Leibniz's moral thought contains a strong relational and affective component (25). This is significant because social education cannot be founded on reason alone if reason is understood as cold calculation; it also requires sensitivity to others, benevolence, emotional responsiveness, and the ability to understand the good of another. Therefore, Leibniz's concept of justice as wise benevolence provides a bridge between rational ethics and social-emotional formation.

Contemporary studies have also begun to identify explicit educational implications in Leibniz's philosophy. Salimi and Moradi Khaneghah examined the application of Leibniz's views in the structure of education in Iran and concluded that Leibnizian rationalism can inspire the development of a reason-centered approach to education, provided that it is adapted to cultural and Islamic values (26). Gramigna and Boschi, by returning to an unpublished Leibnizian writing and interpreting it through an educational lens, demonstrated that Leibniz's thought can support educational proposals centered on rational formation, moral responsibility, and human development (27). Reinhart also presented Leibniz's philosophy as a form of social technē, suggesting that philosophy can function as a practical art for organizing collective life, improving social understanding, and constructing rational forms of coexistence (28). These studies confirm that Leibniz's philosophy can be read not only as metaphysics but also as a resource for educational theory.

The contemporary relevance of social education is also evident in studies outside strictly philosophical or religious frameworks. Buttler and colleagues, in their comparative work on school-to-work transition, emphasized the importance of education in preparing individuals for social participation, professional life, and responsible integration into broader social systems (29). Although this perspective differs from philosophical and theological approaches, it reinforces the idea that education must prepare individuals for meaningful participation in society. When placed beside Leibniz's view that education should contribute to the perfection of individuals and society, such contemporary educational concerns show the continuing importance of linking personal development with collective welfare.

Despite the growing literature on social education in Islamic thought and the increasing recognition of Leibniz's ethical and educational relevance, few studies have systematically extracted the dimensions and components of social education from Leibniz's philosophy and analyzed its educational implications. Most Islamic studies have focused on Nahj al-Balagha, the Qur'an, or Islamic educational models, while Leibnizian studies have generally emphasized metaphysics, rationalism, ethics, or historical intellectual context. The gap lies in connecting Leibniz's metaphysical, anthropological, epistemological, ethical, and social ideas into a coherent model of social education. Such an inquiry is important because Leibniz offers a distinctive framework in which individuality, rational order, benevolence, justice, common good, and universal harmony can be interpreted as educational principles.

A Leibnizian approach to social education can contribute to contemporary educational theory in several ways. First, it provides a model of the individual as internally active and uniquely dignified, which prevents social education from becoming mere external conformity. Second, it presents social harmony as the result of rational coordination rather than coercive uniformity. Third, it defines justice as wise benevolence, thereby integrating reason and affection in moral education. Fourth, it links education with the common good and the perfection of both individual and society. Finally, it opens the possibility of comparative dialogue with Islamic sources such as Nahj al-Balagha, where justice, responsibility, moral conduct, and collective welfare are also central concerns. This convergence suggests that a comparative philosophical-educational model may help respond to contemporary crises of fragmentation, individualism, and moral uncertainty.

Therefore, the aim of the present study was to identify the dimensions and components of social education and analyze its educational implications from the perspective of Leibniz.

Methods and Materials

The present study was conducted using a qualitative research design based on directed qualitative content analysis with a philosophical-educational orientation. The study sought to identify the dimensions and components of social education from the perspective of Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz and to analyze its educational implications within the context of rationality, ethics, justice, and social harmony. Because the nature of the research problem required deep conceptual exploration and interpretive analysis of philosophical texts, a qualitative methodology was considered the most appropriate approach. The study was fundamental-theoretical in purpose and relied on documentary and library-based data collection. The primary corpus of analysis consisted of Leibniz's major philosophical works and writings that contained explicit or implicit references to metaphysical, anthropological, epistemological, ethical, political, and educational themes related to social life and human perfection. The principal sources included *Monadology*, *Discourse on Metaphysics*, *Theodicy*, philosophical letters and correspondences, writings on natural law, and secondary interpretive works discussing Leibniz's ethical and educational thought. All accessible Persian and English translations of the original texts were reviewed to ensure conceptual precision and interpretive consistency.

The process of participant selection in the conventional empirical sense was not applicable in this philosophical qualitative inquiry because the unit of analysis consisted of conceptual and textual data rather than human subjects. Instead, the study employed purposive sampling of documents and philosophical passages. Textual units were selected according to their relevance to the central concepts of social education, including reason, justice, common good, moral responsibility, harmony, individuality, social order, benevolence, education, and civic life. The selected texts were subjected to repeated close reading and interpretive examination in order to extract meaningful conceptual units associated with social education and its philosophical foundations. Theoretical saturation was considered achieved when no new conceptual categories or interpretive themes emerged from additional textual analysis and when the extracted concepts formed a coherent and integrated conceptual network.

Data collection in this study was conducted through systematic documentary analysis and conceptual extraction from primary and secondary philosophical sources. The main instrument for data collection was a researcher-developed conceptual coding framework grounded in the philosophical system of Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz. Initially, the researcher performed a comprehensive conceptual review of key terms and categories associated with social education, including society, justice, rationality, moral duty, common good, human perfection, harmony, benevolence, responsibility, freedom, and civic coexistence. These concepts were examined linguistically, philosophically, and educationally in order to construct an initial analytical framework for coding and interpretation.

The collected texts were imported into MAXQDA qualitative analysis software to facilitate systematic coding, organization, retrieval, and conceptual mapping of the data. During the data collection process, all meaningful textual segments associated with educational, ethical, social, anthropological, and metaphysical dimensions were extracted line by line and sentence by sentence. Particular attention was given to passages related to the concepts of monads, pre-established harmony, rational selfhood, justice as wise benevolence, social responsibility, natural law, collective happiness, and the relationship between individual and society. Analytical memos and reflective notes were also recorded throughout the coding process to document emerging interpretations, conceptual relationships, and theoretical insights. The use of MAXQDA enabled transparent management of the coding process and supported the development of thematic hierarchies and conceptual networks.

To enhance the credibility and trustworthiness of the data collection process, several validation procedures were implemented. Repeated return to the original texts ensured consistency between codes and textual meanings. In addition, portions of the coding process were reviewed by experts in philosophy of education and Islamic educational thought to evaluate

conceptual coherence and interpretive accuracy. Reflexive self-review was also employed to reduce the imposition of personal assumptions on the interpretation of Leibniz's philosophical ideas.

Data analysis was conducted through a three-stage qualitative content analysis process consisting of open coding, axial coding, and selective coding. In the first stage, open coding, the researcher carefully reviewed the philosophical texts and extracted all meaningful units associated with the study objectives. Each statement or conceptual expression relevant to social education and its philosophical implications was assigned a descriptive initial code. The coding process remained closely tied to the original textual meanings to preserve conceptual authenticity and avoid premature abstraction. Through this stage, 51 initial codes were identified from the analyzed documents.

In the second stage, axial coding, the extracted codes were systematically compared and grouped according to conceptual similarity, thematic coherence, and philosophical relationships. This process led to the formation of several foundational themes and organizing categories. Concepts such as individuality, internal self-activity, rational perception, moral duty, justice, social harmony, and common good were connected and integrated into broader conceptual structures. The analysis revealed significant relationships between Leibniz's metaphysical theory of monads and his ethical-social understanding of human coexistence and collective harmony. During this stage, conceptual links between rational self-awareness, moral benevolence, and civic responsibility became increasingly evident.

In the final stage, selective coding, the organizing themes were integrated into overarching dimensions that constituted the final conceptual model of social education from Leibniz's perspective. Five overarching dimensions emerged from the analysis: metaphysical foundations of social education, anthropological foundations of social education, epistemological foundations of social education, ethical foundations of social education, and educational aims and implications. These dimensions collectively formed an integrated theoretical framework demonstrating how Leibniz's philosophical system can serve as a foundation for social education centered on rationality, justice, moral responsibility, and the pursuit of the common good.

To ensure reliability and analytical rigor, the coding process was conducted repeatedly over different time intervals, and intercoder agreement procedures were applied through consultation with academic reviewers familiar with qualitative philosophical inquiry. Holsti's coefficient of reliability was calculated for portions of the coded data, yielding a high level of agreement. The use of systematic documentation, coding transparency, analytical memoing, and conceptual triangulation contributed to the dependability and confirmability of the findings.

Findings and Results

The findings of the present study were derived from the directed qualitative content analysis of the philosophical works of Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz, including *Monadology*, *Discourse on Metaphysics*, *Theodicy*, writings on natural law, and selected philosophical correspondences. Through the processes of open, axial, and selective coding, 51 initial codes were extracted and subsequently organized into foundational themes, organizing themes, and overarching dimensions of social education. The analysis demonstrated that Leibniz's philosophical system contains a coherent framework for conceptualizing social education based on rationality, justice, internal harmony, moral responsibility, and the common good. The extracted findings ultimately led to the identification of five overarching dimensions of social education: metaphysical foundations, anthropological foundations, epistemological foundations, ethical-social foundations, and educational aims and implications. Table 1 presents the extracted codes, foundational themes, and organizing themes derived from the analyzed documents.

Table 1. Extracted Codes, Foundational Themes, and Organizing Themes Related to Social Education in Leibniz's Thought

No.	Documented Text/Concept	Initial Codes	Foundational Themes	Organizing and Overarching Themes
1	Monads as simple substances and foundational elements of existence	Simple substance; real atoms of nature; indestructibility; absence of external influence	Fundamental and independent monadic substance	Organizing Theme: Monadic ontology; Overarching Theme: Metaphysical foundations of social education
2	Distinction and internal self-movement of monads	Unique individuality; internal principle of change; appetite as internal motivation	Self-activity and intrinsic individuality	Organizing Theme: Principle of individuality and self-activity; Overarching Theme: Anthropological foundations of social education
3	Perception, memory, and reflective consciousness	Rational soul; self-awareness; knowledge of truth	Hierarchical perception and reflective awareness	Organizing Theme: Levels of consciousness and cognition; Overarching Theme: Epistemological foundations of social education
4	God and the best possible world	Divine perfection; infinite wisdom; moral and metaphysical order	Rational and moral order of the universe	Organizing Theme: Rational theology and cosmic order; Overarching Theme: Teleological foundations of social education
5	Justice as wise benevolence	Justice as organized charity; pursuit of common good; social duty	Integration of reason and emotion in justice	Organizing Theme: Rational-ethical conception of justice; Overarching Theme: Ethical foundations of social education
6	Common good and social responsibility	Social benefit; enduring happiness; moral obligation toward society	Responsibility and collective welfare	Organizing Theme: Indicators of common good and responsibility; Overarching Theme: Principles of social education
7	Society as the City of God	Moral world; reward and punishment; knowledge of virtue	Ethical society governed by justice	Organizing Theme: Ideal moral society; Overarching Theme: Leibnizian ideal social order
8	Political perfection and educational purpose	Flourishing of reason; education for perfection and common good	Rationalization of society through education	Organizing Theme: Educational teleology and politics; Overarching Theme: Educational implications
9	Benevolence and the role of the other	Reciprocity; significance of others; social perspective	Dynamic relation between self and others	Organizing Theme: Ethics centered on the other; Overarching Theme: Humanistic foundations of social education
10	Freedom, morality, and divine providence	Rational freedom; universal benevolence; moral intentionality	Freedom guided by rational morality	Organizing Theme: Relation of freedom and ethics; Overarching Theme: Moral-theological foundations
11	Natural society and natural law	Natural sociality; preservation of society; family as first society	Sociality rooted in human nature	Organizing Theme: Natural society and natural law; Overarching Theme: Anthropological-social foundations
12	Evolution of justice toward collective welfare	Transition from individual good to common good	Priority of collective welfare	Organizing Theme: Development of justice in Leibniz's philosophy; Overarching Theme: Central principle of social education
13	Justice toward future generations	Intergenerational responsibility; universal benevolence	Justice beyond the present generation	Organizing Theme: Intergenerational justice; Overarching Theme: Responsibility-oriented education
14	Necessity of education for individual and social perfection	Education as perfection; realization of common good	Unity of personal and collective development	Organizing Theme: Necessity and purpose of education; Overarching Theme: Goals of social education
15	Political science and the empire of reason	Rational governance; reason guiding individuals and states	Rationalization of social and political systems	Organizing Theme: Political-educational teleology; Overarching Theme: Rational ideal society

The first category of findings demonstrated that Leibniz's metaphysical conception of monads establishes the ontological basis for social education. The extracted codes emphasized that each individual possesses an independent and internally active essence that cannot be mechanically controlled through external coercion. This finding indicates that social education in Leibniz's thought is grounded in respect for individuality and the intrinsic dignity of the human person.

The second set of findings revealed that the principle of pre-established harmony provides a theoretical explanation for social cohesion without eliminating individuality. Although monads remain internally autonomous, they are harmonized

through a universal rational order. This suggests that social order emerges from the coordination of rational individuals rather than through authoritarian social control.

The analysis further showed that individuality occupies a central position in Leibniz's anthropology. The codes related to internal appetite, self-activity, and intrinsic movement toward perfection indicate that education should facilitate the unfolding of internal capacities rather than impose external conformity. The educational process is therefore interpreted as a process of awakening rather than conditioning.

Another significant finding concerned Leibniz's theory of perception and reflective consciousness. The extracted themes demonstrated that the human mind, as a rational monad, possesses the capacity for self-awareness and truth recognition. Consequently, social education must cultivate reflective thinking and rational understanding in order to enable individuals to recognize their social responsibilities and ethical obligations.

The findings also indicated that Leibniz rejects purely mechanistic interpretations of human cognition and social behavior. Instead, human beings are understood as rational and morally purposive entities whose actions are guided by conscious awareness. This philosophical orientation reinforces the importance of intellectual cultivation in educational systems.

The analysis of texts concerning divine perfection and the best possible world revealed that social education in Leibniz's philosophy is teleological in nature. Human society is interpreted as part of a rational and morally ordered universe directed toward perfection. Educational activity is therefore connected to the broader purpose of harmonizing human conduct with cosmic rationality.

A major finding of the study involved Leibniz's definition of justice as "wise benevolence." The extracted codes demonstrated that justice is not merely legal equality or institutional order, but rather a rationally organized form of charity directed toward the common good. This interpretation places ethical rationality at the center of social education.

The findings further revealed that justice functions as a social duty aimed at preserving society and promoting collective welfare. Society is conceptualized as a union of individuals oriented toward shared happiness and mutual flourishing. This perspective highlights the communal dimension of moral education.

Another important finding concerned the concept of the common good. The analysis showed that social actions are evaluated according to their capacity to maximize benefit and minimize harm within society. Happiness was interpreted as enduring joy rooted in rational and ethical life, thereby linking personal fulfillment with collective welfare.

The study also demonstrated that Leibniz assigns a central role to moral responsibility in social life. The codes related to duty, prudence, and obligation suggest that individuals are ethically accountable for contributing to social harmony and public welfare. Social education therefore includes the cultivation of responsible citizenship.

The category of findings associated with the "City of God" illustrated Leibniz's vision of an ideal ethical society. This society is characterized by rational order, moral accountability, and the assurance that good actions are rewarded while harmful actions are punished. The findings indicate that ethical order is inseparable from social order in Leibniz's thought.

The analysis additionally revealed that self-knowledge serves as the foundation for understanding justice and virtue. According to Leibniz, knowledge of the soul precedes ethical maturity. This implies that social education must begin with reflective self-awareness before progressing toward broader social consciousness.

The findings concerning education and political order demonstrated that Leibniz regarded the flourishing of reason as the ultimate goal of politics and governance. Educational institutions are therefore expected to cultivate rational judgment, intellectual discipline, and civic responsibility in order to create a harmonious society governed by reason rather than force.

Another major finding involved the role of empathy and the recognition of others. The extracted themes emphasized reciprocity between self and others and highlighted the ethical importance of considering the perspective of others in both

morality and politics. This finding supports the idea that social education must promote empathy, dialogue, and relational understanding.

Finally, the analysis revealed that Leibniz's later writings increasingly prioritized the common good over narrow individual interests and extended the concept of justice to future generations. This demonstrates that social education, from Leibniz's perspective, must cultivate long-term moral responsibility and intergenerational ethical awareness. The resulting conceptual framework presents social education as a rational, ethical, and transformative process directed toward human perfection, collective harmony, and the realization of the common good.

Discussion and Conclusion

The findings of the present study demonstrated that the philosophical system of Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz contains a coherent and multilayered framework for theorizing social education. Through directed qualitative content analysis, five overarching dimensions were identified, including metaphysical foundations, anthropological foundations, epistemological foundations, ethical-social foundations, and educational aims and implications. The results revealed that Leibniz's philosophy, despite its highly metaphysical character, extends beyond abstract rational speculation and provides important educational implications concerning individuality, rationality, justice, moral responsibility, social harmony, and the common good. In particular, the study showed that social order in Leibniz's thought is not based on external coercion or rigid social control but emerges from the internal rational harmony of autonomous individuals whose development is directed toward perfection and collective welfare.

One of the central findings of the study was the role of monadic ontology in shaping the foundations of social education. The extracted themes indicated that each individual is understood as a unique and internally active monad possessing intrinsic dignity, self-movement, and independent rational capacity. This finding aligns with interpretations of Leibniz's philosophy that emphasize individuality within universal harmony (17, 19). The notion that monads are internally self-active yet coordinated through pre-established harmony suggests that social education should cultivate inner rationality rather than impose conformity through external force. In educational terms, this means that human beings must be guided toward self-realization and conscious participation in society rather than passive obedience. Such a conclusion is also compatible with educational theories emphasizing dignity-centered and developmental approaches to human formation.

The findings concerning individuality and self-activity further demonstrated that Leibnizian anthropology supports an educational model based on internal growth and rational awakening. The extracted concepts related to appetite, internal movement, and reflective consciousness indicated that education is fundamentally a process of actualizing latent capacities. This interpretation corresponds with Gramigna and Boschi's argument that Leibniz's educational thought seeks the perfection of the individual through rational and moral cultivation (27). Similarly, Salimi and Moradi Khaneghah emphasized that Leibniz's views can contribute to educational systems by strengthening reason-centered and self-directed learning processes (26). The present findings therefore reinforce the idea that social education should move beyond mechanical instruction and instead promote reflective awareness, independent judgment, and responsible freedom.

Another important finding concerned Leibniz's conception of perception and reflective self-awareness. The analysis revealed that human beings, as rational monads, possess the capacity for conscious knowledge of themselves and reality. This suggests that social education is inseparable from epistemological development because social responsibility depends on reflective awareness. Individuals who understand themselves and recognize the rational structure of existence are more capable of understanding their duties toward others and society. This finding is consistent with Cai's interpretation of Leibniz's intellectual system as an integrated rational project connecting knowledge, order, and human development (20). It also resonates

with Reinhart's argument that Leibniz's philosophy functions as a form of "social technē," in which rational understanding contributes to the organization of collective life (28). Therefore, the study confirms that rational self-awareness is not merely an individual cognitive achievement but also a prerequisite for ethical and social participation.

The findings additionally showed that Leibniz's teleological worldview plays a crucial role in his conception of social education. The identified themes concerning divine perfection and the best possible world indicate that the universe is governed by rational and moral order. Consequently, education becomes a process through which individuals align themselves with this order. This interpretation corresponds with Phemister's argument that Leibniz's philosophy unites theory and practice in the service of human improvement and social advancement (18). The educational implications of this finding are significant because they suggest that education must not be restricted to utilitarian or technical goals; rather, it should cultivate ethical rationality, wisdom, and orientation toward the common good.

The study's findings concerning justice constitute one of its most important contributions. Justice was identified as "wise benevolence," meaning the rational organization of charity and concern for others. This finding demonstrates that Leibniz's ethics integrates reason and affection instead of opposing them. Dong's interpretation of Leibniz as a virtue ethicist strongly supports this conclusion because it emphasizes virtue, moral character, and benevolent action as central features of Leibnizian ethics (24). Likewise, Aiello's analysis of empathy and sensitivity to others' pleasure and pain confirms that Leibniz's philosophy contains a relational and affective dimension that is essential for moral life (25). The present study therefore suggests that social education must cultivate both rational judgment and emotional sensitivity in order to produce socially responsible individuals.

Another major finding involved the relationship between justice and the common good. The analysis demonstrated that Leibniz gradually moved from a limited emphasis on individual benefit toward a stronger prioritization of collective welfare and universal benevolence. This development indicates that social education should encourage individuals to transcend narrow self-interest and recognize their responsibilities toward society. Such findings align with educational discussions emphasizing social participation, collective responsibility, and ethical citizenship (2, 29). In this regard, the present study suggests that social education should cultivate a balance between individual development and commitment to the welfare of others.

The findings concerning empathy and the role of the other also carry important educational implications. Leibniz's emphasis on reciprocity between self and others indicates that ethical and political life depend on recognizing the perspective of others. This finding supports Aiello's interpretation of Leibnizian ethics as fundamentally relational and empathetic (25). Moreover, the emphasis on dialogue, understanding, and reciprocal recognition resonates with Horyna's analysis of Leibniz's openness to intercultural understanding and philosophical exchange (21). Accordingly, social education should foster empathy, communication, and intercultural awareness rather than merely transmitting isolated cognitive content.

The results related to natural society and natural law further demonstrated that Leibniz considered sociality to be rooted in human nature itself. The family was identified as the first natural society, and social order was interpreted as a continuation of humanity's natural inclination toward cooperation and coexistence. This conclusion aligns with Islamic educational studies emphasizing the foundational role of family and moral upbringing in social education (7, 16). It also corresponds with Najafi and Shahrajabian's emphasis on social education as necessary for preserving ethical and communal order (12). Therefore, the study indicates that social education should begin within natural social institutions and gradually expand toward broader forms of civic and global responsibility.

The findings also highlighted the importance of education as an instrument for rationalizing society and promoting collective perfection. Leibniz regarded the flourishing of reason as the ultimate goal of politics and governance, and education was viewed as the primary means for achieving this objective. This interpretation is strongly supported by Reinhart's conception of

philosophy as a social art directed toward rational coexistence (28). It also aligns with contemporary educational discussions emphasizing the need for critical thinking, social reasoning, and responsible citizenship in modern societies (29). Thus, the study confirms that education, from a Leibnizian perspective, is not simply preparation for employment or social adaptation but a transformative process aimed at creating rational and ethical communities.

The study further demonstrated important convergences between Leibnizian thought and Islamic educational perspectives, especially those derived from *Nahj al-Balagha*. Both traditions emphasize justice, responsibility, moral self-cultivation, and the importance of the common good. Studies on *Nahj al-Balagha* consistently stress that social education should develop moral awareness, ethical conduct, social participation, and concern for others (3, 4, 11). Sharifi and colleagues similarly emphasized the integration of reason, affection, and social harmony in Qur'anic approaches to social education (15). These similarities suggest that despite differences in philosophical and theological foundations, both traditions share a commitment to harmonizing individual perfection with collective welfare.

The findings also demonstrated that Leibniz's concept of intergenerational responsibility extends social education beyond immediate social relations and introduces a long-term ethical perspective. Justice was interpreted as including obligations toward future generations, implying that education should cultivate awareness of the enduring consequences of human action. This dimension is particularly relevant in contemporary discussions about sustainability, social responsibility, and ethical governance. It suggests that social education should not focus exclusively on present social adaptation but should also prepare individuals to act responsibly toward future communities and humanity as a whole.

In addition, the findings revealed that Leibniz's philosophy offers a strong critique of purely mechanistic and reductionist approaches to education. Human beings are not viewed as passive recipients of social conditioning but as rational and moral agents capable of self-awareness and ethical growth. This insight has important implications for contemporary educational systems that often prioritize technical efficiency, standardized performance, and instrumental outcomes over moral and intellectual formation. The present study therefore supports approaches to education that emphasize critical reflection, ethical reasoning, and holistic human development.

Another important implication of the findings is that social harmony, according to Leibniz, is compatible with diversity rather than dependent on uniformity. The principle of unity in diversity suggests that different individuals, perspectives, and capacities can coexist within a rational and harmonious social order. This conclusion aligns with Zimmer's interpretation of Leibnizian pluralism and provides an important theoretical foundation for educational approaches that value diversity, dialogue, and mutual respect (19). In increasingly pluralistic societies, such a perspective may contribute to reducing social conflict and strengthening coexistence.

Overall, the findings of the study indicate that Leibniz's philosophy provides a comprehensive and philosophically grounded model of social education centered on rationality, justice, benevolence, and collective harmony. The study demonstrates that Leibnizian thought can contribute significantly to contemporary educational philosophy by offering a framework that integrates individuality and sociality, reason and morality, freedom and responsibility, and personal development and collective welfare. In this sense, social education becomes a process of cultivating rational and ethical individuals capable of participating consciously in the realization of the common good.

One limitation of the present study was its exclusive reliance on documentary and philosophical sources without empirical investigation of how Leibnizian educational principles may function within contemporary educational settings. In addition, because the study employed qualitative philosophical analysis, some interpretive conclusions may reflect the contextual understanding of the researcher despite efforts to ensure rigor, reflexivity, and analytical transparency. Another limitation

concerns the scarcity of educational studies specifically devoted to Leibniz's philosophy, which restricted the availability of directly comparable educational literature.

Future research is recommended to conduct comparative analyses between Leibniz's conception of social education and other philosophical or religious traditions, particularly Islamic educational thought derived from Nahj al-Balagha and Qur'anic teachings. Empirical studies may also investigate the applicability of Leibnizian educational principles in modern educational systems, especially in relation to citizenship education, moral development, critical thinking, and intercultural dialogue. Furthermore, future researchers could examine the relationship between Leibniz's ethical rationalism and contemporary theories of democratic education, social cohesion, and global citizenship.

The findings of the present study may have practical implications for curriculum developers, educational policymakers, teachers, and social educators. Educational systems can benefit from integrating rational reflection, ethical reasoning, empathy, and responsibility toward the common good into teaching practices and curricular structures. Schools and universities may also strengthen social harmony by encouraging dialogue, reflective thinking, and awareness of collective responsibility instead of emphasizing only competitive achievement and technical performance. Moreover, the integration of rationality and moral benevolence highlighted in Leibniz's philosophy can contribute to the formation of educational environments that support both personal flourishing and social cohesion.

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Authors' Contributions

All authors equally contributed to this study.

Declaration of Interest

The authors of this article declared no conflict of interest.

Ethical Considerations

All ethical principles were adhered in conducting and writing this article.

Transparency of Data

In accordance with the principles of transparency and open research, we declare that all data and materials used in this study are available upon request.

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