

## Comparative Analysis Of Ki Hajar Dewantara's Character Education With John Dewey

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**Abstrak:** Pendidikan karakter merupakan landasan bagi manusia sebagai manusia yang beradab dalam masyarakat. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengkaji perbandingan hasil pemikiran pendidikan karakter. Peneliti hanya membandingkan hasil pemikiran pendidikan karakter Ki Hajar Dewantara dengan Jhon Dewey. Penelitian ini menggunakan metode kualitatif dengan menggunakan kajian pustaka dari berbagai literatur seperti jurnal ilmiah, buku, dan penelitian yang berkaitan dengan pokok bahasan. Penelitian ini menganalisis hasil perbandingan pemikiran para tokoh pendidikan karakter tersebut, yang meskipun mempunyai perbedaan pemikiran yang positif, namun bertujuan untuk kemajuan pendidikan di Indonesia yang melahirkan individu-individu yang berbudi luhur dan berkepribadian baik, mampu berpikir kritis, aktif, dan berpartisipasi dalam masyarakat. Meski demikian, keduanya sepakat bahwa pendidikan karakter harus menjadi fokus utama dalam sistem pendidikan di Indonesia guna mencetak individu-individu berkualitas yang mampu memberikan kontribusi positif bagi masyarakat. Oleh karena itu, diperlukan upaya bersama dari semua pihak untuk memperkuat pendidikan karakter di Indonesia untuk mencapai tujuan tersebut.

**Kata Kunci:** *Comparative Analysis, Character Education, Ki Hajar Dewantara, Jhon Dewey*

**Abstract:** Character education is the foundation for human beings as civilized people in society. This study aims to examine the comparative results of character education thinking. The researcher only compares the results of character education thinking, Ki Hajar Dewantara with Jhon Dewey. This research uses a qualitative method by using literature review from various literatures such as scientific journals, books, and researches related to the subject matter. This research analyzes the comparative results of the thoughts of these character education figures, which although they have positive differences in their thoughts, are for the advancement of education in Indonesia which creates individuals who are virtuous and have good personalities, are able to think critically, actively, and participate in society. Nevertheless, both agree that character education should be the main focus in the education system in Indonesia in order to create qualified individuals who are able to make a positive contribution to society. Therefore, a joint effort from all parties is needed to strengthen character education in Indonesia to achieve this goal.

**Keywords:** *Comparative Analysis, Character Education, Ki Hajar Dewantara, Jhon Dewey*

### Introduction

Humans are essentially true learning beings. Through education, humans can form a civilized personality. Education forms awareness. Education involves a process of self-formation and moral determination that is in accordance with the individual's conscience. Education is a process of self-formation and ethical self-determination, in accordance with the conscience of the Conscience (Kohnstamm, 1995). In the teaching and learning process, students are taught to develop moral awareness, improve critical thinking skills, foster empathy and respect for others and teach social and environmental responsibility. By having a good character and strong morals, humans can become better individuals in daily life and be able to contribute positively to society and the surrounding environment. Therefore, education is one of the important factors in shaping human beings to become more ethical selves.

Human beings are the most perfect creatures compared to other creatures, the essence of humans is to have the ability to recognize themselves, the ability to have a sense of responsibility, and the heart. Education According to the Father of National Education, Ki Hajar Dewantara, education is an effort to increase the growth of children's ethics, mind and body to improve the lives



of students in harmony with their world. Therefore, Education is a series of processes that aim to develop human potential in order to achieve perfection as dignified beings. This educational process includes various aspects, such as knowledge, skills, attitudes, and moral values that must be instilled in each individual, contained in (Law No. 20, 2003).

The main goal of education is to humanize human beings so that they can live better and quality lives and become productive and responsible members of society. In an effort to achieve this goal, education must also be able to provide equal opportunities for all people without any discrimination. Therefore, education is very important for human development and the progress of the nation in the long term.

The concept of education is one of the foundations of education for the Indonesian nation which is based on the principle of independence which means that humans are given freedom from God Almighty to regulate their lives in line with the rules in society. Ki Hajar Dewantara's thoughts, which are in line with the preamble to the 1945 Constitution, are related to educating the nation that adapts to the education system with the needs of the life and livelihood of the Indonesian people.

The Indonesian nation is a great nation, a great nation is a nation that does not forget history, as expressed by our Proclamator, Ir. Soekarno. In studying history, we can understand how these events shaped the world we know today. In addition, through the study of history, we can also learn from past mistakes and successes to help build a better future. Therefore, it is important that we continue to learn and appreciate the values of history so that the same mistakes do not repeat themselves in the future.

The history of education in Indonesia is influenced by figures at the world level and national figures. According to (Sunarso, 2007) The history of education in Indonesia can be traced back to the Hindu and Buddhist times in the 5th century AD, but it only began in the 17th century AD, when the Dutch East Indies government organized an education system aimed at educating skilled workers who could be employed in Dutch East Indies companies.

A figure who has made great contributions to the advancement of education in Indonesia and received the title of Father of National Education is Ki. Hajar Dewantara, he is an activist of the Indonesian independence movement, a columnist and a pioneer in educating the Indonesian nation. Throughout his life, he was filled with struggle and devotion for the benefit of the nation (Yanuarti, 2018). Ki Hadjar Dewantara has a concept of education that is based on the principle of independence which means that humans are given freedom from God Almighty to manage their lives while still in line with the rules that exist in society (Ainia, 2020).

One of the most popular world education figures is John Dewey, who was born in Burlington, United States on October 20, 1859 and died on June 1, 1952 in New York (Ralston, 2023). Many of Dewey's works have influenced the way of thinking of the American nation and the world. Therefore, the researcher is interested in comparing John Dewey's thoughts with one of Indonesia's national figures, Ki Hajar Dewantara.

Comparing a good understanding of the history of one of the nationals with the figures of the world of education as the foundation of education to suit the actual conditions of the Indonesian nation. Comparison of thoughts about character education of Ki Hajar Dewantara with Jhon Dewey as an effort to instill a mindset that is able to form a complete personality for students.

## **Method**

This research is a literature research (Library research) with a descriptive analysis approach used in this study is a literature study supported by relevant reference sources, reading and recording and managing research data (Zed, 2008). In the process of digging up data and information, we also conducted interviews with several education experts who have a deep understanding of the thoughts of Ki Hajar Dewantara and John Dewey. In addition, the author also uses technology to find sources of information from the internet. From the results of this research, it is hoped that it can find similarities in the views of the two figures related to the importance of education as a means to form the character and personality of qualified individuals. In addition, we also found fundamental differences in the concept of education carried by the two. This research is expected to make a positive contribution to the development of the world of education in Indonesia.

## **Results And Discussion**

Education in the world has been going on since pre-Christian times, according to (Pidarta, 2007) explains the journey of world education that has taken place starting from the Hellenistic era (150 BC -500), the Middle Ages (500-1500), the Humanism or Renaissance era and the Reformation era (1600s). We still need to make a lot of efforts to improve our education system. One of the things that can be done is to strengthen the curriculum and integrate technology in learning. In addition, the government must also provide greater support for teachers and schools so that they can provide better teaching to students. Finally, it is important that we continue to encourage students to learn independently and critically so that they can become productive individuals and contribute positively to society.

Education in Indonesia has similarities between the history of education in the world and in Indonesia which has occurred starting from the Hindu Buddhist era, then followed by the development of Islamic influence, the colonial era, to the era of independence. Some famous Indonesian education figures include Ki Hajar Dewantara, Mohammad Yamin, and Ahmad Dahlan. Ki Hajar Dewantara is known as the father of national education because of his concept of education that prioritizes student freedom and independence (Rahmah & Hudaidah, 2021).

Character education is an important process to form a good character and personality in each individual. This involves aspects of knowledge, emotions and actions (Maharani et al., 2023). Character education is one of the important aspects in the formation of qualified individuals with integrity. Two great figures in the world of education, namely Ki Hajar Dewantara from Indonesia and John Dewey from the United States, have made significant contributions to the development of character education. Although both come from different cultures, they have quite a parallel view in terms of the importance of character education as an integral part of the educational process.

### **Ki Hajar Dewantara**

Ki Hajar Dewantara, who we know as the Father of Indonesian Education, was born on May 2, 1889, which is commemorated as National Education Day. He was also the founder of the Taman Siswa College or School during the Dutch colonial period. The school was established with the aim of providing opportunities for the natives to obtain the right to education as well as the priayi and the Dutch.

Ki Hadjar Dewantara's work on education, reminiscent of the constructivist approach in education (Yunan & Andriani, 2019). All of which emphasize that the emphasis of the teaching and learning process lies with the students. The teacher acts as a facilitator or instructor who helps students construct conceptualizations and solutions to the problems faced. So optimal learning is student-centered learning. Constructivism, which has had a great influence since the 1930s and 1940s in America, as well as in Europe, has been studied directly or indirectly by Ki Hadjar Dewantara.

The first basis of the constructivist approach to education is the "convergence theory" which states that "human knowledge" is the result of the interaction of innate factors (nature) and nurture factors (nurture). According to him, both "basic" (innate factors) and "teaching" (education) play a role in shaping a person's character (Yunan & Andriani, 2019). Although they come from different cultures, they have something in common in the view that education is not only about academic knowledge but also character building. Ki Hajar Dewantara teaches that education must pay attention to moral and ethical aspects, while John Dewey emphasizes the importance of direct experience and active participation of students in the teaching-learning process.

Ki Hajar Dewantara also taught the concept of "Ing ngarsa sung tulada" or "knowing oneself" as the basis for building a good character. Meanwhile, John Dewey emphasized the importance of learning through actions and direct experience to form an active and critical personality. Have the same view in terms of the importance of character in education. Ki Hajar Dewantara emphasized that education must provide the development of children's ethics and personality so that they can live in harmony with their world. Character ethics education is a job where students are aware, caring, and living values so that students can become knowledgeable individuals (Sukri et al., 2016).

Ki Hajar Dewantara views that character education is an integral part of the formation of a whole human being, so that it can achieve its life goals optimally. Meanwhile, John Dewey saw that character education is a continuous process and must be done all the time.

In the Indonesian context, this is reflected in the ideals of national education mandated in the 1945 Constitution, namely educating the life of the nation. Ki Hajar Dewantara also fought for the

rights of education for women and encouraged the development of character education as part of the learning process. His great contribution in the world of education made his name enshrined as the name of the first state university in Indonesia, Yogyakarta State University.

In the Indonesian context, Ki Hajar Dewantara's thoughts on character education are very relevant to the needs of the nation today. Character education can be a solution to overcome morality problems in society, such as corruption, violence, and intolerance. Therefore, there needs to be an effort to implement Ki Hajar Dewantara's thoughts on character education in the education system in Indonesia.

Ki Hajar Dewantara, who is also known as the founder of modern education in Indonesia, has a deep understanding of the importance of character education. For Ki Hajar Dewantara, education is not only about knowledge transfer, but also the formation of a solid and virtuous character. He emphasized noble values such as mutual cooperation, honesty, and courage as the main foundation in character education.

One of the most important concepts introduced by Ki Hajar Dewantara is the Tri Darma of Taman Siswa College, namely to life together (mutual cooperation), life skills (skills), and knowledge (science). In this Tri Darma, values such as a sense of solidarity, cooperation, and social responsibility are emphasized as an integral part of education.

Here are some philosophical ideas about character education according to Ki Hadjar Dewantara (Suparlan, 2016):

#### **1. Experiential Education:**

- Dewantara argues that education must be based on real experiences that are critically and actively investigated.
- He developed the concept of "learning by doing", where direct experience and practice become the basis for learning.

#### **2. Progressive Education:**

- Ki Hadjar Dewantara supports progressive education that emphasizes student experience, experimentation, and active participation.
- He champions an approach that integrates knowledge with everyday life.

#### **3. Character Education in Three Educational Centers:**

- According to Dewantara, character education must be focused on three educational centers: family, school, and community synergistically.
- He teaches values such as religiosity, nationalism, independence, mutual cooperation, and integrity.

#### **4. Education in the Spirit of Nationalism:**

- Ki Hadjar Dewantara emphasized the importance of teaching the spirit of nationalism to students.
- For example, by giving examples, repeating good habits, and providing physical-psychological experiences.

### **John Dewey**

John Dewey was born in Burlington, United States on October 20, 1859 and died on June 1, 1952 in New York (Ralston, 2023). John Dewey, on the other hand, was a highly influential American philosopher and educator. He also understood that education is not only about knowledge, but also about the formation of good character. For Dewey, education should be relevant to everyday life and provide hands-on experience to students. In 1879, after receiving his diploma through an examination, he became a teacher for 2 years. But then he continued his studies until he completed his doctorate in philosophy (1884) (Arifin, 2020).

John Dewey was an important figure in progressive education and pragmatism. He believed that education should be more than just memorizing facts; It must prepare students to participate actively in society. Dewey emphasized the importance of practical experience and social interaction in the learning process. According to him, schools should reflect society and be a place where students can learn through action and reflection. Dewey also criticized traditional education that focused too much on subject matter and ignored the individual needs of students.

He proposes a more holistic approach, where students learn through activities that are interesting and relevant to their lives. It is a concept that is still very relevant and applied in many modern education systems. John Dewey, an American philosopher and educator, had a rich view of character education. Here are some philosophical ideas about character education according to John Dewey (Williams, 2017):

### **1. Experiential Education:**

- Dewey argued that education should be based on real-life experiences that are critically and actively investigated.
- He developed the concept of "learning by doing", where direct experience and practice become the basis for learning.

### **2. Progressive Education:**

- Ki Hadjar Dewantara supports progressive education that emphasizes student experience, experimentation, and active participation.
- He champions an approach that integrates knowledge with everyday life.

### **3. Democracy in Education:**

- Dewey linked education to democracy. According to him, education must teach the values of democracy, participation, and tolerance.
- She championed multicultural education that values diversity and teaches openness to differences.

### **4. Instrumentalism:**

- Dewey developed a type of logic called instrumentalism. This logic examines the inherent truths in the arrangement of things.
- He emphasized the importance of connecting philosophy with practical life.

### **5. The Use of Psychology in Education:**

- Dewey established the first educational psychology laboratory at the University of Chicago and the second at Columbia University.
- He introduced contextual learning and transformed the multicultural education system in the United States.

These ideas influenced the development of educational philosophy and educational practice to this day. This educational approach developed by John Dewey emphasizes more on student-centered learning, where teachers become facilitators of learning. In addition, Dewey also taught the importance of experience in the teaching and learning process. This concept is known as "learning by doing".

In Dewey's view, education should be relevant to students' daily lives and be able to help them face future challenges. Therefore, he emphasized the importance of education that not only focuses on mastery of subject matter, but also 21st century skills such as critical thinking skills, teamwork, and creativity.

The educational approach developed by John Dewey has made a great contribution to the world of education and is still relevant today. This is evident by the many schools or educational institutions that apply the principles of this approach in their learning methods.

Dewey emphasized the importance of a democratic education in which students are not only passive recipients of information, but also active in the learning process. Through this approach, Dewey promoted values such as tolerance, freedom of opinion, and participation in society as part of character building.

According to (Hasbullah, 2020) In general, John Dewey's philosophical ideas are contained in concepts that are constructed and expressed in discourses that are easily understood by the general public and the general public. John Dewey's philosophical ideas that must be based on real experiences that must be critically and actively investigated.

#### Comparison Between Ki Hajar Dewantara and John Dewey's Character Education

Ki Hajar Dewantara's educational philosophy focuses on character development, emphasizing values such as respect, discipline, honesty, and responsibility (Sugiarta et al., 2019). His education system, which is summarized in the principle of "ing ngarsa sung tuladha, ing madya mangu karsa, tut wuri handayani," underlines the noble values that should be the guidelines for character education (Young, 2019). Dewantara's thoughts highlight the importance of the environment, leadership, mutual cooperation, and fostering a sense of love for the nation's culture to foster future generations with strong character (Suwahyu, 2018).

In contrast, John Dewey's pragmatic philosophy in education emphasizes experiential learning, problem-solving, and the integration of theory and practice. Dewey's ideas have influenced global learning theory, advocating for practical, skills-based sustainability education. Its democratic pedagogy promotes context-appropriate solutions and peaceful life through education and politics. In Dewey's view, the knowledge we possess is always finite and never final. Therefore, he emphasizes the importance of a continuous process of inquiry to improve our understanding of the world. Dewey's philosophy also emphasizes the importance of experience in learning. He believed that experience is the primary source of knowledge and that learning should be done through hands-on experience. This is reflected in his approach to education, where he proposes a learning model that is student-centered and based on their needs as well as their own experiences. In conclusion, Dewey's philosophy makes an important contribution to thinking about education and epistemology, emphasizing the importance of a continuous process of inquiry and experience as the primary source of knowledge (Muflich & Nursikin, 2023).

Despite coming from different cultures, both Ki Hajar Dewantara and John Dewey understand the importance of character education as an integral part of the formation of quality individuals. In terms of educational approach, Ki Hajar Dewantara emphasizes character formation through noble values and mutual cooperation activities, while John Dewey promotes a democratic and hands-on experience-based approach to education. In terms of values focus, despite differences in the emphasis on values, both consider values such as honesty, social responsibility, and participation in society as important aspects of character education. In terms of educational goals, while Ki Hajar Dewantara emphasized the importance of creating virtuous individuals with good personalities, John Dewey focused more on the formation of individuals who are able to think critically, be active, and participate in society.

These two figures also emphasized the importance of education as a means to create a better society. Ki Hajar Dewantara emphasized the importance of education in creating human beings who have noble ethics and good personalities, while John Dewey emphasized the importance of education in forming active and participatory citizens. Meanwhile, John Dewey argued that education must develop critical, active, and participatory skills for students.

From the thoughts, Ki Hajar Dewantara and John Dewey have something in common on the importance of character education in forming quality and integrity individuals. Although they come from different cultures, their views are in line with Indonesia's national development goals to create virtuous individuals with good personalities who are able to think critically, actively, and participatively in society.

The conclusion of this study is that the comparison of thinking about character education between Ki Hajar Dewantara and John Dewey has many similarities in their views on the importance of character formation through the educational process. Character education can be a solution to

overcome morality problems in Indonesian society today. This can be achieved by integrating character values in the educational curriculum and paying more attention to the development of students' attitudes, personalities, and morals. In addition, it is also necessary to develop character outside the classroom through extracurricular activities and introduction to local culture that can form awareness of the importance of noble values in community life. Thus, it is hoped that Indonesia's young generation can become agents of positive change and build a better nation in the future.

## Conclusion

World and Indonesian education figures basically have thoughts that have influenced and impacted education in ancient times until now. The thoughts of previous education leaders shaped Indonesian education into this way and are still being implemented and continue to be developed. Despite coming from different backgrounds, Ki Hajar Dewantara and John Dewey have made significant contributions to the development of character education. Both understand that character education is an important foundation in the formation of individuals who have integrity, think critically, and are able to contribute positively to society. If, in its development, education does not only focus on academic aspects, but also on the formation of individual characters with good personalities. This is in line with the concept of character education which is important in building human beings as civilized social beings. Ki Hajar Dewantara and John Dewey are two educational figures who have different thoughts but both recognize the importance of character education.

Ki Hajar Dewantara emphasized that education must shape the ethics of students so that they are able to live in harmony with their world. Meanwhile, John Dewey emphasized that education should teach practical skills to students so that they can be active and participate in society. Nevertheless, both agreed that character education must be the main focus in the education system in Indonesia in order to create qualified individuals who are able to make a positive contribution to society.

In carrying out character education, Ki Hajar Dewantara uses a learning method that is more focused on the direct experience of students with the surrounding environment, so that students will more easily understand the moral values that they want to convey. Meanwhile, John Dewey uses a learning method that is more focused on practical and collaborative experiences between teachers and students.

In conclusion, although Ki Hajar Dewantara and John Dewey have differences in their thoughts on character education, both agree that it is very important to do this in order to create quality individuals who are able to make a positive contribution to society. Therefore, joint efforts are needed from all parties to strengthen character education in Indonesia to achieve this goal.

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