

Cosmological Convergence: A Comparative Philosophical Study of Multilevel-Multidimensional Holistic Education and the Sundanese Panca Waluya Paradigm

Konvergensi Kosmologis: Studi Filosofis Komparatif Pendidikan Holistik Multilevel-Multidimensional dan Paradigma Panca Waluya Sunda

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Abstract: Contemporary education is often criticized for a reductionism that separates cognitive development from spiritual, emotional, ecological, and social dimensions. Multilevel-Multidimensional Holistic Education (MMHE) responds to this fragmentation, while the Sundanese Panca Waluya paradigm offers five interconnected values: Cageur (health), Bageur (goodness), Beunghar (creative abundance), Bener (truth and integrity), and Pinter (wisdom). This qualitative comparative philosophical study examined their ontological, epistemological, and pedagogical relations through dialogical hermeneutics and comparative axiology, with Daoist concepts as a mediating interpretive lens. The analysis identified convergence in relational understandings of the person, experiential and ethically situated knowledge, and the integration of virtue and wisdom. It also identified a complementary contribution: Panca Waluya gives culturally situated ethical and communal content to the multidimensional structure of MMHE, while Daoist ideas of balance and non-forcing help interpret the dynamic relations among its values. On this basis, Harmony Waluya Pedagogy (HWP) is proposed as a three-way conceptual synthesis that maps MMHE levels and dimensions onto the five Panca Waluya values and interprets their interaction through Daoist balance and flow. HWP is a theoretical framework rather than an empirically validated intervention, and the interpretive corpus was purposive rather than exhaustive. The model may inform culturally responsive curriculum design, teacher education, and Education for Sustainable Development.

Keywords: Panca Waluya, holistic education, Sundanese philosophy, Daoism, indigenous pedagogy

Abstrak: Pendidikan kontemporer kerap dikritik karena reduksionisme yang memisahkan perkembangan kognitif dari dimensi spiritual, emosional, ekologis, dan sosial. Pendidikan Holistik Multilevel-Multidimensional (MMHE) menjawab fragmentasi ini, sedangkan paradigma Panca Waluya Sunda menawarkan lima nilai yang saling berkaitan: Cageur (kesehatan), Bageur (kebaikan), Beunghar (kelimpahan kreatif), Bener (kebenaran dan integritas), dan Pinter (kebijaksanaan). Penelitian filosofis komparatif kualitatif ini mengkaji hubungan ontologis, epistemologis, dan pedagogis keduanya melalui hermeneutika dialogis dan aksiologi komparatif, dengan konsep Taoisme sebagai lensa interpretatif penengah. Analisis menemukan konvergensi dalam pemahaman manusia yang relasional, pengetahuan yang berakar pada pengalaman dan etika, serta keterpaduan kebijakan dan kebijaksanaan. Analisis juga menemukan kontribusi komplementer: Panca Waluya

memberi isi etis dan komunal yang berakar pada konteks budaya bagi struktur multidimensional MMHE, sedangkan gagasan keseimbangan dan tindakan tanpa pemaksaan dalam Taoisme membantu menafsirkan hubungan dinamis antarnilai. Atas dasar itu, Harmony Waluya Pedagogy (HWP) diusulkan sebagai sintesis konseptual tiga tradisi yang memetakan tingkat dan dimensi MMHE pada lima nilai Panca Waluya serta menafsirkan interaksinya melalui keseimbangan dan aliran Taoisme. HWP merupakan kerangka teoretis yang belum diuji secara empiris, dan korpus interpretatifnya bersifat purposif, bukan menyeluruh. Model ini berpotensi menjadi acuan bagi perancangan kurikulum responsif budaya, pendidikan guru, dan Pendidikan untuk Pembangunan Berkelanjutan.

Kata Kunci: *Panca Waluya, pendidikan holistik, filsafat Sunda, Taoisme, pedagogi indigenus*

Introduction

The dominant educational paradigm of the twenty-first century, despite numerous reforms, remains heavily influenced by the legacy of industrial-era positivism. This system prioritizes standardized testing, cognitive accumulation, and economic utility, often at the expense of human wholeness, emotional well-being, and spiritual depth (Robinson & Aronica, 2018; Biesta, 2009, 2021). In response to this fragmentation, holistic education has gained significant momentum. It holds that learning must engage the whole person (head, heart, hands, and spirit) and must take place within a connected community and ecological context (Miller, 2019).

Specifically, Multilevel-Multidimensional Holistic Education (MMHE) proposes that human consciousness develops through various levels, from egoic to ecocentric, and manifests across multiple dimensions: physical, emotional, mental, social, aesthetic, and spiritual (Gidley, 2016). However, a critical gap remains in the literature. Much of the theoretical framing of holistic education derives from Western humanistic psychology, such as the work of Maslow and Rogers, or from transpersonal psychology (Wilber, 2000). Although valuable, these sources may not fully resonate with the ontological realities of non-Western societies. There is a pressing need to decolonize educational theory by integrating indigenous knowledge systems that have long practiced holistic living and learning (Andreotti et al., 2015; Battiste, 2013; Smith, 2021).

In Southeast Asia, particularly within the Sundanese culture of West Java, Indonesia, there is a profound philosophical framework known as Panca Waluya. It translates literally as “Five States of Well-being” or “Five Dimensions of Nobility.” Panca Waluya is not merely a set of moral slogans but a comprehensive cosmological and educational paradigm. It holds that a human being achieves true humanity (Manusa Jati) only when five essential qualities are in balance: Cageur (physical and mental health), Bageur (moral goodness and empathy), Beunghar (spiritual and creative wealth), Bener (truth and integrity), and Pinter (intellectual and spiritual intelligence) (Fadilah et al., 2026).

Despite its depth, Panca Waluya has largely been discussed within regional cultural studies or local character education programs (Fadilah et al., 2026). Scholarly work that elevates Panca Waluya to the level of international philosophical discourse remains scarce, particularly in comparison with global holistic education models. There is also a lack of theoretical mediation that can explain the dynamic mechanisms of Panca Waluya to a global audience. This study therefore proposes Daoism, a major Eastern philosophical tradition with growing relevance in global educational theory, as the mediating lens (Moon, 2015; Wang, 2019; Xu et al., 2023). Daoism’s emphasis on naturalness (Ziran), balance (Yin-Yang), and effortless action (Wu Wei) offers a

sophisticated vocabulary for articulating the fluid, non-dualistic nature of Panca Waluya (Slingerland, 2003; Xu et al., 2023).

Current holistic education models risk becoming abstract universalisms that fail to account for specific cultural ontologies. Conversely, indigenous educational paradigms such as Panca Waluya risk remaining marginalized as “local folklore” rather than being recognized as sophisticated philosophical systems. Comparative studies are lacking that systematically analyze the ontological and epistemological structures of Panca Waluya alongside MMHE, use a third philosophical framework (Daoism) to bridge and explain the convergence between the two systems, and propose a synthesized pedagogical model that is both globally relevant and locally rooted.

The novelty of this study lies in its structured, three-way comparison. Prior work discusses the multidimensional account of human development in MMHE and treats Panca Waluya in cultural or character-education contexts. By contrast, this article examines the two frameworks through a consistent ontological, epistemological, and axiological comparison and uses Daoist concepts as an interpretive mediator rather than treating either tradition as a direct equivalent of the other. The proposed Harmony Waluya Pedagogy (HWP) therefore contributes a structured conceptual mapping: MMHE supplies levels and dimensions of development, Panca Waluya supplies five culturally grounded values, and Daoist balance and non-forcing are used to interpret the relations among them. This is a theoretical synthesis, not a claim of historical equivalence or empirical effectiveness. In this way, the study positions indigenous Indonesian philosophy as a serious contributor to global educational theory and responds to the call for a new social contract for education that respects diverse knowledge systems (UNESCO, 2021). It also offers a trans-cultural framework that can inform curriculum design, teacher education, and policy-making in diverse cultural contexts, promoting education that is not only effective but also ethically and ecologically sustainable.

Building on this gap, the study aims to (1) deconstruct the ontological, epistemological, and axiological foundations of MMHE; (2) analyze the philosophical structure of Panca Waluya; (3) identify convergence, divergence, and complementarity between them through Daoist philosophy; and (4) formulate HWP as a synthesized theoretical framework for contemporary holistic education.

Method

This study employs a qualitative research design with a comparative philosophical approach. Specifically, it uses dialogical hermeneutics, a method that interprets texts and concepts from different traditions by placing them in dialogue with one another to uncover shared meanings and unique insights (Gadamer, 1975; Lavery, 2003). This method is appropriate for comparing distinct cultural paradigms without reducing one to the terms of the other.

The data consist of three categories of textual sources. The first comprises Sundanese primary and secondary texts, including Amanat Galunggung and Sanghyang Siksa Kandang Karesian (Danasasmita et al., 1987), the Sundanese lexicon (Danadibrata, 2006), and contemporary scholarly interpretations of Panca Waluya as an ethnopedagogical framework (Fadilah et al., 2026). The second is holistic education literature, consisting of peer-reviewed articles and scholarly books on MMHE, indigenous pedagogy, and holistic curriculum (Battiste, 2013; Gidley, 2016; Miller, 2019). The third comprises Daoist philosophical texts, namely the Tao Te Ching (Laozi, 2006) and the Zhuangzi, along with contemporary academic commentaries on Daoist education (Moon, 2015; Wang, 2019; Xu et al., 2023).

The source corpus was selected purposively according to relevance to the study's three conceptual domains, identifiable authorship or textual provenance, and capacity to support philosophical interpretation. Holistic-education sources were selected for explicit discussion of MMHE, holistic curriculum, or indigenous pedagogy, with a preference for peer-reviewed literature. Sources were excluded from the interpretive corpus when their relevance to these concepts could not be established from their text or bibliographic description. The corpus was treated as a purposive philosophical sample rather than an exhaustive systematic review.

Analysis proceeded iteratively through four documented operations. First, each tradition was read separately, and concepts were assigned provisional codes under ontology (human-world relations), epistemology (what counts as knowledge and how it is known), axiology (values and ends), and pedagogy (educational implications). Second, each code was recorded with its source passage, contextual meaning, and an interpretive memo. Codes were refined when repeated readings revealed overlap or ambiguity. Third, a comparison matrix classified each relation as convergence (shared meaning), divergence (meaningful difference), or complementarity (one framework contributes a dimension that is not explicit in the other). Fourth, the synthesis considered only relationships supported by the matrix and interpreted them through relevant Daoist concepts while retaining differences among traditions. For replicability, the same code definitions and comparison questions were applied across all three source groups. The resulting model is an interpretive proposition rather than a measured causal model.

Interpretive credibility was supported through source triangulation across Sundanese, holistic-education, and Daoist materials; peer debriefing with two experts (one in Sundanese cultural studies and one in comparative philosophy); and thick description of concepts and their contexts, which are established procedures for trustworthiness in qualitative inquiry (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). During debriefing, interpretations and the comparison matrix were open to challenge, and ambiguous claims were reconsidered against the source passages. The analysis also maintained a distinction between textual interpretation, cross-tradition comparison, and the author's proposed pedagogical implications. These procedures strengthen transparency and credibility, although they do not eliminate the situatedness of hermeneutic interpretation.

Results and Discussion

Ontological Convergence: The Human as Microcosm

Both MMHE and Panca Waluya reject the Cartesian dualism that separates mind from body and self from world, and instead share a relational ontology. In MMHE, the physical dimension is foundational: learning is embodied, and cognitive processes are shaped by physical health and sensory experience. Panca Waluya places Cageur as the first pillar, which indicates that physical and mental health is a prerequisite for other forms of development. This reading resonates with research that presents embodied learning as an alternative to mentalistic education (Macedonia, 2019) and with evidence that school-based mindfulness interventions hold promise for cognitive performance and resilience to stress, although the available studies are heterogeneous and often underpowered (Zenner et al., 2014).

From a Daoist perspective, the body is a vessel of Qi (life energy), and Cageur can be understood as the free flow of Qi. When a student is stressed, bullied, or physically neglected, this flow can be read as blocked and learning as impaired. In this reading, Cageur is not just a "health

class” but the cultivation of vital energy. The reading is interpretive, because the comparison does not measure Qi or its effects on learning.

The comparison yields three linked interpretive findings. First, both MMHE and Panca Waluya treat human development relationally rather than as a separation of mind and body: MMHE foregrounds embodied learning, while the placement of Cageur among the five Waluya values makes health a condition intertwined with other forms of development. Second, the Sundanese idea of Tri Tangtu, as interpreted in this study, extends the relational view beyond the individual toward nature and the Divine. Third, the Daoist concepts of Qi and Ziran offer a vocabulary for discussing vitality and alignment with nature (Xu et al., 2023), but this is an interpretive analogy, not evidence that the traditions share an identical ontology. Taken together, these findings support an ecological and embodied reading of HWP: learning environments should attend to bodily well-being and human-environment relations rather than treat them as peripheral to cognition.

A second interpretive result concerns the relationship between the kosmocentric level in MMHE and the Sundanese reference to Tri Tangtu. The comparison suggests a shared orientation toward interdependence while preserving the distinct cultural meanings of each concept. Daoist Ziran illuminates the educational implication of acting in accordance with natural relations. The resulting proposition is that ecological embeddedness belongs within holistic learning design. It derives from the conceptual comparison and should not be read as an empirical finding about student outcomes. The proposition is compatible with the emphasis of the holistic curriculum on connections among body and mind, community, and the Earth (Miller, 2019), and with the argument that education should be oriented toward the world and not only toward the learner (Biesta, 2021).

Epistemological Convergence: Knowledge as Creative and Ethically Situated

Both paradigms challenge the positivist view of knowledge as objective, detached fact. MMHE values creative and aesthetic ways of knowing. Panca Waluya’s Beunghar (wealth or abundance) redefines knowledge as a creative, generative force: to be beunghar is to be productive and creative. In a Daoist sense, this can be read as Wu Wei in action, because creativity flows naturally when the mind is clear and unforced (Slingerland, 2003). Standardized education often stifles Beunghar by forcing all students into the same mold. A Panca Waluya-inspired epistemology would instead value diverse forms of intelligence and creativity and recognize that each student has a unique “wealth” to contribute (Robinson & Aronica, 2018).

The comparison identifies Beunghar as a point of complementarity rather than a one-to-one equivalent of the creative and aesthetic ways of knowing in MMHE. In this interpretation, Beunghar frames creativity as a form of generative abundance, while MMHE provides a multidimensional account of how creative knowing may appear in learning. Daoist Wu Wei describes conditions in which creativity is facilitated without excessive external constraint. This parallels the Daoist-inspired view of the classroom as an emergent system in which teachers create conditions rather than impose outcomes (Wang, 2019). The pedagogical implication is to provide meaningful student choice, inquiry, and project-based activity. This implication echoes self-determination theory, which identifies autonomy, competence, and relatedness as needs whose satisfaction supports self-motivation and well-being (Ryan & Deci, 2000), and the description of project-based learning as student-centred instruction characterized by autonomy, collaboration, and reflection (Kokotsaki et al., 2016). The analysis, however, does not establish that these practices necessarily improve achievement.

The comparison of Bener with the contextual understanding of knowledge in MMHE yields an ethical qualification. In the proposed synthesis, knowledge is evaluated not only by how it is produced or justified but also by the integrity of its use. Daoist critiques of artificiality and deception serve as a mediating interpretive resource, whereas Bener retains its distinct Sundanese ethical grounding. The result is an HWP proposition that ethical reasoning and academic integrity should be integrated across subject learning rather than isolated in a separate character lesson. The same orientation is visible in current debates on technology in education, where ethical concerns include fairness, accountability, transparency, bias, autonomy, agency, and inclusion, and where doing things ethically is distinguished from merely doing ethical things (Holmes et al., 2022).

More broadly, the epistemological finding resonates with the proposal that science education should move from having students adopt a single epistemology toward supporting students' navigation of multiple epistemologies (Bang & Medin, 2010). Read in this way, Panca Waluya does not replace disciplinary knowledge. It adds a culturally situated criterion, the ethical use of knowledge, that students can bring into dialogue with disciplinary knowledge.

Axiological Convergence: Virtue and Wisdom as the Ends of Education

The ultimate goal of education in both paradigms is the formation of a virtuous, wise human being. MMHE emphasizes social-emotional learning and empathy. Panca Waluya places Bageur (goodness and kindness) at the center of social harmony: without Bageur, intelligence becomes destructive. This resonates with the Daoist virtue of Ci (compassion), one of the Three Treasures (Laozi, 2006). Education must therefore cultivate Bageur not as a separate "character lesson" but as the foundational attitude of all interactions.

The analysis finds a convergence between MMHE's emphasis on social-emotional learning and Panca Waluya's Bageur, understood here as goodness expressed through empathy and social responsibility. Daoist Ci provides a comparative vocabulary, not a claim of identical doctrine. This supports the proposition that care and respectful interaction should be embedded in collaborative learning, conflict resolution, and service activities. Empirical research on social and emotional learning offers a cautious point of contact. A meta-analysis of 213 school-based programs found improved social and emotional skills, attitudes, behavior, and academic performance (Durlak et al., 2011), and a later meta-analysis examined the follow-up effects of such programs (Taylor et al., 2017). These findings concern social and emotional learning programs in general. They do not test Bageur or HWP, and claims about reduced bullying or improved engagement in specific schools require empirical verification.

The comparison further interprets Pinter not as isolated test performance but as wisdom integrated with Cageur, Bageur, Beunghar, and Bener. The conceptual result is a distinction between technical competence and judgment informed by health, care, creativity, and integrity. Daoist Da Zhi (great wisdom) is used as an analogy for this integrative orientation, while the article does not equate the traditions. The distinction parallels postformal education philosophy, which pairs pedagogical wisdom with pedagogical love, life, and voice (Gidley, 2016), and the broader argument that good education serves qualification, socialization, and subjectification rather than qualification alone (Biesta, 2009). In HWP, assessment should therefore include evidence of disciplinary understanding alongside reflection, ethical reasoning, and application in context. The precise instruments remain a matter for future empirical development.

The Harmony Waluya Pedagogy Framework

The comparative matrix supports the proposed Harmony Waluya Pedagogy (HWP) as a conceptual model with three coordinated layers. First, MMHE contributes a multilevel and multidimensional view of development. Second, Panca Waluya contributes the five culturally situated values that give this development an ethical and communal orientation. Third, the Daoist principles of balance, naturalness, and non-forcing serve as interpretive heuristics for considering how the dimensions and values interact. Table 1 summarizes the mapping. The correspondences are analytical proposals, not claims that the concepts are interchangeable or historically derived from one another. The multilevel layer can also be read alongside integral accounts of development, which describe waves and streams of development and states of consciousness (Wilber, 2000).

Table 1. Comparative Framework of Harmony Waluya Pedagogy

Domain	MMHE Concept	Panca Waluya Pillar	Daoist Mediator	Pedagogical Implication
Physical	Embodied Learning	Cageur (Health)	Qi Flow	Mindfulness, physical activity, safe environments, somatic awareness practices.
Social/Emotional	Empathy & Community	Bageur (Goodness)	Ci (Compassion)	Collaborative projects, conflict resolution, service learning, empathy training.
Creative/Cognitive	Creativity & Innovation	Beunghar (Wealth)	Ziran (Naturalness)	Project-based learning, arts integration, allowing student choice and natural interests.
Ethical	Ethical Reasoning	Bener (Truth)	De (Integrity)	Ethics across curriculum, academic integrity, discussion of moral dilemmas, role modeling.
Integrative	Wisdom/Consciousness	Pinter (Wisdom)	Da Zhi (Great Wisdom)	Interdisciplinary studies, reflection, mentorship, focus on long-term impact and meaning.

The HWP model rests on four principles. First, balance (Yin-Yang): the curriculum must balance structure and freedom, the cognitive and the emotional, and the individual and the community, so that no single pillar dominates. Second, flow (Wu Wei): teaching should follow the natural rhythm of the student and the season, avoiding forced rote learning and instead facilitating discovery. Third, interconnection (Tri Tangtu): all subjects are connected; science is connected to ethics (Bener), art to spirituality (Beunghar), and so on. Fourth, wholeness (Waluya): the goal is not only academic success but the Waluya of the student, that is, complete well-being and nobility. The principles of balance and interconnection are consistent with the synthesis of the science of learning

and development, which stresses developmentally supportive relationships, integrated supports that include home and school connections, and instruction that intentionally builds social, emotional, and academic skills (Darling-Hammond et al., 2020). Because that synthesis does not test HWP, the consistency is supportive context rather than validation.

Critical Discussion: Challenges and Opportunities

Implementing HWP in systems dominated by standardized testing is difficult: how can Bageur or Cageur be measured? One response lies in alternative assessments such as portfolios, reflective journals, peer reviews, and community feedback, together with policy reform that values these forms of evidence. The tension between what is measurable and what is educationally valuable has long been noted (Biesta, 2009), and project-based approaches likewise depend on well-aligned assessment (Kokotsaki et al., 2016). Daoist non-action offers a further angle, because wuwei has been used to open space for effortless action amid standardization and accountability reform (Moon, 2015).

There is also a risk of romanticizing Panca Waluya as a static, perfect tradition. It must be adapted to modern contexts. For example, Beunghar in the digital age includes digital literacy and creative coding, while Bener includes digital ethics and AI integrity (Holmes et al., 2022). The paradigm must remain dynamic rather than fossilized. Debates on decolonization show that different interpretations of decolonization carry different tensions and paradoxes (Andreotti et al., 2015). The integration of Panca Waluya into global theory should therefore avoid both tokenism and idealization, and it should reposition indigenous knowledge as a vital field of knowledge alongside Eurocentric thinking (Battiste, 2013).

Teachers cannot teach Waluya if they are not Waluya themselves. Teacher education programs must therefore incorporate holistic development for teachers, which requires a shift from technical training to transformative professional development that addresses the teacher's own Cageur, Bageur, and Pinter. This view is consistent with a holistic approach to teacher education in which deeper levels such as identity and mission, and not only behavior and competencies, shape the quality of teaching (Korthagen, 2004).

While rooted in Sunda, HWP has global relevance because the crises of mental health (Cageur), social polarization (Bageur), environmental degradation (Bener), and unethical technology (Pinter) are global. Panca Waluya offers a timeless framework for addressing these issues, and by framing it through Daoism and MMHE, it becomes accessible to international educators. This accessibility should be read as an argument for dialogue rather than a claim of universality, in line with the call for education grounded in cultural diversity and an ethic of care (UNESCO, 2021).

Conclusion

This study compared Multilevel-Multidimensional Holistic Education (MMHE) and the Sundanese Panca Waluya paradigm through a Daoist interpretive lens. It found convergence in relational understandings of the person, in experiential and ethically situated knowledge, and in the integration of virtue and wisdom. In response to the four research objectives, the analysis clarified the foundations of MMHE and the philosophical structure of Panca Waluya, identified their convergence and complementarity, and formulated Harmony Waluya Pedagogy (HWP) as a theoretical framework that emphasizes ontological wholeness, epistemological integration, and pedagogical balance. Theoretically, the findings suggest that Panca Waluya is not merely a local

cultural artifact but a philosophical system that can enrich global discourse on holistic education, and that Daoist concepts can serve as a mediating vocabulary without implying equivalence among traditions.

Practically, the framework implies that curriculum design, teacher education, and policy could give greater attention to embodied well-being, the ethical integration of subject learning, creative autonomy, and wisdom-oriented assessment, and that indigenous wisdom should be treated as a valid source of educational theory rather than being displaced by Western-centric curricula. These implications remain proposals. HWP is a conceptual framework built on a purposive corpus and interpretive analysis, it has not been tested empirically, and its interpretations remain situated. Future research should implement HWP in diverse school settings, use longitudinal designs to examine its relation to student well-being, academic performance, and social responsibility, and compare Panca Waluya with other indigenous paradigms, such as Ubuntu in Africa and Buen Vivir in Latin America.

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