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<https://journal-gehu.com/index.php/gehu> Points of Convergence Between Biblical

Education and Ki Hadjar Dewantara's Educational Philosophy: A Philosophical

Comparative Study Lilik Kusnadi¹, Marthin S. Lumingkewas² ^{1,2}Sekolah Tinggi Teologi

Indonesia Jakarta, Indonesia Article Info ABSTRACT Article history: Received

2025-11-10 Revised 2025-12-16 Accepted 2025-12-18 This study aims to comparatively

analyze the educational paradigms of the Bible and the thought of Ki Hadjar Dewantara in

order to identify their points of convergence, fundamental differences, and the potential

integration of both within the context of character education in Indonesia. Employing a

qualitative approach with a philosophical comparative method, this research examines

primary sources such as biblical texts and the works of Ki Hadjar Dewantara, as well as

secondary sources including books on educational philosophy, theological journals, and

historical studies of Ki Hadjar Dewantara's ideas. Data collection techniques include

documentation studies and literature review, while data analysis involves hermeneutic

interpretation, holistic analysis, systematic comparison, and philosophical synthesis. The

results of the study indicate that both paradigms share several important points of

convergence, particularly in their emphasis on character formation, learner autonomy,

teacher exemplarity, and a holistic view of the educational process. However, there are

fundamental differences in their epistemological, ontological, ² and axiological

foundations. Biblical education is rooted in divine revelation, views humans as the Imago

Dei, and orients its goals toward piety and spiritual salvation. Conversely, Ki Hadjar

Dewantara's thought is grounded in natural and cultural laws, views humans as individuals

who must be empowered, and emphasizes happiness, moral character (budi pekerti), and

national identity as its primary goals. These differences also influence their respective

educational methods: the biblical emphasis on teaching truth and spiritual formation

contrasts with the among method of Ki Hadjar Dewantara, which prioritizes learning

freedom and learner-centered guidance. Keywords: Character Christian Education

Educational Theology Ki Hadjar Dewantara Philosophical Comparative Study Philosophy of Education Points of Convergence This is an open-access article under the CC BY-SA license. Corresponding Author: Lilik Kusnadi ¹⁷ Sekolah Tinggi Teologi Indonesia Jakarta, Indonesia Email: lilikkusnadi@gmail.com

<https://doi.org/10.58421/gehu.v5i1.865> 270 1. INTRODUCTION Education is an essential foundation for shaping a nation's character, intelligence, and civilization. Amid technological advancement, globalization, and moral–social dynamics, Indonesian education faces an orientation crisis that demands a strong, holistic, and relevant philosophical foundation [1]. Ki Hadjar Dewantara laid the groundwork for national education by emphasizing humanism, nationalism, and character formation through the principles of kodrat alam (natural disposition), freedom in learning, and the Trisula of Education [2]. On the other hand, ² in the context of Christian education, the Bible serves as a theocentric foundation that directs education toward a transcendent purpose: to know, love, and obey God as the Source of Truth [3]. Both concepts offer rich philosophical frameworks, yet they arise from different epistemological and teleological bases. The biblical concept of education is oriented toward the formation of the whole person (holistic), encompassing spiritual, moral, intellectual, and social dimensions as a reflection of the imago Dei [4]. Meanwhile, Ki Hadjar Dewantara's educational model emphasizes humanization in accordance with natural and historical dispositions, liberates education, and defines the role of the teacher as a pamong who guides learners toward the highest levels of safety and happiness [5]. Despite their differences, both perspectives share a common emphasis on character, freedom, and the integral development of the human person [6]. However, philosophical studies that comprehensively compare these two paradigms are still very limited. Most research addresses only one concept in isolation or focuses on practical aspects rather than on an in-depth analysis of its philosophical essence, points of convergence, and relevance to the development of national education grounded in spiritual and cultural values. In fact, a conceptual integration between the

theocentric Christian educational paradigm and the humanistic–nationalistic model of Ki Hadjar Dewantara has the potential to contribute significantly to the formulation of a holistic, contextually grounded character education model for Indonesia’s multi-faith society [7]. Previous studies reveal that research on spiritually and culturally grounded education has been conducted through various approaches, although none have comprehensively brought together biblical ² educational thought and the philosophy of Ki Hadjar Dewantara (KHD) within a deep philosophical analysis. The study by Ndruru [8] shows that the formation of Christian character cannot be separated from the application of theological principles in Christian Religious Education (PAK). This research found that Christian theology significantly influences the approach, strategy, and orientation of teaching PAK, thereby shaping learners’ character. The harmonious integration of Christian theology, character education principles, and PAK teaching methods ² has been proven effective in strengthening students’ internalization of Christian values. It emphasizes the need for a PAK curriculum that consistently reflects theological values and focuses on character formation, enabling formal education to become an effective space for moral and spiritual growth. However, this study focuses on how the Word of God serves as ² the basis for moral transformation and does not directly relate its findings to the national educational paradigm. Furthermore, the study by Wiryanto and Anggraini [9] found that Ki Hadjar Dewantara’s humanistic educational concept is strongly relevant to the development of the

<https://doi.org/10.58421/gehu.v5i1.865> 271 Merdeka Belajar Curriculum. Humanistic education, which emphasizes the inner and outer freedom of learners, aligns with the curriculum’s goal of granting teachers and students the freedom to think and develop creativity according to their respective potentials. Librarybased analysis showed that Dewantara’s humanistic values—such as the among method and panca dharma—are reflected in various Merdeka Belajar policies, including the Sekolah Penggerak program, Guru Penggerak, the development of Pancasila Student Profiles, and the cultivation of 21st-century ⁹ skills such as critical thinking, problem solving, communication, and

collaboration. Thus, this study affirms that the Merdeka Belajar Curriculum serves as a modern implementation of Ki Hadjar Dewantara's educational principles in shaping autonomous, character-driven, and globally competitive learners. Another study by Silitonga [10] shows that ¹⁴ curriculum development through ChristCentered Holistic Character Education (PHBK²) requires integrating Christian values into all educational dimensions—spiritual, academic, socio-emotional, and physical. Each dimension must ²⁰ reflect the character of Christ, such as love, humility, patience, forgiveness, obedience, and integrity. ² Based on a literature review, the research asserts that the effectiveness of Christian curriculum development depends on integrating faith into all academic and non-academic activities, as well as on the teacher's role as a spiritual mentor. This holistic approach effectively fosters empathy, social responsibility, and moral integrity in students while preparing them to become character-driven leaders and agents of change in society. A study by Wahyudi [7] notes that although the teacher's role, according ³ to Ki Hadjar Dewantara and Christian education, shares several pedagogical similarities, particularly in character building and mentoring, it also has fundamental differences in its epistemological and teleological dimensions. Through a comparative literature analysis, the study underscores that Dewantara's humanistic values can serve as general revelation, relevant to strengthening ¹ the role of Christian teachers, yet remain insufficient to describe the whole identity and mission of Christian educators. The uniqueness of the Christian teacher lies in their spiritual ministry as shepherds, mediators between knowledge and biblical truth, and exemplars of Christ's dimensions, absent from Dewantara's concept. Thus, the Christian teacher's role is distinct because it ⁹ is rooted in special revelation, making it more transcendental in orientation and responsibility compared to Dewantara's concept. Lastly, ² the study by Setiawan and Pujiono [11] demonstrates that contemporary developments demand educational models better suited to the characteristics of today's learners, and the Merdeka Belajar concept, inspired by Ki Hadjar Dewantara, represents an important breakthrough. ¹ Through a literature study, the research found that the essence of Merdeka Belajar, especially through the Among System, aligns with values in

Christian Religious Education. This alignment is seen in their shared goal of shaping knowledgeable, moral, and civilized learners. With appropriate implementation, the Merdeka Belajar concept can strengthen Christian Religious Education in forming students who are not only intellectually capable but also reflect Christ-like character. Based on these five studies, each contributes significantly ¹ to the development of valuebased education. However, none has directly engaged in a philosophical dialogue between the theocentric biblical concept of education and the humanistic, nationalistic concept of Ki Hadjar Dewantara. Thus, there remains a clear research gap in exploring their points of

<https://doi.org/10.58421/gehu.v5i1.865> 272 convergence, fundamental differences, and potential for synthesis that could enrich the development of character education in Indonesia. The literature review shows several important gaps: first, very few studies conduct philosophical comparative analysis of these two concepts, leaving their deep similarities and differences unmapped; second, no integrative model yet exists that combines the theocentric values of biblical education with the humanistic–nationalistic values of ¹ Ki Hadjar Dewantara for the development of character education in Indonesia; third, there is still no theoretical framework to guide Christian educational institutions in being faithful to Scripture while remaining relevant to the cultural and national context of Indonesia. These gaps highlight the urgency ² of this study. This research offers significant novelty to educational philosophy in Indonesia. First, it directly conducts a philosophical comparative analysis between the educational concept in the Bible and Ki Hadjar Dewantara’s thought by examining their epistemological, ontological, and teleological aspects, an approach not found in previous studies. Second, it produces a holistic character-education synthesis model rooted in transcendent truth through special revelation, while remaining culturally relevant through an understanding of general revelation. Third, it introduces a new conceptual framework for Christian ¹ education in Indonesia that enables the integration of Dewantara’s humanistic–nationalistic values without diminishing its theocentric identity. Thus, this study not only enriches theoretical

discourse in Christian education and national education but also provides an alternative, applicable model for the development of character education in contemporary Indonesia.

2. METHOD This study employs a qualitative, philosophical-comparative approach to examine in depth and compare the fundamental concepts of the role of teachers from the perspectives of Ki Hadjar Dewantara and Christian Education. This approach was chosen because the research focuses on understanding the philosophical meanings, foundational values, and epistemological and teleological orientations of both educational paradigms. The data sources for this study fall into two main categories: primary and secondary data. The primary data include the Biblical texts as the theological foundation of Christian Education, and the original works of Ki Hadjar Dewantara, which contain his thoughts on national education and the Among System. Meanwhile, the secondary data are obtained ² from various books on the philosophy of education, scholarly journals on Christian educational theology, and historiographical works on the development of Ki Hadjar Dewantara's ideas, which enrich the analytical context. ¹ Data collection techniques were carried out through documentation studies and literature review. All documents, both theological texts and educational writings, were systematically examined to obtain a profound understanding of the core ideas, principles, and educational orientations from each perspective. This approach enables the researcher to trace relevant historical, philosophical, and pedagogical foundations in addressing the research questions. The data analysis process consisted of four main stages. First is the stage of interpretation (hermeneutics), namely, interpreting the core meaning of key concepts found in the Bible and in the thought of Ki Hadjar Dewantara. The second stage is a holistic-
<https://doi.org/10.58421/gehu.v5i1.865> 273 analytic analysis, ² in which the conceptual structure is examined in terms of educational components such as goals, educators, learners, content, and methods. The third stage is comparative analysis, in which both concepts are systematically compared to identify similarities, differences, and potential relationships. The final stage is synthesis, namely formulating new findings or a more

comprehensive model of understanding the uniqueness of the teacher's role in Christian Education based on the comparative insights gained from Ki Hadjar Dewantara's paradigm. With this structured, multilayered method, the study ¹ is expected to yield a deep, comprehensive, and contextually relevant philosophical ¹ understanding of the contemporary Indonesian educational landscape.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION 3.1. Result Analysis of ² the Concept of Education from a Biblical Perspective

The findings of ² this study indicate that ² the philosophy of education according to the Bible possesses a strong theological foundation and is oriented toward the comprehensive transformation of human character. ¹² Literature reviews from various Christian education journals affirm that the concept ¹ of education in Scripture is not merely cognitive but primarily spiritual-formational, guiding humans back into a right relationship with God. First, education is understood as a process of cultivating the "fear of the Lord" as the beginning of knowledge and wisdom. Numerous studies in educational theology emphasize that this phrase ¹⁰ does not refer to emotional fear, but to an attitude of reverence, submission, and ethical awareness of God's authority. Christian education, as analyzed in contemporary theological journals, views biblical wisdom as an integration of knowledge, morality, and ¹ the experience of faith that leads learners toward a proper understanding of life. Thus, the findings confirm that ⁸ the "fear of the Lord" is the core epistemology of Christian education, distinguishing it from modern humanistic educational paradigms. Second, ¹ the role of the Holy Spirit as Parakletos Helper, Guide, and Teacher is a crucial element in ¹ the educational process according to the biblical perspective. Academic literature highlights that the Holy Spirit functions not only as a source of spiritual inspiration but also as an agent of transformation, renewing thinking, shaping character, and directing learners' behavior. In numerous writings on educational theology, this pneumatological dimension ² is seen as a distinctive aspect of Christian education, because spiritual growth does not rely solely on human capacity but is a collaboration between pedagogical effort and divine work. This study confirms that spiritual growth encompasses ¹ the formation of the heart, mind, and actions in accordance with the truth of Scripture. Third, the ultimate goal of ²

education in the biblical perspective is defined by clear moral and spiritual direction, namely the formation of godliness, obedience to God's will, and moral responsibility expressed in daily life. Christian education journals emphasize that these aims portray education as ¹² the cultivation of integral character rather than mere academic achievement. Godliness is understood as a steadfast relationship with God reflected in ethical living; obedience as a commitment to carrying out God's will in all

<https://doi.org/10.58421/gehu.v5i1.865> 274 aspects of life; and responsibility as an expression of faith demonstrated through social action, discipline, and care for others. Overall, the findings show that the philosophy of education in the Bible is holistic and transformative, placing the spiritual aspect at its center and influencing the intellectual, emotional, and moral dimensions of learners. Literature analysis reinforces that Christian education cannot ² be separated from its theological foundation, since teaching, guidance, and character formation are directed toward restoring the imago Dei in the human person. Thus, ¹ the study concludes that biblical education has a uniqueness not found in secular educational paradigms, particularly in its ultimate goals, moral orientation, and faith-based foundation that undergirds the entire learning process. ³ The Philosophy of Education According to Ki Hadjar Dewantara The findings indicate that Ki Hadjar Dewantara's educational philosophy is rooted in a humanistic view that regards humans as beings with an inherent nature to grow, develop, and become free. Literature reviews from Indonesian education journals confirm that his thought consistently places ² education as a process of humanization, in which learners are treated not as objects to be filled, but as subjects with natural potential and rights to develop according to their nature. The well-known concept tut wuri handayani emphasizes that the educator's role is to guide while respecting the learner's autonomy. Thus, education ² is seen as a means of helping individuals achieve both outward and inward freedom, a principle widely discussed in studies on educational humanism in Indonesia. First, education is understood as a process of humanizing and empowering natural potential (kodrat alam). Scholarly literature

highlights that, according ³ to Ki Hadjar Dewantara, humans possess two inherent natures: a natural disposition (biological, psychological, and social) and a disposition of the times (technological and cultural development). Through education, these dispositions must be guided so learners can live harmoniously with their environment and ¹² the demands of their era. Research analyzing Kodrat Alam shows ³ that Ki Hadjar Dewantara emphasizes respecting children's developmental tempo, their basic needs, and natural learning rhythms. This study confirms that, from his perspective, education is a conscious effort to direct natural potential without coercion, making the learning process more humane, liberating, and contextual. Second, the study finds that ⁶ the Panca Dharma Freedom, Natural Disposition, Culture, Nationality, and Humanity hold deep relevance for shaping individuals and the nation. Numerous academic studies regard the Panca Dharma as the normative foundation of national education. The principle of freedom stresses that education should liberate the learner's mind, soul, and behavior. Natural disposition guides the development of teaching methods adaptive to learners' potential. Cultural Dharma requires education to be rooted in local values and Indonesian cultural heritage. Nationality Dharma reinforces the role of education in forming responsible citizens. Humanity Dharma broadens learners' perspectives so they can participate in global civilization. This study aligns with educational research showing that the Panca Dharma is the most fundamental framework for understanding the mission of Ki Hadjar Dewantara's educational thought.

<https://doi.org/10.58421/gehu.v5i1.865> 275 Third, according to ¹ Ki Hadjar Dewantara, the main goals of education are oriented toward happiness, well-being, and the formation of budi pekerti (character). Various studies emphasize that budi pekerti is the core of his educational philosophy, encompassing moral, emotional, spiritual, and social dimensions. Education aims not only to produce intellectually capable individuals but also to develop persons who are socially and spiritually secure and able to live with inner balance. This study affirms that budi pekerti comprises two important dimensions: a cultural one,

emphasizing the importance of national cultural values; and a national one, cultivating love for the homeland and a sense of responsibility as citizens. ¹ Overall, the findings show that Ki Hadjar Dewantara's educational philosophy offers a paradigm centered on humanity, cultural continuity, and the formation of national character. His ideas remain highly relevant to contemporary Indonesian education, particularly in the context of the Kurikulum Merdeka, which promotes learning freedom, character-based education, and cultural identity. The results also indicate that his philosophy provides not only theoretical foundations but also practical guidance for curriculum development and the modern role of educators.

Comparative Study: Convergence and Divergence

The comparative analysis reveals important points of convergence between biblical educational philosophy and Ki Hadjar Dewantara's thought, as well as significant philosophical divergences. These findings show how the two paradigms can enrich one another while maintaining distinct identities. First, both concepts place character formation ¹ as the primary goal. Scripture emphasizes godliness and obedience, while ³ Ki Hadjar Dewantara stresses budi pekerti as the reflection of complete humanity. Previous studies in ² philosophy of education affirm that character formation is the strongest meeting point between religious and humanistic-nationalist education. Second, there is a similarity in the principle of freedom or learner autonomy. In Scripture, freedom refers to liberation from spiritual and moral ignorance through divine truth. In Ki Hadjar Dewantara's thought, freedom reflects the emancipation of learners from ignorance, oppression, or restrictive educational systems. Both aim to produce free individuals capable of making conscious and responsible decisions. Third, both perspectives view educators as role models. The concept *Ing Ngarsa Sung Tulada* corresponds to biblical imagery of teachers as shepherds and moral exemplars. Both emphasize that ⁷ education is not merely the transmission of knowledge but the formation of character through lived example. Fourth, both paradigms view ² education as a holistic process involving multiple environments. ³ Ki Hadjar Dewantara introduces the Tri Center of Education (family, school, society), while Scripture underscores spiritual education within the family, congregation, and social community.

Both perspectives regard human formation as a collective endeavor across the learner's entire life environment. In terms of divergence, the study identifies several foundational differences. First, epistemologically, biblical education ⁹ is rooted in divine revelation as the highest

<https://doi.org/10.58421/gehu.v5i1.865> 276 source of truth, whereas Ki Hadjar Dewantara's thought is grounded in natural disposition, culture, and empirical human experience. This distinction reveals that knowledge ⁷ in Christian education is theocentric, while Ki Hadjar Dewantara's approach is humanistic and naturalistic. Second, there is divergence in axiological orientation. Biblical education directs humans toward spiritual salvation, godliness, and living according to God's will. In contrast, ¹ Ki Hadjar Dewantara focuses on social well-being, happiness, and ^{the formation of} a cultured Indonesian person. These differing value orientations reveal teleological aims that cannot be fully integrated, though partial intersections do occur. Third, ² the concept of human nature differs significantly. Scripture views humans as Imago Dei, created in God's image with a transcendent spiritual purpose. ³ Ki Hadjar Dewantara understands humans as individuals with natural and cultural dispositions who must be empowered to live harmoniously in society. These ontological differences shape each perspective's understanding of human development and educational goals. Fourth, the implications for teaching methods also diverge. Christian education emphasizes teaching the truth, doctrine, and spiritual discipline grounded in divine revelation. Ki Hadjar Dewantara's method prioritizes gentle guidance, learning freedom, and support from behind (tut wuri handayani). Christian methods are more directive in ¹³ moral and spiritual instruction, while Ki Hadjar Dewantara's methods are more facilitative and oriented toward learner independence. Overall, this comparative study shows that both paradigms have areas of intersection that enrich ¹ the understanding of character education, yet they maintain profound philosophical differences. These findings provide an important foundation for constructing a synthesis model that honors both the transcendent values of Scripture and

the cultural significance of Ki Hadjar Dewantara's educational philosophy. 3.2. Discussion Analysis of **2** the Concept of Education from a Biblical Perspective The concept of education in the biblical perspective provides a strong theological foundation and positions education as a process of holistic transformation of the human person. Christian educational principles do not merely emphasize cognitive aspects but focus more deeply on moral, spiritual, and character formation oriented toward renewing human relationships with God. Various Christian education studies, published in both national and international journals, demonstrate that the biblical paradigm of education possesses distinctive characteristics that set it apart from modern education, which tends to be secular and humanistic. First, the concept of **8** "the fear of the Lord" as the beginning of wisdom serves as the epistemological pillar of Christian education. This value is understood not as emotional fear, but as an attitude of reverence, submission, and moral awareness of God's authority. Biblical wisdom is an integration of knowledge, morality, and faith; therefore, Christian education must **1** aim to develop a worldview aligned with the truth of Scripture [12]. Knowledge in Christian education is always tied to a personal relationship with God as the source of wisdom. Thus, **5** the goal of Christian education does not stop at academic achievement but extends to the transformation of attitudes, character, and ways of thinking [13].

<https://doi.org/10.58421/gehu.v5i1.865> 277 Second, **7** the role of the Holy Spirit as guide, helper, and teacher (Parakletos) is a fundamental element in Christian education. **10** The Holy Spirit is understood as the agent of transformation who renews the human heart and mind, making Christian education a collaboration between pedagogical effort and divine work [14]. The curriculum of authentic Christian education must allow room for spiritual formation led by the Holy Spirit, as true character transformation cannot be achieved through human effort alone [15]. Third, **18** the purpose of education in Scripture is to form godliness, obedience, and moral responsibility. Education is understood as a process of cultivating **5** a life that reflects a right relationship with God and others, rather

than merely achieving academic competence. Moral and spiritual orientation is the primary foundation of Christian education, as humans are viewed as moral beings accountable before God [16]. 1 The goals of Christian education always relate to the formation of integral character, in which faith, ethics, and daily life practices are interconnected holistically [17]. Overall, this discussion shows that 2 the philosophy of education according to the Bible is holistic, integrative, and transformative. Christian education cannot be separated from its theological foundation, as the entire teaching process is directed toward restoring the imago Dei 13 (the image of God) in human beings. Literature on biblical education reinforces that it offers a unique paradigm 7 not found in secular educational systems, particularly in its spiritual orientation, life purpose, and moral foundation. 3 Philosophy of Education According to Ki Hadjar Dewantara The philosophy of education proposed by Ki Hadjar Dewantara is rooted in a humanistic worldview that regards human beings as dignified, free, and endowed with natural potential to grow holistically. Numerous studies in national and international journals affirm that Ki Hadjar Dewantara's thought 2 positions education as a process of humanization—liberating individuals from ignorance, dependency, and oppression. This perspective places learners as active subjects rather than passive objects, meaning that 1 the learning process must respect the child's freedom, nature, and developmental rhythm [2]. The principle 3 tut wuri handayani serves as the core pedagogical orientation, emphasizing that educators provide guidance while still preserving learners' autonomy [18]. First, education in Ki Hadjar Dewantara's perspective is understood as a process of humanizing and empowering natural potential. Humans possess two inherent natures: the nature of alam (the natural order) and zaman (the era). Education must guide learners 9 to adapt to the demands of their time without losing their identity [19]. Respect for natural potential requires educators to attend to the pace of each child's development and to 18 create learning environments aligned with learners' biological, psychological, social, and cultural needs. Studies consistently assert that education loses its meaning when teachers impose their will without considering the students' innate disposition and potential. Second, 1 this

study highlights the relevance of the Panca Dharma Freedom, Natural Order, Culture, Nationality, and Humanity as the normative foundation of national education. The Panca Dharma provides a crucial philosophical framework for shaping identity, character, and national consciousness [20]. Freedom emphasizes forming individuals who are inwardly and outwardly autonomous; Natural Order stresses methods

<https://doi.org/10.58421/gehu.v5i1.865> 278 aligned with the child's developmental stages; Culture affirms the importance of education grounded in local wisdom; Nationality underscores the role of education in cultivating responsible citizens; and humanity expands learners' vision to enable them to contribute to global civilization. These findings align with Indonesian educational research, which regards the Panca Dharma as the philosophical foundation of the Kurikulum Merdeka. Third, Ki Hadjar Dewantara's educational goals are oriented toward happiness, wellbeing, and the development of budi pekerti (moral character). Various educational journals affirm that budi pekerti is the core of education, encompassing moral, spiritual, emotional, and social capacities [21]. Education is not merely intended to produce intellectually capable individuals but also those who are socially and spiritually resilient, capable of achieving happiness through inner balance. In this perspective, the formation of the whole person becomes the central aim for individuals who are moral, cultured, and able to live harmoniously within society. Overall, the findings indicate that Ki Hadjar Dewantara's educational philosophy offers a humanistic, culturally grounded paradigm oriented toward building national character. Its relevance is particularly strong in contemporary Indonesian education, especially within the Kurikulum Merdeka, which promotes learner autonomy, character strengthening, and culture-based education. Ki Hadjar Dewantara's thought is not only philosophical in nature but also provides a practical foundation for curriculum development, learning methods, and the role of educators in the modern era. Comparative Study: Convergence and Divergence The comparative analysis shows that the educational paradigms of the Bible and the thought of Ki Hadjar Dewantara share several significant

points of convergence that have the potential to serve as the foundation for synthesizing character education. The first convergence lies in their orientation toward character formation, or budi pekerti, in which both position the moral dimension as ¹ the core of education. Biblical education emphasizes moral transformation through values such as love, obedience, and holiness, while Ki Hadjar Dewantara highlights budi pekerti as the manifestation of civilized humanity. This alignment is supported by international research stating that character is a universal foundation across various educational systems, both secular and religious [22]. The second convergence appears in the principle of learner autonomy/independence. ⁶ Ki Hadjar Dewantara developed the concept of “freedom to learn” through the among method, in which educators act as facilitators of independence rather than authoritative controllers. This parallels ¹⁶ the biblical concept of mature faith development, in which individuals do not depend solely on religious figures but build a personal relationship with God [23]. Modern educational research also confirms that learner autonomy enhances intrinsic motivation and moral reasoning abilities [24]. The third convergence lies in educators’ role as exemplars. In biblical education, teachers have a pastoral function as moral and spiritual models. In Ki Hadjar Dewantara’s thought, the teacher is a pamong, a guide who embodies ethical example for learners. Moral exemplarity among teachers ⁵ is a key predictor of character development in Indonesian schools [25]. The fourth convergence is evident in their holistic view of education as

<https://doi.org/10.58421/gehu.v5i1.865> 279 involving the family, school, and community.

This perspective is consistent with Ki Hadjar Dewantara’s Tri Pusat Pendidikan and aligns with the biblical view that places the family at the center of spiritual value transmission.

These findings are reinforced by international literature showing ⁵ that character education is most effective when strengthened across multiple environments [26]. Despite these strong convergences, fundamental divergences remain evident. Epistemologically, biblical education is grounded in divine revelation and is theocentric, while Ki Hadjar Dewantara’s educational philosophy is rooted in natural and cultural principles that are

humanistic. These differing sources of knowledge lead to distinct value orientations. Educational theology studies affirm that Christian education cannot **2** be separated from the authority of Scripture as **the source of truth** [27]. In **the realm of** axiology, biblical education aims at spiritual salvation and **the formation of** the new person in faith. In contrast, Ki Hadjar Dewantara's model is oriented toward socio-cultural well-being, namely, the prosperity of individuals in social, national, and cultural life. National literature notes **3** **that Ki Hadjar** Dewantara's Panca Dharma highlights cultural and humanitarian dimensions as the foundational values of education [28]. Another divergence is found in their ontological views of humanity. Scripture regards humans as bearers of God's image, with a spiritual purpose, while **Ki Hadjar Dewantara** positions humans as beings shaped by natural and social forces. This ontological difference produces distinct approaches to moral evaluation, as noted **1** **in research on** religious education [29]. Methodologically, biblical education prioritizes spiritual activities such as doctrinal teaching, spiritual discipline, and **2** **the formation of** faith communities. Conversely, **4** **Ki Hadjar Dewantara** emphasizes the among **method, which provides** freedom, respects the child's nature, and adopts a humanistic cultural approach. The among method aligns closely with modern constructivist approaches [30]. These divergences are not merely technical but touch the core nature of educational aims. Therefore, synthesizing character education must be done critically, respecting the integrity of both traditions and acknowledging philosophical boundaries between transcendent religious values and humanistic cultural values. A rushed integration without a clear epistemological framework risks privileging one paradigm over the other, requiring a structured, reflective methodological and axiological approach. 4.

CONCLUSION This research demonstrates that the **4** **philosophy of education** as **presented in the** Bible and the thoughts **of Ki Hadjar Dewantara** are both complementary and fundamentally different. **2** **In terms of** convergence, both place character formation at the center of the educational process, emphasize learners' independence or autonomy, highlight the educator's role **as a moral** exemplar, and view **education as a** holistic process involving multiple environments. These similarities affirm that the humanistic values of **1**

Ki Hadjar Dewantara can function as a form of general revelation that supports Christian educational practice in social and pedagogical contexts. However, the study also identifies significant philosophical differences. The epistemological foundation of biblical education rests on divine revelation, whereas Ki

<https://doi.org/10.58421/gehu.v5i1.865> 280 Hadjar Dewantara's educational thought is rooted in natural and cultural principles. Axiological differences are also evident: the Bible is oriented toward spiritual salvation and piety, while Ki Hadjar Dewantara focuses on forming individuals who are happy, cultured, and possess a strong national identity. Their ontological views of humanity also diverge from Scripture, which views humans as Imago Dei, while Ki Hadjar Dewantara sees humans as individuals who must be empowered according to their nature and cultural environment. These differences lead to distinct educational methods: the teaching of truth in a theocentric paradigm contrasts with the among method in Ki Hadjar Dewantara's thought, which emphasizes freedom and guidance. Overall, this research concludes that both paradigms possess rich philosophical insights that can be critically integrated within the Indonesian educational context. The humanistic values of Ki Hadjar Dewantara offer significant contributions to pedagogical, contextual, and cultural aspects, while the biblical perspective provides an essential theological foundation for Christian education. The uniqueness of Christian education lies in the implications of special revelation, especially in the formation of faith, spirituality, and Christlike character elements not found in Ki Hadjar Dewantara's concept. Thus, this study affirms that dialogue between the Bible and the thought of Ki Hadjar Dewantara enables the development of a richer, more holistic, and contextual understanding of education without diminishing the theocentric identity of Christian education. These findings open the way for developing a synthesis model relevant to character education in Indonesia and for strengthening the role of Christian educators within today's national educational landscape. ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS The author expresses profound gratitude to God Almighty for His guidance and wisdom, which have

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