

Research Article

Internalization of the Concept of Character Education According to Ki Hadjar Dewantara and Its Implementation in Kurima State Middle School

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Abstract

Character education is an education system that aims to instill certain character values in students, in which there are components of knowledge, awareness or willingness and actions to carry out these values. The Importance of application character education to students at Kurima State Junior high school is because many of them showed poor behavior and harsh character. The main purpose of this research is to find out Ki Hajar Dewantara's character education and internalize these concept at Kurima State Junior High School. Results of this research showed that Ki Hadjar Dewantara seeks to instill national education foundation based on principles of Indonesia, one of that principle is Culture principle. Ki Hadjar Dewantara culture principle said that culture must be explored and developed through character education. And that culture principle implemented through instill character values in school culture, when school provision facilities support school program and school habituation in daily life at school. School program's must be designed to form students character by design the right activities at school environment and student get used to character values that designed by school.

Keywords: Character Education, Ki Hadjar Dewantara, Internalization, Implementation, Papua.



INTRODUCTION

Education is the pillar of a nation's strength. Through education, a nation can uphold its dignity. In this era, education is not only focused on the intellectual abilities of an individual during their educational journey but also needs to integrate other factors such as attitude, behavior, and character. The issues surrounding education in Indonesia are complex, as there are problems in almost all aspects that need to be addressed. Moral degradation has become rampant in the world of education, presenting a grim picture. This can be seen from the frequent fights among students, the rise in drug-related cases involving students, the lack of respect shown by students towards adults, and the habitual practice of cheating. The issues of culture and national character are currently under sharp scrutiny by society in various aspects of life, as discussed in various print media, interviews, dialogues, and discussions on electronic media (Mushthofa et al., n.d., p. 78).

Education is a primary concern, particularly education related to character, morals, and ethics. Character education is highly needed and has become a major issue, receiving specific attention from the government (Nugroho et al., n.d., p. 89). Character education has become a part of society and the nation, emphasizing habits that are continuously practiced and done.

The purpose of character education is to develop an individual's ability to make good or bad decisions, preserve, and realize goodness in daily life (Laiila, n.d., p. 4). Character education is expected to serve as the foundation in shaping a complete and superior personality for the younger generation. Through the family, community, and schools, it is hoped that the process of transferring cultural values can be carried out through character education (Meigawangi, R, 2010: p.1-2), enabling society to become a competitive resource that is balanced with the times. Character education can be implemented in a synergistic manner, both in schools, at home, and in the community (Insani, G. N., et al., 2021: 8153-8160). Furthermore, character education is hoped to become a daily habit.

To date, character education is still considered the responsibility of religious teachers. Many teachers do not feel that character values should be the basis for teaching, which affects the outcome of education and its impact on the behavior of Indonesian individuals. National education cannot stop at just teaching but must include implementation and application that directly impact the behavior of students.

In reality, character education values refer to Pancasila as the worldview of the Indonesian people. However, the practice still leaves much to be desired today (Judiiianii, n.d., p. 289).

It is clear here that one of the tasks of teachers is to shape the character of students. Ki Hadjar Dewantara hoped that the Indonesian people would possess good attitudes and personalities, remaining grounded in the unique culture and character of Indonesia (Maiisaro et al., n.d., p. 312). Therefore, teachers' perspectives on character education need to be tested, especially in schools or learning groups. This is because teachers should be able to build the character of students through the symbols passed down by Ki Hadjar Dewantara, rather than being influenced by Western educational doctrines. Many teachers are trapped in certifications but lose the essence of education.

The output of education should produce students who are independent, physically healthy, mentally sound, intelligent, and responsible members of society, contributing to their own happiness and the well-being of others (Hariis, n.d., p. 312). The concepts of "asah, asih, and asuh" are universal principles that are very suitable to be used as methods to achieve noble character aligned with national ideologies.

Observations at SMP Negeri Kurima show a lack of teacher role models for students. This is because teachers often leave or are absent from school, and even when present, they do not teach. Additionally, students have lost trust in teachers, there is little involvement from parents in their children's education, and parents show little concern for their children's education. Students are often absent from school, and their behavior tends to be rude, disrespectful, and indifferent to their own education.

Based on the educational system presented by Ki Hajar Dewantara and the observations made, it is hoped that teachers will understand and apply the principles of Ki Hajar Dewantara's educational system in their role as educators, so that a truly impactful education is created—not just focused on knowledge, but also on shaping students' behavior.

Thus, the researcher aims to gain a new understanding related to role modeling and character education as taught by Ki Hajar Dewantara. The aim of this study is to explore the concepts of character education according to Ki Hajar Dewantara and to understand how these concepts can be implemented at SMP Negeri Kurima, Papua Pegunungan.

METHOD

The study in this research is qualitative through literature study. The method of literature study involves the analysis and synthesis of information from various literature sources relevant to the research topic. The method used in this research is qualitative through the collection of various documents or literature that are analyzed descriptively.

Within the research framework, the type of data used is data taken or obtained directly from the primary research source, namely educational personnel at Kurima State Junior High School. Data obtained from various journals, books, and other references are analyzed using descriptive qualitative analysis and systematically arranged to obtain a sound conclusion and provide a generalizable overview of the research within the scope of this study.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Education is the most valuable asset humans possess. Through education, we can fulfill all our life needs, both materially and spiritually, and it is expected to produce more capable, mature, resilient, resourceful, and self-confident individuals, both personally and as members of society. In Papua, education is crucial yet rare, particularly in Kurima, Papua Pegunungan, where the education system is deeply concerning. Why is this the case? Education in this area is far from being properly educated or educating others.

Schools in Kurima often face a shortage of teachers, even though global data indicates that the number of teachers there should be sufficient. The issue lies in the reliability of the teachers as educators, as many teachers neglect their duties, leaving schools feeling the absence of educators and their impact on the students. As a result, children of school age in Kurima are still struggling to become fluent in reading and writing, which significantly impacts their character development.

One school in Kurima that requires special attention is SMP Negeri Kurima. The school has a large number of students, many of whom are indigenous Papuans who live in the area. The children attending this school are those who need guidance and character building, as envisioned by Ki Hajar Dewantara. Many of these students still do not understand how to behave towards their peers and adults. This is influenced by the cultural practices of the parents in educating their children. Cultural influences greatly

affect how children communicate with others. The culture that allows children to grow and develop in their environment, with many children being entrusted to their uncles, results in a lack of emotional connection between children and their biological parents.

Ideally, the primary education should come from the nuclear family environment. However, in Kurima, and throughout the Papua Pegunungan region, the situation is different. Parents tend to let their children grow without being properly educated, both in terms of knowledge and character. The culture that places more trust in uncles to take care of the children leads to children growing up following the lifestyle and practices of their uncles, who are the closest family members, instead of their biological parents.

This situation creates students at SMP Negeri Kurima who display behavior such as rudeness, neglecting tasks assigned to them, lack of sensitivity to the teachings provided by their teachers, poor response to lessons, laziness, and indifference to their attendance at school. Therefore, there is a need for a proper understanding and methods that teachers can use to address these issues. Through this study, the researcher aims to internalize the ideas of Ki Hajar Dewantara in the field of education, particularly in implementing character education by applying the five principles of "Panca Dharma": the principle of freedom, culture, humanity, nationalism, and order and peace.

Observations and experiences at SMP Negeri Kurima highlight several issues in addition to the cultural influences, including: First, the lack of parental involvement in their children's education. Second, the lack of role modeling by teachers as educators. Third, teachers attending school only as a formality. Fourth, the lack of teacher attention to the students. Fifth, the inactivity of students in following lessons due to involvement in various activities that are not important to them, such as attending mourning events, church inaugurations, etc. Based on these issues, the National Education Goals outlined in the Indonesian Republic Law No. 20 of 2003 on the National Education System have not been achieved (UU Sisdiknas, 2003, p. no. 20).

Concept of Character Education by Ki Hadjar Dewantara

Ki Hadjar Dewantara is a great pioneer with very modern ideas. He earned the title of "Father of National Education" based on his struggles in building the foundation of education from the colonial era to the present. Ki Hadjar Dewantara (Hikmasari, D. N., et al., 2021:19-31) stated that character education is an educational concept that starts

with continuous habituation activities to build character intelligence, which can form a good and strong personality and character (Wardani, n.d., p. 10). Good habits, if done routinely, can have a positive impact on human beings. Humans will be able to control their desires to avoid doing bad things. Humans have extraordinary potential, different characters, and attitudes. Referring to this, humans who possess character intelligence will always use their thoughts and feelings, balancing them well and making mature decisions.

Ki Hadjar Dewantara developed an educational system that instilled character in us. Our national education system is more liberal, leaning toward the interests of the Dutch colonizers. Indonesians were not taught about culture, economics, politics, or democracy. The reason was simple—if natives were taught, they would rebel. The aim was to prevent natives from recognizing their culture as their identity. Ki Hadjar Dewantara once said, "Educating a child is like educating a nation. If the child is corrupted, the nation will be corrupted" (Suryana & Muhtar, n.d., p. 6131).

Education, according to Ki Hadjar Dewantara, is the right of every human being, both materially and spiritually. Ki Hadjar Dewantara emphasized character education as the foundation of his educational concepts, with the principles of "Pancadharma," consisting of the principle of nature or peace, the principle of freedom, the principle of culture, the principle of nationalism, and the principle of humanity (Sukrii et al., n.d., p. 41). Ki Hadjar Dewantara understood the importance of respecting others' rights, which meant that his educational concept also emphasized human aspects (Ainia, D. K, 2020:95-101).

Ki Hadjar Dewantara believed that character education is a systematic effort connected with building culture, teaching growth in harmony between the soul, body, and the environment, which can positively influence a child's development towards civilized human values in life (Asa, n.d., p. 258). We can understand that the effort to implement character education starts with the family environment as the initial foundation for instilling character in children (Nugroho et al., n.d., p. 94). Subsequently, the school plays a secondary role in balancing children's character development through various habitual practices and role modeling, helping children develop a strong character that will help them face society. Negative influences can be overcome as long as they have a strong foundation from the family environment and supported by character education at school.

Ki Hadjar Dewantara's efforts to establish the foundation of national education were based on the principles of Indonesian identity, one of which is the principle of culture. From this cultural principle, Ki Hadjar Dewantara reminded the nation's generation that culture is an identity that must be recognized and balanced through education. Educators should understand the moral distortion occurring in the nation's generation today. It is acknowledged that many educators no longer understand the Triology of Ki Hadjar Dewantara, which includes: "Ing Ngarso Sung Tulodo," "Ing Madyo Mbangun Karso," and "Tut Wuri Handayani," as instruments of character education. Educators today tend to focus on reading textbooks without considering the concepts of character, leadership, and education rooted in these teachings (Adprijadi, n.d., p. 40).

Modern educators must question their approach, as education has become limited to teaching and far from true educating. The failure of modern education to address the balance of the times with character will create Indonesians who are physically healthy but spiritually damaged (Salirawati, n.d., p. 27). Children possess an important phase for the growth and instilling of national moral values. This phase is the right time to instill wise character values in the hearts of children. Therefore, educational participants should be equipped with good morals and life experiences, and they will grow into a generation that is cultured, values-oriented, creative, and independent.

Character Formation Internalization in Classroom Learning

Character formation is the process of building positive character traits in students through various strategies and activities, which involve teaching moral values, role modeling, and providing examples of positive behavior by teachers. Every student has a different character. Some tend to be quiet, obedient, and disciplined, while others are very active, creative, strong-willed, and difficult to manage. There are several ways to form students' character in the classroom. First, by providing role models, where educators, as role models, play a crucial role in shaping students' character by teaching honesty, politeness in interactions with students, and the school environment. Second, during lessons, teachers should subtly incorporate moral messages relevant to the material being taught. Third, rewards and recognition for positive behavior can motivate students to continue displaying good character; therefore, role models can offer praise or rewards accordingly. Character formation can also involve activities that foster

leadership qualities in students, such as giving them the opportunity to lead small groups. Additionally, character formation in the classroom can be achieved by teaching moral values, sharing inspiring experiences or success stories that help students understand positive values (quipper.com).

In the implementation of character education, it is not only acquired specifically in the classroom but is generally obtained in the entire school environment. Character Education Partnership (CEP) adapts the theory of Likona concerning the implementation of effective character education in schools (Sihotang, n.d., p. 36). There are several principles of effective character education, including: First, schools, with all their community members, balance basic ethical values and behaviors recognized as good character. Second, schools define character comprehensively, covering ways of thinking, behaving, and acting. Third, schools use comprehensive, deep, and proactive approaches to balance character. Fourth, schools create supportive communities. Fifth, schools provide students with opportunities to express moral values. Sixth, schools balance meaningful and challenging curricula that respect all students, balance values, and help them succeed. Seventh, schools help students balance their motivation. Eighth, school staff form a learning community that can become examples and role models for students. Ninth, schools balance leadership collaboratively and support various aspects of character education. Tenth, schools involve parents and the community as partners in character education. Eleventh, schools regularly assess the culture and climate within the school and staff in character education, manifesting good character (Sihotang, n.d., p. 36).

The implementation of character education in schools is generally carried out through three approaches: (1) exclusive; (2) inclusive (integrated); and (3) a mixed approach. The exclusive approach has been implemented, particularly in subjects such as Religious Education, Moral Pancasila Education, Citizenship Education, and Cultural Education. Recently, a "Honesty Counter" was introduced to instill honesty values in students. This exclusive model has several advantages, such as being easy to implement with teachers, textbooks, and assessments. Its disadvantage is the lack of integration of values that should be balanced across subjects, leading to a high likelihood of overlapping values and a lack of emphasis on other character traits (Heindriiana & Jacobus, n.d., pp. 25–29). Moreover, because there is no consensus on the values (character traits) to be balanced, it is difficult for the school to assess how much

character development has taken place in the students.

The inclusive model of character education is an alternative that is worth trying. In the inclusive model, character is formulated collectively by the entire school community and is implemented by all subjects through integrated learning models. According to Fogarty (1991) in his book *The Mindful School: How to Integrate the Curriculum*, there are nine models of integrated learning, one of which is the integrated model. This model integrates all subjects to balance cognitive, psychomotor, and affective aspects. This model seems suitable for balancing character in schools. This approach is based on the following principles: (1) the character values or traits that the school aims to balance in students must be planned, agreed upon, and implemented by all components of the school; (2) there should be a division of roles among teachers for balancing character within specific subjects (Sarii & Puspiita, n.d., p. 72).

The role of the teacher in character education is vital, as teachers are central figures in education. Teachers are responsible for the teaching process and must create an environment conducive to students' emotional and behavioral development. Despite the emergence of various educational references, it is the authority of teachers that determines the direction of character development in students (Dalyono & Leistariiniingsih, n.d., p. 42).

Various strategic efforts to help address the crisis of character values can be pursued through various alternatives, primarily through education, both in formal and non-formal settings, inside and outside the school. Character education is a process that balances the awareness of every student as citizens who are dignified, free, sovereign, and willing to maintain and preserve that freedom and sovereignty (Judianii, n.d., p. 289).

Educators are the backbone of character education, as they play a crucial role in shaping the personality of students. Schools, as educational units, must create an environment that fosters positive emotional and behavioral habits in children, with educators guiding them towards better character development. On the other hand, in schools where positive emotional and behavioral habits are not fostered, it is difficult to find positive impacts on students' habits (Saleh, n.d., p. 108). Character education aims to shape students' ways of thinking and behaviors, which will become the foundation of the nation.

The character education values outlined above should be implemented at

schools, especially at SMP Negeri Kurima, as part of efforts to form good character in the students. Schools should not only transfer knowledge but also become catalysts for character education. The best way to teach character education is through classroom activities, extracurricular activities, and various educational practices (Utami, n.d., p. 40). In classroom learning, teachers can use methods relevant to the material or the students' environment. Methods commonly used in character education include meaningful greeting, doctrinal teachings, role modeling, habituation, and value clarification.

Therefore, character must be manifested in behaviors and actions to align with the nation's culture, which has always been integral to the teachings of the National Education Figure, Ki Hadjar Dewantara, through the Tri-Centered Education concept. Educators have an important role in shaping the character of students. The role of educators must be based on their understanding of Ki Hadjar Dewantara's character education concepts.

The Role of Schools in Character Formation

Schools play a very strategic role in shaping individuals with good character. Schools are responsible not only for producing students who excel in knowledge and technology but also for shaping their identity, character, and personality. For character education to succeed, it requires adequate and consistent understanding from all members of the educational community. In an educational institution, there are supervisors, school principals, educators, and staff, all of whom must share the same perception of character education for students. Each component of the education system has its own role. The school principal, as the manager, must have a strong commitment to implementing character education concepts (Syahronii, n.d., p. 28).

Character education is more specifically implemented within the classroom environment, then integrated into extracurricular activities, and reinforced through daily behavior practices in the school environment. Thus, educators have an essential role in instilling character values in students, ensuring that each learning process runs effectively. The educational process in the context of character education can follow five key roles (Sumeirta, n.d., pp. 11–14): First, the conservator (maintainer) of value systems, which are sources of normative behavior. Second, the innovator (balancer) of knowledge values. Third, the transmitter (communicator) of value systems to students. Fourth, the

transformer (changer) of value systems through the individual's personality and behavior. Fifth, the organizer (manager) who ensures that the educational process is accountable, both formally and morally (GP, n.d.).

In addition to the school principal, teachers are the figures expected to educate students to have good character, be cultured, and moral. Referring to the Indonesian Republic Law No. 20 of 2003 on the National Education System, Article 1, it is explained that all educational staff, including teachers, counselors, facilitators, instructors, and others in accordance with their specialties, must participate in character education (Hariita et al., n.d., p. 52). Likewise, school staff and employees are required to contribute to character education by maintaining positive attitudes and behaviors to become role models for students.

Furthermore, in character education, all components must be involved, including components like the curriculum content, teaching processes, assessment, the quality of relationships, the management of subjects, school management, the implementation of curricular activities, and the empowerment of facilities and infrastructure, as well as budgeting and work ethics across the entire school community. In this regard, the school can create a character education program using methods such as the following: First, display moral messages through posters, banners, school magazines, or bulletins with the intention of gradually embedding these messages into students' subconscious. Since much of human behavior is driven by the subconscious, it is hoped that these moral messages will shape the students' character positively. Second, regularly and intensively reinforce moral messages so that they become ingrained in students' subconscious. Third, require students to follow school rules, such as arriving on time, being polite, respectful, etc. Students who violate these rules will be given tasks to make them aware of their mistakes, rather than imposing meaningless punishment. Fourth, provide counseling space for students who need special assistance. Fifth, integrate moral messages into every lesson, such as sharing moral messages related to the sacrifices of national heroes during history lessons. Sixth, allocate more time for religious education lessons, such as having them twice a week. Seventh, educate by setting a good example (teaching by example). As educators, it is crucial to set a good example in behavior, speech, and actions, as this greatly influences the students (Ilimamudiin, li., et al., 2022:102-108).

A teacher, in addition to teaching, is also expected to guide and instill character

values in students, which will become a foundation for their success in life. If students succeed in their future endeavors, it signifies the success of the educator, because the knowledge imparted to them is a key to success.

The Connection Between Ki Hadjar Dewantara's Thoughts on Character Education and the Culture in Kurima

Ki Hadjar Dewantara's thoughts on character are closely related to culture. He believed that when discussing character education, it must be rooted in the culture of the school or the environment in which the students are located. By doing so, students will understand and appreciate their culture, passed down through generations, which in turn will strengthen their sense of identity and pride in their culture. It will also enable them to comprehend local values and build their personalities in accordance with their nature and the values of their nation. Furthermore, Ki Hadjar Dewantara emphasized the primary role of the family in nurturing the moral character of children.

The local wisdom and culture where SMP Negeri Kurima is located are strongly influenced by the culture of mutual cooperation and the deep connection with nature, as well as the respect for traditions. The community holds a harmonious worldview with the environment, considering nature as an inseparable part of their life. Their belief in customary rituals and the kinship system serves as an essential foundation in daily life. Observing the daily life of students at the school, it appears that students are often influenced by character traits that are not suitable for their development, because in their environment, they frequently imitate and adopt adult behaviors, such as smoking or chewing betel. At their impressionable age, they are easily influenced by such actions, and they even jokingly ask teachers for cigarettes.

Moreover, as Ki Hadjar Dewantara stated about older generations, it is important to provide children with lessons that encourage them to follow positive examples. This would enable the students in school to create an educational environment that is free and results in individuals who are intellectually and morally excellent. Educators are therefore expected to master competencies that include pedagogical, personal, social, and professional aspects, guided by the values of Pancasila.

Relating Ki Hadjar Dewantara's thoughts on character education to culture is very relevant because when character education is linked to culture, students will not forget their own culture. It will help them realize the potential within themselves and

develop their character in alignment with their cultural roots.

CONCLUSION

Ki Hadjar Deiwantara in character education is a systematic effort related to balancing culture with the desire to provide teaching in the balanced growth of the soul and body of children in their nature so that the environment can help provide a positive influence on the progress of students physically and mentally towards the direction of human morality in the perfection of life. The implementation of character education is realized through the instillation of character values in the school culture, namely through the provision of facilities to support various activities in school programs and those that are customary in daily life at school. These school programs are designed to shape the character of students through activities in the environment of Kurima State Junior High School which are designed in such a way that students, both consciously and unconsciously, have become accustomed to being instilled with character values that are planned by Kurima State Junior High School.

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