



Conceptualizing A Definition Of Education In The Light Of Swami Vivekananda: A Qualitative Approach

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Abstract- This qualitative research paper conceptualizes a comprehensive definition of education as understood through the philosophical, spiritual, and humanistic vision of Swami Vivekananda. Employing Saldaña's (2013) multi-cycle coding framework—comprising open coding, axial coding, and selective coding—this study conducts a systematic textual analysis of primary sources of writings of Swami Vivekananda. The coding process moves through a structured progression: from raw textual data to initial codes, from codes to categories, and from categories to overarching themes. Three primary thematic clusters emerge: (1) Education as the process of Manifestation through Inner Perfection (2) Education as the Integration of Mind, Character, and Skill, corresponds to cognitive, affective, and psychomotor domains of learning; and (3) Education as a Humanistic process, reflecting development of personality and selfhood as the supreme educational ideal. The study concludes that Vivekananda's conception of education resists mechanical, information-centric models in favour of a humanistic epistemology that nurtures the affective domain to unlock cognitive potentiality, culminating in the fullest manifestation of the human being.

Keywords: Swami Vivekananda, education, qualitative research, thematic analysis, first cycle coding, second cycle coding, man-making education, manifestation, humanistic epistemology, Vedanta, Samkhya philosophy

I. Introduction

Education is among the most contested concepts in the human intellectual tradition. Across civilisations, epochs, and philosophical schools, thinkers have attempted to articulate what it means to truly educate a human being. In the Indian philosophical tradition, few voices have spoken with the clarity, urgency, and breadth of Swami Vivekananda (1863–1902), a towering figure in the renaissance of Indian thought.

Vivekananda's conception of education is not merely prescriptive or institutional; it is profoundly ontological and epistemological. It is grounded in three foundational axioms that structure the present inquiry:

Axiom 1: Education is the way of understanding Reality.

Education is not passive absorption of information but an active process of unveiling the nature of reality, both external and internal. It is a tool of inquiry into existence itself.

Axiom 2: Education is the process to explore Self and beyond it.

True education must turn inward. It must lead the learner from the surface of empirical experience toward the depths of internality. Yet it does not stop there; it also reveals the universal Self in all beings.

Axiom 3: Education is the process of organizing Self and Reality.

Education produces inner order—the integration of thought, feeling, and will—and enables the human being to relate harmoniously to the world. This is the organisational function of education: the cultivation of an integrated, purposeful selfhood.

These three axioms form the conceptual scaffolding upon which this paper is built. Rather than treating Vivekananda's educational thought as a set of isolated aphorisms, this study systematically excavates and organises his ideas through a rigorous qualitative methodology: the multi-cycle coding process as described by Saldaña (2013) in *The Coding Manual for Qualitative Researchers*.

The central research question guiding this inquiry is: How can education be conceptually defined in the light of Swami Vivekananda's philosophical vision, and what thematic architecture emerges from a systematic qualitative analysis of his primary texts?



II. Research Methodology

2.1 Research Design

This study adopts a qualitative documentary research design. Documentary research in qualitative inquiry involves the systematic analysis of written texts—in this case, primary philosophical and discursive texts authored or reported by Swami Vivekananda—as the principal source of data. The epistemological stance is interpretivist: meaning is not extracted mechanically from texts but is co-constructed through the researcher's rigorous, reflexive engagement with the data.

2.2 Overview of Coding Approach

The analytic method follows Saldaña's (2013) multi-cycle coding framework. As Saldaña explains, coding is a heuristic—an exploratory problem-solving technique—that enables the researcher to move from raw data through iterative layers of abstraction toward theory. The present study employs the following coding types:

Type 1 — Open Coding (First Cycle)

Initial, provisional labelling of data segments. Codes are assigned freely and inductively, staying close to the text.

Type 2 — Axial Coding (Second Cycle)

Codes are examined for relationships, and related codes are grouped into categories. The researcher identifies causal conditions, contextual factors, and consequences.

Type 3 — Selective Coding (Theme Generation)

A central or core category is identified that integrates and explains the other categories. This culminates in thematic synthesis and theory-building.

All coding was conducted manually through close reading and reflexive analytic memo writing, consistent with Saldaña's (2013) recommendation for solo coding with rigorous self-examination.

2.3 Coding Procedure: Step-by-Step

Step 1: Data Familiarisation

Both primary texts were read in full, multiple times, without any coding or analytic intervention. The purpose was to develop deep familiarity with the data corpus—its vocabulary, rhetorical patterns, philosophical assumptions, and recurring motifs. Key passages were annotated with preliminary impressions and reflective memos.

Step 2: Initial Coding (Open/First Cycle Coding)

Passages directly or indirectly addressing the nature, purpose, means, and goals of education were identified and labelled with short, descriptive codes. Codes were kept close to Vivekananda's own language—what Saldaña (2013) calls *In Vivo* coding—wherever possible. Three primary code-clusters emerged at this stage.

Step 3: Code Refinement

Codes were reviewed, merged, and sharpened. Redundant codes were collapsed; ambiguous ones were clarified through contextual re-reading. Sub-codes were identified within each primary code-cluster.

Step 4: Category Development (Axial/Second Cycle Coding)

Related codes were grouped into three categories based on shared conceptual properties. Each category was examined for its internal coherence, its relationship to the other categories, and its grounding in Vivekananda's philosophical sources—particularly Sāṃkhya cosmology and Advaita Vedānta.

Step 5: Theme Generation (Selective Coding / Thematic Synthesis)

A thematic architecture was constructed that integrates all three categories under a single overarching theoretical proposition: Vivekananda's conception of education as a Humanistic Epistemology—a developmental process that proceeds from the nurturing of inner potentiality, through the cultivation of values and character, to the fullest outward manifestation of human perfection.



IV. Data Analysis: Coding Process

FIRST CYCLE CODING (OPEN CODING)

The following section presents the three primary code-clusters derived from the first cycle of open coding. Each cluster contains three codes, drawn from Vivekananda's primary texts. Each code is presented with its description, analysis, and illustrative example.

OC-1: Education is the process of exploring yourself.

Description:

This open code captures the foundational metaphysical premise of Vivekananda's educational thought: that every human being already contains within themselves the seed of perfection and that education's role is revelatory, not additive. In *Vedanta: Voice of Freedom* frames the educational process as the progressive removal of internal obstacles to the expression of an already-existing inner perfection.

Analysis:

Using the 5W-1H framework: What is education? — The manifestation of inner perfection. How? — Through the removal of ignorance and the cultivation of assimilation. Why? — Because the perfection is already there; it simply requires uncovering. This code is the conceptual root from which all other codes branch, making it the primary indicator for the eventual selective theme.

Example:

Vivekananda uses the metaphor of a screen with a growing hole: is the beautiful scene outside, and the hole represents the degree of educational progress achieved. "As the hole grows larger and larger, more and more of the scenery comes into view, and when the screen has vanished, we come face to face with the whole of the scenery". This is education as unveiling, not as filling.

OC-2: Man-Making Education

Description:

'Man-making education' is Vivekananda's most compact and culturally resonant formulation of the educational ideal. The phrase encapsulates the production of fully realized human beings — not scholars, not technicians, not docile citizens — but men and women who embody the fullness of human potential across the physical, intellectual, and spiritual dimensions. In the context of colonial India, it was also a liberatory declaration.

It is a man-making religion that we want. It is man-making theories that we want. It is man-making education all round that we want. And here is the test of truth—anything that makes you weak physically, intellectually, and spiritually, reject as poison."

Analysis:

Some basic questions: Whats is the criterion of educational success? — The making of full human beings. Who benefits? — Every student, regardless of caste, class, or gender. What is to be rejected? — Anything that weakens the individual physically, intellectually, or spiritually. This code provides the evaluative criterion for education: it functions both as definition and as test.

Example:

Vedanta: Voice of Freedom records that in his final years, Vivekananda "concentrated on giving final shape to his 'man-making education.' It was his experience that an ideal character could be formed by combining the four yogas — the paths of action, knowledge, devotion, and meditation." This practical implementation of the man-making ideal in the training represents the educational application of the concept from affective domain to cognitive counterparts.



OC-3: Character Formation

Source: Complete works of Swami Vivekananda

Description:

Character formation is identified by Vivekananda as one of the three core outcomes of authentic education — alongside life-building and man-making. Character is not merely the adherence to rules; it is the embodiment of values, the integration of ethical understanding into habitual conduct. Education that does not form character has, in Vivekananda's view, failed, however impressive its academic credentials.

"We must have life-building, man-making, character-making assimilation of ideas. If you have assimilated five ideas and made them your life and character, you have more education than any man who has got by heart a whole library."

Analysis:

The criterion of assimilation — 'made them your life and character' — provides a behavioral and existential test of educational quality. Information that has been merely memorized does not constitute education; ideas that have been assimilated into character do. This is consistent with the GTM focus on understanding 'what they do, how they do it, and why they do it' (Charmaz, 2008, as cited in Williams & Moser, 2019).

Example:

Vivekananda's satirical use of the Sanskrit proverb — 'The ass carrying its load of sandalwood knows only the weight and not the value of the sandalwood' - perfectly encapsulates the failure of information-based education: it may carry the weight of knowledge without possessing its value. Character formation means that knowledge becomes wisdom — internalized, lived, and expressed in ethical conduct.

OC-4: Strengthening of Mind

Description:

The strengthening of the mind is one of Vivekananda's central educational prescriptions. The physical metaphor — muscles of iron, nerves of steel — is not merely rhetorical; it signals the importance of mental discipline, intellectual vigor, and volitional strength as essential components of education. A weakened mind is, for Vivekananda, the product of negative education.

"Make your nerves strong. What we want is muscles of iron and nerves of steel. We have wept long enough. No more weeping, but stand on your feet and be men."

Analysis:

This code is closely related to OC-11 (Negative Education Critique): the strengthening of the mind is precisely what negative education fails to achieve. The criterion is simple: does the educational process produce a stronger, more capable, more resilient mind? If not, it has failed Vivekananda's test of truth.

Example:

Vivekananda's insistence that 'Truth is strengthening. Truth is purity, truth is all-knowledge; truth must be strengthening, must be enlightening, must be invigorating' establishes a triad — strengthening, enlightening, invigorating — as the criteria for genuine educational truth. Education is tested not by examinations but by the strength it produces in the learner.



OC-5: Self-Reliance / Standing on One's Own Feet

DESCRIPTION:

Self-reliance — the capacity to stand upon one's own feet — is the practical outcome of authentic education. It is the integration of inner strength, intellectual clarity, and moral confidence into a stable, independent selfhood. For Vivekananda, the purpose of education is precisely to create individuals who do not need external support to navigate the world with intelligence and integrity.

"They shall learn from the start to stand upon their own feet. They shall learn from their childhood that God is the Spirit and should be worshipped in Spirit and in Truth."

Analysis:

This code is democratically inclusive: the standard of educational success — 'can one stand on their own feet?' — applies to every student regardless of social position. It is also deeply anti-paternalistic: an education that produces dependence on teachers, texts, or authority has, in Vivekananda's view, fundamentally failed its purpose.

Example:

Vivekananda extended this principle specifically to the upliftment of the downtrodden: 'Freedom — physical freedom, mental freedom, and spiritual freedom are the watchwords of the Upanishads'. This makes self-reliance not merely a personal achievement but a social and political imperative: education is the means by which the oppressed regain the power to stand independently.

OC-6: Fearlessness (Abhiih)

Description:

Fearlessness (abhiih) is identified by Vivekananda as the hallmark of genuine education and the distinctive achievement of Vedantic philosophy. In *Vedanta: Voice of Freedom*, he notes that the word 'abhiih' (fearless) is 'used again and again' in the Upanishads — 'in no other scripture in the world is this adjective applied either to God or to man.' For Vivekananda, education that does not produce fearlessness has not achieved its deepest aim.

"According to Swami Vivekananda, the message of Vedanta consists in unfolding the potential divinity of man, developing an unshakable faith in oneself, manifesting absolute fearlessness of any kind."

Analysis:

Fearlessness is the psychological and spiritual correlate of self-reliance (OC-5). The self-reliant person is fearless; the fearless person is self-reliant. Together, they represent the achieved outcome of authentic education: a human being who faces the world — its challenges, its uncertainties, its moral demands — without retreating into dependence, conformity, or denial.

Example:

'Strength, strength is what the Upanishads speak to me from every page. This is the one great thing to remember... Are there no human weaknesses? says man. There are, say the Upanishads, but will more weakness heal them? Strength, O man, strength, say the Upanishads. Stand up and be strong' (Vivekananda). This is education as the cultivation of existential courage.



OC-7: Inner Potential (Atman / Potential Divinity)

Description:

The concept of inner potential — the Atman, the divine self latent within every human being — is the ontological foundation of Vivekananda's educational philosophy. The Vedantic teaching that 'I am complete and perfect, and I was never bound' (Vivekananda) implies that every student, without exception, possesses infinite inner resources that education is designed to release.

"In plants the obstacle to soul-manifestation is very great; in animals, a little less; and in man, still less; in cultured, spiritual men, still less; and in perfect men it has vanished altogether."

Analysis:

This code provides the philosophical justification for the inclusive, egalitarian dimension of Vivekananda's educational vision. Since every human being possesses the same divine inner potential, no student is intrinsically less educable than any other. Differences in academic performance reflect differences in the degree to which the obstacles to inner manifestation have been removed — not differences in fundamental capacity.

Example:

The evolutionary framework — from plant to animal to man to perfect man — maps the progressive removal of obstacles to soul-manifestation. Education is the conscious acceleration of this evolutionary process: the teacher's role is not to create potential in the student but to remove the obstacles (ignorance, fear, passivity, moral confusion) that prevent the student's inherent potential from manifesting.

OC-8: Life-Building Assimilation of Ideas

Description:

Assimilation — the integration of ideas into life and character — is Vivekananda's epistemological criterion for genuine education. This concept directly contradicts the banking model of education (Freire, 1970) in which knowledge is deposited in students as in an account. For Vivekananda, knowledge that has not been assimilated — digested, lived, expressed in conduct — is not education but merely information storage.

"If you have assimilated five ideas and made them your life and character, you have more education than any man who has got by heart a whole library."

Analysis:

This code operationalizes the abstract ideal of manifestation (OC-1) into a concrete pedagogical principle: assimilation. The question for educational practice becomes: how does one teach in such a way that ideas are not merely memorized but assimilated — made part of the student's living character? This implies active, engaged, experiential learning rather than passive reception.

Example:

The contrast between the ass and the sandalwood — 'The ass carrying its load of sandalwood knows only the weight and not the value of the sandalwood' — is Vivekananda's definitive image of unassimilated education: the student may carry great quantities of knowledge without possessing any of its value. Assimilation transforms the weight into fragrance.

OC-9: Sattva — Luminous Clarity as Educational Goal



Description:

The Samkhya-Yoga framework of three gunas — Sattva (luminosity/clarity), Rajas (activity/dynamism), and Tamas (inertia/darkness) — provides a philosophical psychology of the educational process. The soul is already pure; it is covered by Tamas (ignorance, passivity) and Rajas (restless ambition). Education's task is to progressively increase Sattva — the luminous quality through which the soul's natural perfection shines.

"The one theme of the Vedanta is to get this Sattva. As I have told you, the soul is already pure and perfect, and it is, according to the Vedanta, covered up by Rajas and Tamas particles. The Sattva particles are the most luminous, and the effulgence of the soul penetrates through them as easily as light through glass."

Analysis:

This code provides the philosophical architecture for understanding educational change. A Tamasic student is passive, unresponsive, without initiative. Rajasic energy must first be activated — curiosity, ambition, engagement. But Rajas alone is insufficient: ultimately Sattva must be cultivated — the serene, discriminating awareness that enables genuine understanding and moral clarity.

Example:

Vivekananda's dietary and lifestyle prescriptions (Ahara-shuddhi, purification of intake — physical and mental) are all oriented toward increasing Sattva: 'if the Rajas and Tamas particles go, and leave the Sattva particles, in this state the power and purity of the soul will appear, and leave the soul more manifest'. This is the Samkhya-Yoga theory of educational development.

OC-10: Chitta-shuddhi — Purification of Mind as Educational Process

"What is needed is Chittashuddhi, purification of the heart. And how does that come? The first of all worship is the worship of the Virat—of those all around us."

Description:

Chitta-shuddhi (purification of the mindstuff) is the prerequisite for genuine educational development. A mind clouded by selfishness, prejudice, and attachment cannot receive or transmit genuine knowledge. Education must attend to the moral and emotional purification of the student with the same rigor it applies to intellectual development — indeed, without purification, intellectual development is stunted or misdirected.

Analysis:

The identification of service to others as the primary means of purification — 'worship of the Virat — of those all around us' — has a profound implication for educational design: service-learning is not an extracurricular activity but a primary mode of moral and educational development. In serving others genuinely, the student enacts the recognition of universal human dignity, which is simultaneously a moral act and an epistemological one.

Example:

Vivekananda's vision of 'Daridra Narayana Seva' — service to the poor as service to God — is the practical implementation of Chitta-shuddhi as educational method. By serving the most marginalized members of society, the student dissolves the ego-boundary between self and other, which is simultaneously the dissolution of the primary obstacle to inner manifestation.



OC-11: Critique of Negative Education

Description:

The critique of negative education defines, by negation, what authentic education must be. Negative education is that which systematically undermines the student's confidence in self, tradition, family, and cultural inheritance. It produces, in Vivekananda's devastating phrase, students who are 'a mass of negation, lifeless and boneless.' The antidote is positive, affirming, humanistic education — man-making education that builds on what the student already possesses.

Analysis:

This open code functions diagnostically in the GTM process: it establishes the negative case — the educational failure — that all subsequent positive codes are designed to address. The 5W-1H question 'What is failing in current education?' is answered systematically by this code: it is failing because it is negating rather than affirming, emptying rather than manifesting, weakening rather than strengthening.

Example:

The specific failure Vivekananda identifies is the corrosive effect of colonial education on Indian students' sense of cultural identity and self-worth. An education that teaches students to despise their own heritage, language, family, and sacred texts has not educated them — it has wounded them. Authentic education does the opposite: it honors the student's inheritance while developing the critical capacities needed to engage creatively with the world.

OC-12: Humanistic Development

Description:

Humanistic development is the overarching orientation of Vivekananda's educational vision. The recognition that all ethical action, all spiritual inspiration, and all genuine human achievement are 'expressions of infinite oneness in human nature' grounds the educational enterprise in a vision of universal human dignity and interconnectedness. Education serves the humanization of the student — and through the student, of society.

"There has not been one religious inspiration, one manifestation of the divine man, however great, but it has been the expression of that infinite oneness in human nature. And all that we call ethics and morality and doing good to others is also but the manifestation of this oneness." (Vivekananda)

Analysis:

This code functions as the ethical and social context for all the other open codes. Manifestation (OC-1), Man-Making (OC-2), Character (OC-3), and all the others are ultimately in service of humanistic development: the full realization of the human being's potential for love, wisdom, and service. Education divorced from this humanistic context degenerates into training.

Example:

Vivekananda's declaration that 'every body that exists is your body. And in hurting anyone, you hurt yourself' (Vivekananda) provides the ontological foundation for compassion as an educational value. Humanistic education cultivates not merely individual excellence but the capacity for solidarity — the recognition that one's own flourishing is inseparable from the flourishing of all.



Code 2.1 — 'Education is the Combination of Values, Mind, and Skills'

"It was his experience that an ideal character could be formed by combining the four yogas—the paths of action, knowledge, devotion, and meditation—and he trained the monks accordingly."

Description: This code captures Vivekananda's integrative approach to education as the simultaneous cultivation of values (bhakti/devotion), mind (jnana/knowledge), and skills (karma/action), with the unifying discipline of raja yoga (meditation) providing the inner stability to sustain and integrate the other three.

Analysis: Vivekananda's four-yoga model anticipates Bloom's taxonomy (1956) by nearly six decades in recognizing that authentic education must address the cognitive (jnana yoga), affective (bhakti yoga), and psychomotor (karma yoga) dimensions of human experience. However, Vivekananda adds a dimension that Bloom's secular taxonomy omits: the contemplative or spiritual dimension (raja yoga), which he regards as the integrating center of all educational development. From the perspective of contemporary educational psychology, this integrative model also resonates with Gardner's (1983) theory of multiple intelligences and Goleman's (1995) concept of emotional intelligence.

Example: In his practical training of the Ramakrishna Order of monks, Vivekananda implemented a curriculum that included intellectual study (Vedanta philosophy), practical service (karma yoga in hospitals and schools), devotional practice (bhakti yoga in worship), and meditative discipline (raja yoga). This integrated curriculum represents the practical instantiation of his educational philosophy.

Code 2.2 — 'The Inner Ocean of Existence, Knowledge, and Bliss'

Description: This code addresses the ontological foundation of values-education in Vivekananda's thought. Values—ethical, moral, and social—are not external impositions but expressions of the fundamental oneness (advaita) of all being. Education in values is therefore education in the recognition of one's identity with the whole of existence.

Analysis: The affective domain of education—values, emotions, attitudes, and moral sensibilities—is grounded in the metaphysical recognition that the self is not isolated but is, in its deepest nature, identical with all other selves. This provides a uniquely powerful philosophical foundation for moral education: the student is not asked to follow moral rules out of fear or social convention but to act from an inner recognition of universal kinship. This resonates with Nel Noddings' (1984) 'ethics of care' and with Kohlberg's (1981) post-conventional moral reasoning, while surpassing both in the depth of its ontological grounding.

Example: Vivekananda's insistence that all ethical action is 'the manifestation of oneness' provides a rationale for compassionate service as an educational activity in its own right. Service (seva) is not merely an extracurricular activity; it is a primary mode of self-education, because in genuinely serving others, the student enacts the recognition of the other as self. This is the philosophical basis of what he called 'daridra narayana seva'—service to the poor as service to God.

Code 2.3 — 'Purification of the Mind (Chitta-shuddhi) as Educational Process'

Description: This code captures Vivekananda's understanding of purification—the systematic removal of mental and moral impurities—as a central educational process. Chitta-shuddhi (purification of the mindstuff) is the precondition for all higher learning; a mind clouded by selfishness, prejudice, and attachment cannot receive or transmit genuine knowledge.

Analysis: The concept of Chitta-shuddhi links the cognitive and affective domains of education at the deepest level: intellectual clarity (the cognitive goal) requires moral purification (the affective precondition). This anticipates Dewey's (1916) insight that education is 'the continuous reconstruction of experience,' with the important addition that for Vivekananda, genuine reconstruction requires inner transformation, not merely intellectual reorganization. The practical implication is that education must attend to the student's moral and emotional development with the same rigor it applies to intellectual development.

Example: Vivekananda's identification of service to others ('worship of the Virat—of those all around us') as the primary means of Chitta-shuddhi is simultaneously an educational prescription and a social program. By engaging students in genuine service, education purifies the mind, develops empathy and compassion, and simultaneously addresses social inequities. This provides an indigenous Indian philosophical foundation for what contemporary educators call 'service-learning' (Eyler & Giles, 1999).



Code 3.1 — 'Education Should be Humanistic

Description: Vivekananda's critique of colonial education—which he characterized as 'negative education' that produces only negation—establishes the positive alternative: humanistic education, which affirms, strengthens, and develops the inherent dignity and potential of the student. Humanistic education does not begin with what the student lacks but with what the student already possesses.

Analysis: Vivekananda's critique of 'negative education' anticipates Freire's (1970) critique of the 'banking model' of education, in which students are treated as passive receptacles for information deposited by teachers. Like Freire, Vivekananda insists on the student's active participation in the educational process—but where Freire grounds this participation in political consciousness, Vivekananda grounds it in spiritual self-recognition. The humanistic dimension of his educational philosophy also aligns with the work of Carl Rogers (1969), who argued that meaningful education must treat the whole person and must be predicated on respect for the student's inherent capacity for growth and self-direction.

Example: The child who 'by the time he is sixteen is a mass of negation, lifeless and boneless' (Vivekananda, 2022) is the product of anti-humanistic education—an education that systematically undermines the student's faith in self, tradition, and the sources of meaning in their own culture. Humanistic education, by contrast, builds on the student's cultural inheritance while developing the critical faculties needed to engage creatively with modernity.

Code 3.2 — 'Universal Soul: Education Toward the Infinite'

Description: This code expands the educational horizon beyond the individual to the universal. Education is not merely the development of a particular human being; it is the universe's own process of self-realization, with the human being as its highest instrument. Education, in this sense, is evolution in consciousness.

Analysis: Vivekananda's evolutionary framework for education draws on both the Vedantic concept of progressive manifestation and the Darwinian concept of evolution, synthesizing them into a vision of education as the conscious acceleration of evolutionary development. The movement from plant to animal to man to 'perfect man' is not merely biological but ontological: it is the progressive removal of obstacles to the manifestation of the infinite within the finite. This provides a cosmic rationale for the educational enterprise: to educate a human being is to participate in the universe's own self-discovery.

Example: The image of the 'cultured, spiritual man' as one in whom the obstacle to soul-manifestation is 'still less' provides a practical criterion for educational success: the degree to which a person has become capable of sustained spiritual awareness, ethical sensitivity, and creative engagement with reality. This is measurably different from—and vastly more comprehensive than—the conventional criteria of academic achievement or professional competence.

Code 3.3 — Sattva as the Goal: Manifestation is the highest Priority.

Description: This code provides the Samkhya-Yoga philosophical framework for understanding education as a process of inner elevation. The three gunas—Sattva (Manifestation), Rajas (activity, dynamism), and Tamas (inertia, darkness)—represent three modes of human nature. Education is the process by which Tamas (ignorance, passivity) is transformed through Rajas (active engagement) into Sattva (illuminated awareness and Manifestation).

Analysis: The trigunatmaka framework provides a detailed philosophical psychology of educational change. Tamas in the student manifests as intellectual inertia, moral passivity, and psychological dependence. The first task of education is to activate Rajas—to stimulate curiosity, engagement, and effort. But Rajas alone produces a restless, ambitious, and potentially destructive student; the ultimate goal is the transformation of Rajas into Sattva, which is characterized by clarity of perception, equanimity of temperament, and compassionate engagement with the world. This tripartite developmental model has striking resonances with Vygotsky's (1978) zone of proximal development, Piaget's (1970) theory of assimilation and accommodation, and the developmental stages described by Kohlberg (1981) in moral education.

Example: A Tamasic student is one who has not yet been awakened to the possibilities of learning—passive, unresponsive, without initiative. A Rajasic student is actively engaged but driven by personal ambition or competitive instinct—energetic but potentially undisciplined. A Sattvic student is one who has internalized the love of learning itself, who pursues knowledge not for competitive advantage but for the joy of understanding and the desire to serve—luminous, disciplined, and compassionate. Vivekananda's educational ideal is the cultivation of Sattvic consciousness.



OC-1 Manifestation of perfection	OC-2 Man-making education	OC-3 Character formation	OC-4 Strengthening of mind
OC-5 Self-reliance	OC-6 Fearlessness (Abhiih)	OC-7 Inner potential (Atman)	OC-8 Life-building assimilation
OC-9 Sattva — luminous clarity	OC-10 Chitta-shuddhi	OC-11 Critique of neg. education	OC-12 Humanistic development

Second Cycle Coding (Axial Coding): Philosophical Perspectives

The Second Cycle Coding process organizes the nine first-cycle codes into three philosophical perspectives, each representing a higher level of abstraction and theoretical integration. This corresponds to the 'Pattern Coding' and 'Axial Coding' procedures described by Saldaña (2013), in which first-cycle codes are grouped into categories based on their thematic and conceptual relationships.

Second Cycle Code A: Manifestation as the Ultimate Product of Human Being

Element	Content
Second Cycle Code	Manifestation is the ultimate product of human being, having internally potential as a course supported by the cause-effect relationship of Samkhya and Yoga philosophy
First Cycle Codes	Manifestation • Potentiality • Inner Development • Perfection
Philosophical Grounding	Prakriti (nature) is constituted of Sattva (manifestation/luminosity), Rajas (activity), and Tamas (retardation). The ultimate aim of education is to upgrade human being to a higher order of potentiality—from Tamas through Rajas to Sattva.

The Samkhya-Yoga philosophical framework provides the ontological infrastructure for understanding education as a process of progressive manifestation. Kapila's Samkhya philosophy, referenced by Vivekananda in the Lectures from Colombo to Almora, argues that the evolution of consciousness is driven by the interplay of the three gunas within Prakriti (nature). Education, as Vivekananda conceives it, is the conscious and deliberate acceleration of this evolutionary process—the removal of Tamasic and Rajasic coverings to allow the Sattvic light of the Atman to shine forth.

The cause-effect relationship here is not mechanical but organic: Vivekananda explicitly argues, drawing on Patanjali's Yoga Sutras, that 'good and bad deeds are not the direct causes in the transformations of nature, but they act as breakers of obstacles to the evolutions of nature' (Vivekananda, 2022). This is a profound educational insight: teaching does not directly produce learning; rather, it removes the obstacles—psychological, social, epistemological—that prevent the student's innate intelligence from manifesting.

Second Cycle Code B: Education as Integration of Cognitive, Affective, and Psychomotor Domains

Element	Content
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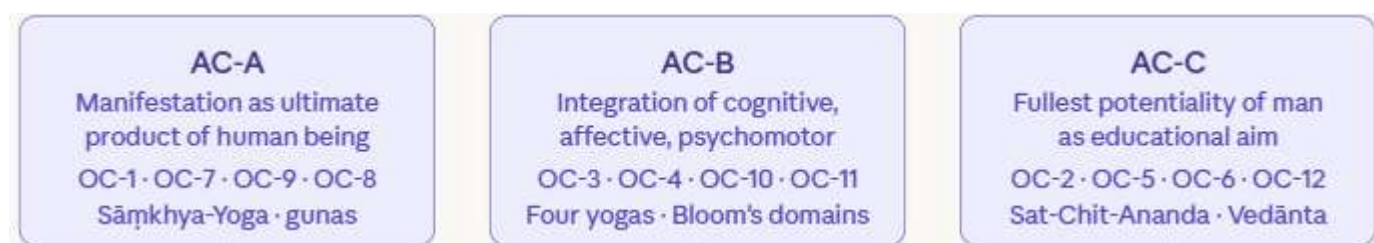
Second Cycle Code	Education is the combination of cognitive, affective, and psychomotor domains with respect to development of mind, character building, and development of skill within any particular system
First Cycle Codes	Character Building • Strengthening of Mind • Skill Development
Philosophical Grounding	The four yogas (karma, jnana, bhakti, raja) correspond to the four dimensions of human development: active-practical, intellectual, emotional-devotional, and contemplative. Education must cultivate all four.

This second-cycle code integrates the three dimensions of Bloom's taxonomy—cognitive, affective, and psychomotor—within the philosophical framework of the four yogas. Vivekananda's insight is that these dimensions are not separate 'domains' to be addressed independently but are mutually constitutive aspects of a unified process of human development. Character building (affective domain) requires intellectual development (cognitive domain) and practical skill (psychomotor domain) just as knowledge requires character and skill requires wisdom.

Second Cycle Code C: The Fullest Potentiality of Man as Educational Aim

Element	Content
Second Cycle Code	The ultimate aim of education is the fullest potentiality of man—the complete development and actualization of all human capacities
First Cycle Codes	Man-Making • Humanistic Education • Universal Soul-Manifestation
Philosophical Grounding	The Vedantic vision of Sat-Chit-Ananda (Existence-Knowledge-Bliss) as the nature of ultimate reality implies that the fully educated human being is one who embodies truth, consciousness, and joy in their daily existence.

Vivekananda's concept of 'man-making' as the ultimate educational aim transforms education from a means to various social ends into an end in itself. The fully educated human being—one who has realized the Atman within—is not a means to economic productivity, national development, or religious conformity; they are the goal. This represents a fundamental challenge to all instrumentalist theories of education and a radical affirmation of the intrinsic value of human development.





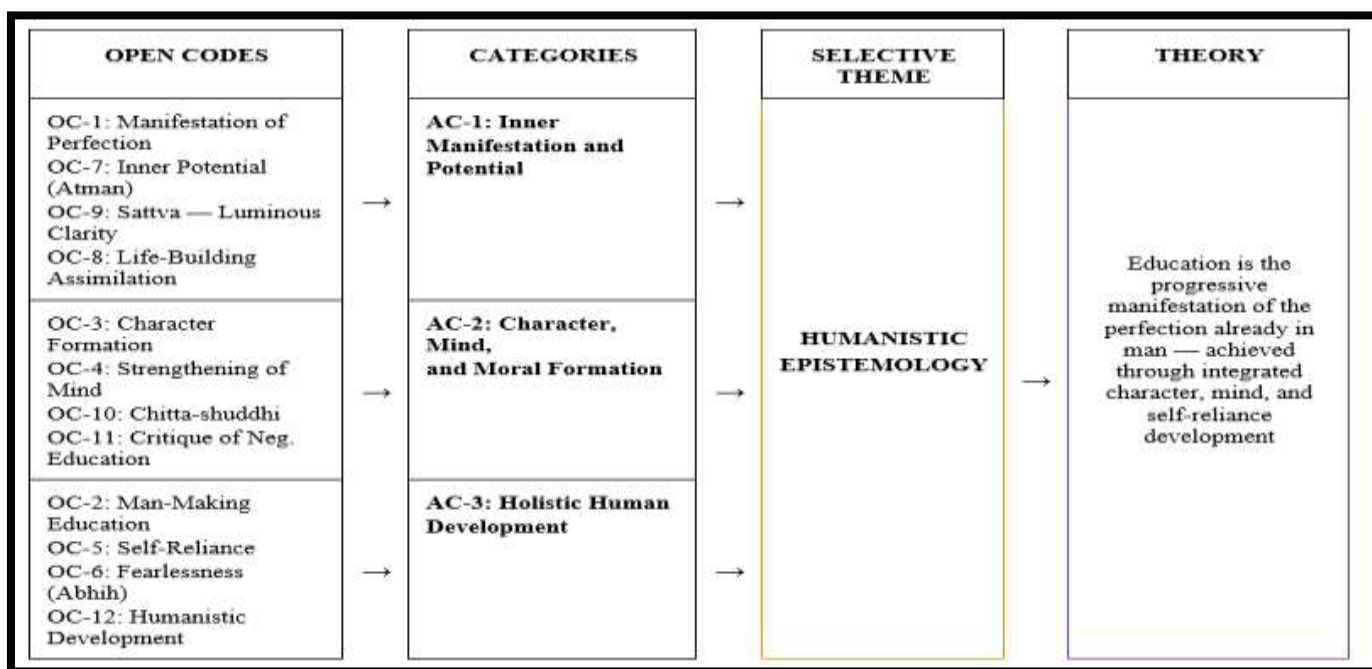
Selective Coding: From Codes To Theory

Selective coding is the third level of coding. As Williams and Moser (2019) state, it enables the researcher to 'select and integrate categories of organized data from axial coding in cohesive and meaning-filled expressions' at a higher level of abstraction. The conceptualization of the yield from selective coding as a 'case' or 'story' provides researchers with 'flexible and multi-type vehicles for codifying and presenting study results' (Strauss, 1998, as cited in Williams & Moser, 2019).

In this study, selective coding integrates the three axial categories into one unified selective theme: Humanistic Epistemology. This selective theme constitutes the grounded theory generated by the analysis and provides the basis for constructing a comprehensive definition of education in the light of Vivekananda's philosophical vision.

A. From Open Codes to Selective Theme

The following diagram presents the complete coding progression from open codes through axial categories to the selective theme:



B. Categorising: From Codes to Categories

The axial coding process generates three major categories, each integrating a cluster of related codes:

Category	Sub-codes	Thematic Link
Category 1: Humanistic Education	Man-Making, Potentiality, Strengthening of Mind, Standing on One's Feet, Strength as Measure	Education as Liberation: The fullest development of the human person as the supreme educational aim.
Category 2: Activity-Centric & Values Education	Values, Culture, Ethics, Morality, Character Building, Heart over Intellect	Education as Character: The affective and ethical formation of the person through integrated value-practice.



Category	Sub-codes	Thematic Link
Category 3: Skill-Based & Manifestation Education	Manifestation, Perfection, Life-Building, Nature as Curriculum Soul's Freedom	Education as Manifestation: The progressive unveiling and expression of inner perfection in outward action and skill.

C. Theory-Based Perspectives: The Three-Phase Educational Model

Drawing together the three categories through selective coding, a three-phase developmental model of education emerges from Vivekananda's vision:

Phase 1 (Foundation):

Nurturing Potentiality — Man-Making Environment — Strengthening of Mind

This phase corresponds to the conquest of Tamas by Rajas: the establishment of conditions—disciplined environment, strong mentorship, positive self-belief—in which latent human potential can begin to stir and assert itself through manifestation, Activity based education and eliminating retardation as far as possible.

+

Phase 2 (Development):

Values — Culture — Morality — Character Building — Affective Cultivation

This phase corresponds to the cultivation of Sattva from Rajas: the progressive refinement of character through ethical training, cultural grounding, and the development of the heart's capacity for love, service, and inspiration.

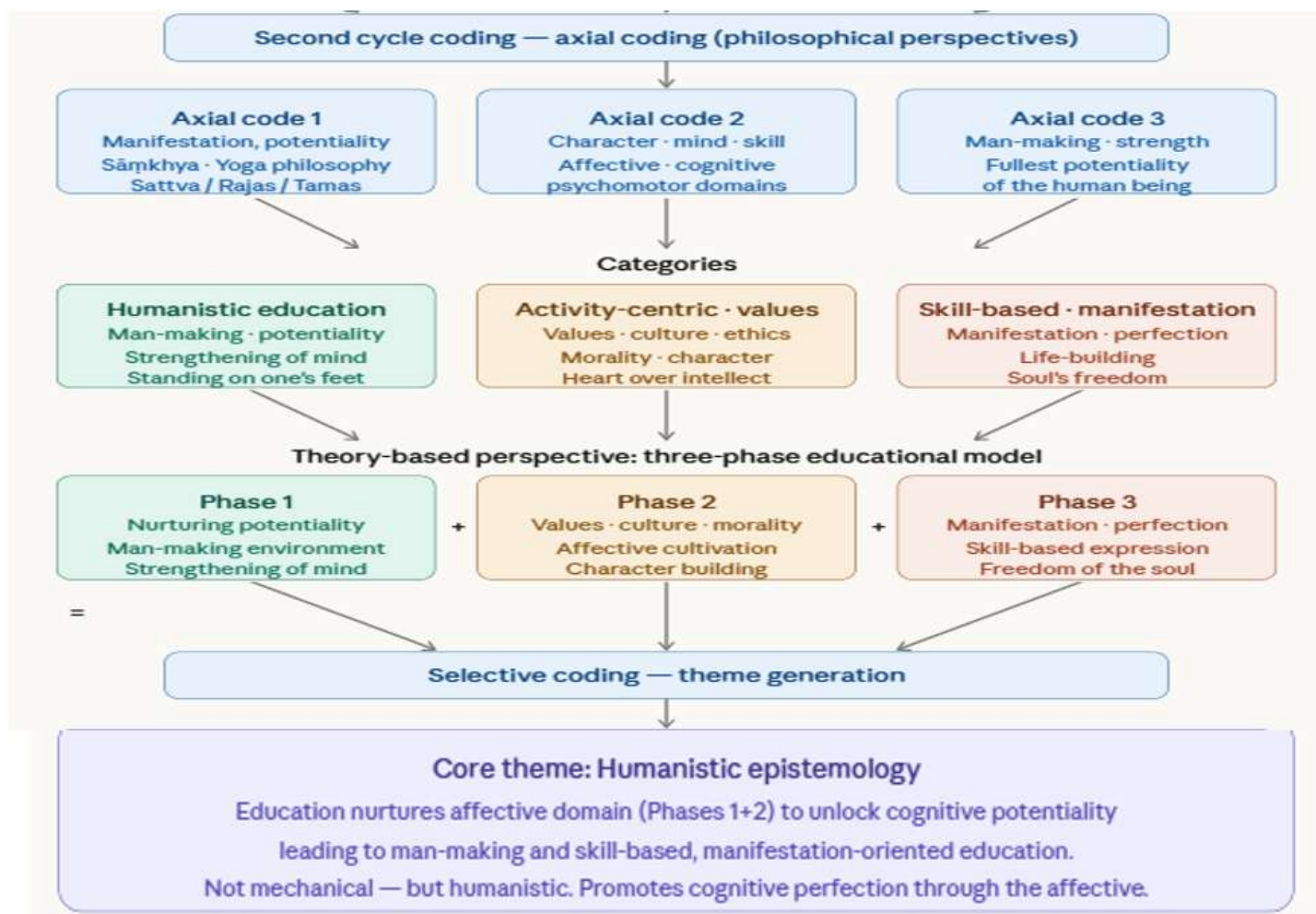
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Phase 3 (Culmination):

Manifestation — Perfection — Skill-Based Expression — Freedom of the Soul

This phase corresponds to transcendence of the Guṇas: the soul's recognition of its own infinite nature, expressed outwardly as perfected skill, creative manifestation, and fearless autonomous action.

= HUMANISTIC EPISTEMOLOGY



The synthesis of Vivekananda's educational thought into what we term Humanistic Epistemology—a theory of knowledge and education grounded in the recognition of the human being's infinite inner potential.

PHASE 1 HUMANISTIC EDUCATION Nurturing Potentiality • Man-Making Environment • Strengthening of Mind	+	PHASE 2 ACTIVITY-CENTRIC EDUCATION Values • Culture • Ethics • Morality • Character Building	+	PHASE 3 SKILL-BASED EDUCATION Manifestation • Perfection • Practical Mastery
HUMANISTIC EPISTEMOLOGY Education not as Mechanical Information Transfer, but as the Promotion of Humanistic Cognitive Perfection				



Theme Generation: Selective Coding

The Theoretical Assertion: Humanistic Epistemology

The theoretical assertion generated by this analysis may be stated as follows:

Vivekananda's conception of education constitutes a Humanistic Epistemology in which the acquisition of knowledge is inseparable from the development of the whole person—physical, moral, intellectual, and spiritual. Education is not mechanical but transformative; it is not additive but revelatory; it is not conformist but liberating. Its ultimate criterion is not the quantity of information possessed but the degree of inner manifestation achieved—the extent to which the student has actualized their inherent potential as a rational, moral, and spiritually aware human being.

This theoretical assertion simultaneously affirms the nurturing of the affective domain (Phase 1: Humanistic Education) as the necessary precondition for the processing of cognitive potentiality (Phase 2: Activity-Centric Education), which in turn leads to the actualization of skill-based, practically effective human agency (Phase 3: Skill-Based Education). The movement from affective grounding through cognitive development to practical mastery is the arc of Humanistic Epistemology.

V. Findings And Discussion

The systematic qualitative analysis of Vivekananda's primary texts yields a rich and coherent conceptual definition of education. Synthesising the three cycles of coding—open, axial, and selective—the following definition is proposed:

Education, in the light of Swami Vivekananda, is the humanistic epistemological process by which the infinite potentiality already presents within every human being—is progressively unveiled through the integrated cultivation of mind (cognitive domain), character and values (affective domain), and practical skill (psychomotor domain). It is not the accumulation of external information but the manifestation of inner perfection; not the formation of compliant functionaries but the making of strong, self-reliant, and spiritually awakened human beings. Its ultimate criterion is strength—the capacity to stand on one's own feet, to think freely, and to act purposefully in the service of self and humanity. Its ultimate aim is the freedom of the soul.

This definition makes several significant contributions to educational philosophy and to Vivekananda scholarship. First, it integrates the metaphysical, psychological, and pedagogical dimensions of his thought into a single coherent framework, showing that they are not independent assertions but mutually supporting aspects of a unified vision. Second, it demonstrates that Vivekananda's educational philosophy, while rooted in Indian philosophical traditions, anticipates and transcends several key developments in Western educational thought—including Bloom's taxonomic model, Rogers's humanistic education, Freire's critical pedagogy, and contemporary research in social-emotional learning. Third, it shows that the qualitative coding methodology of Saldaña (2013) is an effective and rigorous tool for the analysis of philosophical texts, not only sociological or ethnographic data.

The three-phase developmental model (Phase 1: Nurturing Potentiality; Phase 2: Cultivating Values; Phase 3: Manifesting Perfection) has significant implications for curriculum design, teacher training, and educational assessment. It suggests that effective education must begin not with content but with the creation of a nurturing environment in which the learner's selfhood is affirmed and strengthened; that character formation must be treated as primary and continuous, not supplementary; and that the ultimate test of educational success is not examination scores but the quality of the human being produced.

VI. Conclusion

This paper has sought to conceptualise a rigorous and comprehensive definition of education in the light of Swami Vivekananda, employing Saldaña's (2013) multi-cycle qualitative coding framework as the methodological instrument. The analysis demonstrates that Vivekananda's educational philosophy is not a loose collection of inspiring aphorisms but a systematic and internally coherent vision grounded in the deepest currents of Indian philosophical thoughts.

The central finding is that education, for Vivekananda, is a Humanistic Epistemology: a process oriented not toward the production of information-processors or economic units but toward the fullest manifestation of the divine human being. This process is necessarily



three-dimensional—cognitive, affective, and conative—and necessarily three-phased: from the nurturing of latent potentiality, through the cultivation of values and character, to the outward manifestation of perfected skill and free selfhood.

As Vivekananda himself declared, it must be 'life-building, man-making, character-making assimilation of ideas'—an assimilation so deep and so transformative that five such ideas, truly lived, constitute more education than a library memorised entire.

The conclusion emerges with clarity and force: Education is not mechanical but humanistic; not additive but revelatory; not restrictive but liberating targeted for Perfection in terms of manifestation, activity and by removing negative orientation from our life.

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