



# Unveiling Human Nature: Implications For Post-Pandemic Strategies In Adventist Schools

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**Abstract:** Using both articles and books written on human nature, this study analyzed and described selected views on this subject. The main sources of information were provided by Ellen G. White, whose philosophy of Adventist education offers interesting insights and holistic view on human nature as supported by George Knight and John Wesley Taylor. Moreover, additional information on human nature was drawn from psychologists and scholars, including Freud, Skinner, Maslow, and Rogers. The research not only synthesizes different viewpoints on human nature employing textual analysis as a robust research method known for its effectiveness in describing and interpreting texts, but it also provides a significant understanding of the data gathered, unveiling valuable insights to inform educational strategies for Adventist schools in the aftermath of the global disruption.

**Keywords:** *Human Nature, Adventist Philosophy of Education, Post-Pandemic Education*

## I. INTRODUCTION

Throughout history, human nature has been an object of study and concern. The mystery of the nature of man has been considered as a vital issue of great complexity and has often been debated by philosophers. This concern for the nature of man is particularly germane to the field of education.

In her book *Education*, Ellen G. White (1903) says:

In order to understand what is comprehended in the work of education, we need to consider both the nature of man and the purpose of God in creating him. We need to consider also the change in man's condition through the coming in of a knowledge of evil, and God's plan for still fulfilling His glorious purpose in the education of the human race. (p.14)

To restore in man the image of His Maker, to bring him back to the perfection in which he was created, to promote the development of the body, mind, and soul, that the divine purpose in his creation might be realized - this was the work of redemption. This is the object of education, the great object of life. (p.15)

According to Taylor (2022), the distinguishing features of Seventh-day Adventist education converge into a single defining construct - the philosophy of Adventist education. This philosophy is based on the biblical foundations and steered by the insights found in the writings of Ellen G. White.

Knight (2016) extensively expounded and supported the educational philosophy of Ellen White, highlighting four fundamental principles. Firstly, it underscores the reflection of humanity's creation in the image of God. Secondly, it emphasizes the acknowledgment of God's endowment of capacities, facilitating the realization of His divine plan. Thirdly, it recognizes the impact of human fall, resulting in the impairment

and deterioration of the physical, mental, and spiritual well-being. Lastly, it emphasizes the consideration of the devised plan of salvation, offering a life of probation for authentic transformation, which constitutes the essence of true education.

The first catastrophe encountered by the first learners - Adam and Eve in the Eden school brought separation of humanity from God, the Master Teacher. The entire world and humanity was affected, and while under probation different crises continue to change man's condition but humanity was not left behind, rather God provided the best plan of education (White, 1903).

Likewise, an unprecedented crisis happened in the field of education due to the COVID-19 pandemic. This catastrophe resulted in the immense closure of face-to-face activities of schools in more than 200 countries as reported by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), in order to prevent or at least alleviate the spread of the virus. Reimers (2021) explored the global disruptions triggered by the pandemic and found that it impacted over 1.7 billion learners, encompassing 99% of students in low and lower-middle-income countries (OECD, 2020; United Nations, 2020).

The COVID-19 pandemic has created new opportunities for research in many areas (Kumar, 2021). Interestingly, there is a lack of research on human nature and the COVID-19 pandemic. This dearth of research on this subject triggered the present researchers to explore and find out some insights on human nature and their implications for post-pandemic Seventh-day Adventist education.

It is highly unconvincing for parents, psychologists, counselors, and teachers to render their best help and services to the students without having the proper understanding on the concept of man. Due to this fact, this qualitative study was conducted to analyze some insights on human nature. Ideas provided by psychoanalysis, radical behaviorism, humanistic psychology, and Seventh-day Adventist philosophy of education were analyzed. Upon analyzing the different concepts on human nature, the researchers examined the implications and possible outcomes when such concepts are applied on post-pandemic Seventh-day Adventist education.

This study endeavored to analyze selected insights on human nature applying the method of textual analysis. Specifically, this study aimed to answer the following questions:

1. What insights on human nature are provided by psychoanalysis, radical behaviorism, humanistic psychology, and Seventh-day Adventist philosophy of education?
2. What implications for post-pandemic Seventh-day Adventist education can be drawn from the study?

## II. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

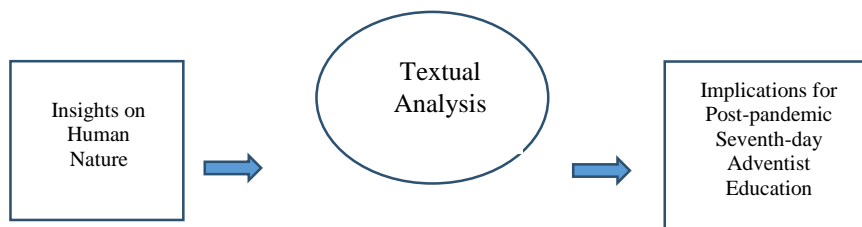
### 2.1 Research Design

This study utilized the qualitative research design which aims to give a complete detailed description and explanation of a phenomenon under investigation. Specifically, the researchers employed textual analysis, a research method used to describe and understand texts, to interpret the pertinent data related to the study.

### 2.2 Theoretical framework

The researchers used both articles and books written on the subject of human nature. The main sources of information was provided by Ellen G. White who has a great deal of interesting and useful information on human nature based on her philosophy of Seventh-day Adventist education. In addition to her work, the researchers expanded the scope by incorporating other insights from various other authors. Moreover, additional information and inclusion of perspectives from psychologists and scholars, including Freud, Skinner, Maslow, and Rogers, enrich the research with diverse viewpoints and discovered valuable insights on human nature.

## 2.3 Research Paradigm



## III. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### 3.1 Psychoanalysis

The founding father of psychoanalysis, Sigmund Freud, has given a distorted image of man. He believed that man is an intellectual animal who is doomed to destruction; man is like an animal which is enslaved to his sexual impulses (Razak, 2018).

### 3.2 Radical Behaviorism

On the other hand, radical behaviorists such as B. F. Skinner gave a mechanistic view on man. By being scientific on their study of man, they have taken man to the laboratories for analysis. By being too scientific and mechanical on their research on man, the behaviorists have failed to consider that human behavior and actions are pretty much related to human temperament, emotional feelings, innate knowledge, norms and values of the society, etc. (Brennan, 2023).

### 3.3 Humanistic Psychology

Meanwhile, the two great influential figures of humanistic psychology, Abraham Maslow and Carl Rogers gave a different version on the concept of human nature compared to Freud and Skinner. Both Maslow and Rogers provided a psychology that painted a positive image of man who has the tendency of actualizing himself and of being more in charge of his fate and less determined by his libidinal forces and the environment (Aruma & Hanachor, 2017).

### 3.4 Adventist Philosophy of Education

For Ellen G. White, man was created by God. Man is the crowning act of the creation of God, made in the image of God, and designed to be a counterpart of God. Accepting the biblical story of creation as the only authentic account of the origin of man, White refuses to accept that man is a cosmic accident or a result of natural evolution (White, 1985).

Taylor's (2022) framework on the Adventist philosophy of education centers on seven essential elements: 1) Purpose aims in restoring individuals to the image of their Maker; 2) Product places emphasis on holistic development across four aspects of life; 3) Paradigm recognizes God as the ultimate source and reference of truth, with the Bible serving as the core curriculum; 4) Perspective incorporates a comprehensive spiritual framework that bridges the great divide between life and learning; 5) Process underscores the importance of nurturing faith in the context of education, emphasizes its link between learning and life; 6) Power emerges as a crucial aspect, pointing the Spirit-filled teachers competence and commitment, and 7) Priority, ultimately, aims to educate for eternity which is framed as a holistic endeavor in Adventist education.

Furthermore, philosophy of Adventist education must be evident in the Adventist schools and in the lives of the teachers and students. The nature of the learners must be considered, as well as the important role of the teachers in planning and implementing, the unique feature of the curriculum rooted in the biblical principles, and the consideration of varied methods aligned to achieved the goal of Adventist education to each learner (Knight, 2016).

### 3.5 Implications for Post-pandemic Seventh-day Adventist Education

#### The Teacher's Role

The teacher who believes that her students were created by God treats them with love and care. She knows that in each heart, a battle is going on between good and evil. Thus, negative aspects of behavior fan their bent to evil.

Adventist teachers have the privilege of being able to nurture, model, and demonstrate God's love, showing students the joy of a personal relationship with Jesus Christ. If the teachers have prepared, cleared obstacles to learning, and established that they care about the students, there is a greater chance that the students will not only succeed, but also gain a better understanding of the world around them.

In addition, Seventh-day Adventist teachers will have to regularly reinvent themselves to remain relevant in the post-pandemic society. They need to update their knowledge, pursue professional development, learn new skills, and be creative. They need to be better equipped to manage a wide range of IT devices in the event of future school closures. Offering short training courses to improve their digital skills will help. Using the post-pandemic period to rebuild education systems and make them resilient is a priority. At the same time, it is important to build a future education system that can make better use of blended learning models to reach all learners at their level and to provide more individualized approaches to teaching (Condori et al. 2021).

#### Teaching Strategies

In the post-pandemic school setting, it is advisable that teachers implement innovative teaching and learning strategies and to creatively explore already-known methodologies, such as competency-based learning, cooperative learning, design thinking, gamification, integrated tasks, problem-based learning, project-based learning, and thinking-based learning (Kumar, 2021).

More importantly, Adventist educators must continue to believe in and practice the integration of faith, life, and learning. A hallmark of Adventist education, faith-integrated teaching strategies seek to guide student learning by using best practice methods not only to deliver content, but also to show the relationship between content and God's plan for humanity, both now and throughout eternity (Taylor, 2022).

#### Student Motivation

It is important to recognize that, due to personal, family, or cultural factors, many students will find it difficult to engage in self-motivated learning and to adapt or respond to changes brought about by the COVID-19 pandemic. Thus, Adventist teachers must use several motivational strategies to engage their students. In addition to being passionate in teaching their content area, they must demonstrate genuine interest in each student, create practical assignments with achievable goals, and be cognizant of the extrinsic and intrinsic factors that impact student motivation.

#### Curriculum

The COVID-19 pandemic experience urges Seventh-day Adventist schools to build their capacity to provide blended models of education in the future. SDA schools should be better prepared to switch easily between face-to-face and remote learning as needed. This will protect the education of students not only during future pandemics, but also during other shocks that might cause school closures, such as natural disasters or adverse weather events. It will also create opportunities for more individualized approaches to teaching and learning. With this in mind, it will be necessary to develop flexible curricula that can be taught in person or online.

In addition, faith-integrated curriculum and instruction are even more urgent during periods of crisis. As educators in Adventist schools worldwide continue to provide access to Adventist instruction, even in these tumultuous times, they must teach their students how to respond to the various crises in life such as the COVID-19 pandemic (Taylor, 2022).

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