
Recontextualizing Ki Hajar Dewantara's Educational Philosophy in the Era of Merdeka Belajar and Global Disruption

*Ismaiza Busti*¹, *Refinal*², *Saifullah SA*³, *Desi Asmaret*⁴, *Julhadi*⁵, *Usman Aliyu Yunusa*⁶

^{1,2,3,4,5}Doctor of Islamic Studies, Universitas Muhammadiyah Sumatera Barat, Indonesia

⁶Department of Islamic Studies, Islamic University in Niger (IUN), Niger

¹ismaiza.busti74@gmail.com, ²refrefinal@gmail.com, ³saifullahsawi261@gmail.com,
⁴desiasmaret.da@gmail.com, ⁵julhadi15@gmail.com, ⁶usmanaliyuyunus1@gmail.com

Received August 27, 2025; Revised October 25, 2025; Accepted November 23, 2025

Abstract

Objective: To critically analyze Ki Hajar Dewantara's educational philosophy and its relevance to contemporary Indonesian education, especially in the context of the "Freedom of Learning" policy. **Theoretical framework:** This research is based on the theoretical framework of humanistic, cultural, and liberation education, with an emphasis on student autonomy, moral development, and the formation of national identity. The triadic philosophy of Ki Hajar Dewantara, which consists of the principles of Ing Ngarsa Sung Tulada, Ing Madya Mangun Karsa, and Tut Wuri Handayani, is used as a conceptual basis in this study. **Literature review:** A literature review shows that although Ki Hajar's educational values are often referenced, there are still shortcomings in integrative and practical studies that relate his thinking to the demands of modern education, especially in the era of digital transformation, global competition, and curriculum reform. Most studies are historical or philosophical, without providing a concrete operational framework for educators and policymakers. **Methods:** This qualitative research uses historical, sociocultural, and content analysis approaches. Primary data was obtained from Ki Hajar Dewantara's original writings, speeches, and policy documents. Secondary data includes related literature and contemporary educational frameworks such as the Independent Curriculum. The analysis was carried out through thematic categorization and interpretive synthesis. **Result:** The results of the study show that Ki Hajar Dewantara's thinking remains relevant, especially in terms of educational freedom, cultural roots, and moral character development. His thinking became the philosophical basis for rehumanizing education in the dominance of metrics and standardization. However, reinterpretation is needed to be in line with the digital learning environment and 21st-century competencies. **Implications:** National education policies need to integrate local cultural values and humanistic pedagogical approaches to create sustainable, identity-based learning. **Novelty:** The uniqueness of this research lies in the reactualization of Ki Hajar Dewantara's educational philosophy as a contextual and adaptive living paradigm to current and future educational challenges.

Keywords: recontextualizing, ki hajar dewantara, educational philosophy, cultural-based education, global disruption.

INTRODUCTION

Education is a very important foundation in shaping the personality, morality, and direction of progress of a nation. In Indonesia, education is not only seen as a process of imparting knowledge, but also as a way to form a whole Indonesian human being. Therefore, the thinking that underlies the development of the national education system is very necessary to be discussed and used as a reference. One of the key figures in the history of Indonesian education is Ki Hajar Dewantara, who is known as the Father of National Education [1].

Ki Hajar Dewantara brings the concept of education that not only increases intellectual intelligence, but also builds character, character, and national spirit. In today's context, Ki Hajar's ideas are increasingly important in facing globalization, technological advances, and the challenges of the industrial revolution era 4.0 and society 5.0. The concept of education that emphasizes "freedom of learning," cultivation, and the development of individual potential based on the nature of nature and time is the main pillar in educational change in Indonesia [2].

Ki Hajar Dewantara's thoughts, such as the philosophy of "Tut Wuri Handayani," "Ing Madya Mangun Karso," and "Ing Ngarsa Sung Tulodo," have become important guidelines in the preparation of the national education system. However, it is necessary to conduct an in-depth study of its application and relevance in education today, especially related to the Independent Curriculum, which is now implemented by the Ministry of Education, Culture, Research, and Technology. An educational approach that focuses on character and culture, as advocated by Ki Hajar, provides a real, contextual, and sustainable educational alternative [3]. Because, in addition, education is an important foundation in nation-building. In Indonesia, the role of education is not only as a medium for knowledge transfer, but also as a process of forming character, identity, and national spirit. One of the key figures who initiated the concept of contextual and culture-based national education was Ki Hajar Dewantara. However, even though his ideas have often been used as references, there is still a significant research gap in understanding, applying, and developing the relevance of his thinking in the context of contemporary education, especially in the era of Industrial Revolution 4.0 and society 5.0 [4].

One of the main gaps in this study is the lack of an integrative study between the concept of "Freedom of Learning" popularized by the current government and the initial ideas of Ki Hajar Dewantara. Although there are many common values in principle, such as respect for children's nature, freedom of learning, and emphasis on culture-based education, there is still little research that critically analyzes how Ki Hajar's original ideas can be adapted in the implementation of the complex and multifaceted Independent Curriculum. Many policy discourses claim to adopt their values, but there has been no in-depth empirical and historical evaluation of the fit or deviation between original ideas and modern practices [5].

Another gap that arises is the lack of exploration of the role of teachers as a central subject in the Ki Hajar Dewantara-based humanism-based education system. The concepts of "Among", "Ing Ngarsa Sung Tulada", "Ing Madya Mangun Karso", and "Tut Wuri Handayani" are pedagogical values that are not only philosophical, but have a practical dimension in the teaching approach. However, many teachers today are still stuck in a technocratic and rigid approach, which is contrary to the spirit of liberation in education carried out by Ki Hajar. In-depth research on how to transform the role of teachers as facilitators of independent learning rooted in local culture is still urgently needed [6].

In addition, there is a lack of literature that discusses the relationship between education as a cultural process and the challenges of today's globalization. Ki Hajar's thinking emphasizes the importance of local culture in education, but in practice, globalization and technology have obscured the cultural identity of many learners. Learning that is not grounded in culture often results in a generation that loses its identity and local wisdom. Thus, further research is

still needed on how local culture-based education as initiated by Ki Hajar can be implemented in the current digital and multicultural education system [7].

The importance of this theme is also shown by the actual condition of Indonesian education, which is undergoing systemic transformation through the Independent Curriculum. The government encourages personalization of learning, projects to strengthen Pancasila student profiles, and the integration of local contexts in learning. However, in reality, not all schools and educators understand the philosophical roots of this change. Ki Hajar's thoughts that prioritize independence, creativity, and integrity should be used as the main reference in formulating policies and teaching practices [8].

Furthermore, the limitations of Ki Hajar Dewantara's thinking in the context of the digital and high-tech era have also not been widely studied. Many of his ideas have not been explicitly formulated to answer today's challenges, such as artificial intelligence, information disruption, and digitalization of education. This is where the reinterpretation and development of Ki Hajar's thinking is needed to remain contextual and solutive in the modern era. This opens up opportunities for researchers to devise a new educational paradigm that remains rooted in local values but is adaptive to global progress [9].

The significance of the development of this theme is not only limited to philosophical aspects, but also has a direct impact on the quality of education, the formation of students' character, and the cultural resilience of the nation. In the flow of value homogenization due to globalization, education based on local culture will be the last wall in maintaining the integrity of the nation. Ki Hajar Dewantara has provided the foundation, but our big task now is to resurrect, reorganize, and apply it systemically [10].

This theme is also relevant to global goals such as the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), especially in point 4 (Quality Education) and point 11 (Sustainable Cities and Communities). Quality, inclusive, and rooted in local culture education, as initiated by Ki Hajar Dewantara, is in line with the SDGs target to build a sustainable, inclusive, and diversity-respecting society. Therefore, the development of research on Ki Hajar Dewantara's thoughts is not only important for national education, but also as a contribution to sustainable global development based on human values [11].

Research Implications. Ki Hajar Dewantara's educational thinking has broad implications in designing a relevant, contextual, and humanist education system in the contemporary era. In practice, the concept of "Freedom of Learning," which is rooted in Ki Hajar's educational philosophy, provides a new direction for learning that respects the freedom, creativity, and uniqueness of each individual [12]. The real implication of this research is the need to adjust the curriculum, learning methods, and the role of teachers who do not only teach, but also accompany morally, emotionally, and culturally. Schools should be set up as fun and liberating "learning parks", not as oppressive and uniform places. This research also invites policymakers to integrate local cultural values into the education system as a form of resilience to the homogeneous flow of globalization [13].

In addition, Ki Hajar's thoughts are relevant to the SDGs agenda, especially in strengthening quality education, based on human values, and upholding cultural diversity. Education based on local culture has the potential to strengthen national identity while building an ethical and civilized global society [14].

Novelty Research. The novelty in this research lies in the reinterpretation of Ki Hajar Dewantara's thinking contextually, by linking it directly to the challenges of the digital age, the implementation of the Independent Curriculum, and the SDGs agenda. Thus, this study becomes a bridge between Indonesia's classical education philosophy and the 21st-century education system that demands flexibility, independence, and alignment with universal cultural and humanitarian values.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Ki Hajar Dewantara's thoughts have become an important foundation in the study of education in Indonesia, especially those related to the philosophical, cultural, and character dimensions of learners. In previous literature studies, education has often been seen as an institutional process that focuses on cognitive achievement and academic output. However, such an approach has proven to be unable to answer the socio-cultural challenges and paradigm shifts that have occurred in the 21st century. Therefore, many studies have begun to re-examine holistic educational approaches that are rooted in local values and humanitarian principles, one of which is through the thought of Ki Hajar Dewantara [15].

In various previous studies, Ki Hajar's educational philosophy, which prioritizes the concepts of "Tut Wuri Handayani," "Ing Madya Mangun Karso," and "Ing Ngarsa Sung Tulada," is considered an ethical and practical framework in the educational process. The existing literature shows that this slogan is not just a slogan, but represents the position of the teacher as a moral guiding educator, not just an academic instructor. Some studies have also highlighted the concept of "Among" in the Taman Siswa system, which emphasizes affection, tenderness, and respect for children's nature [16].

On the other hand, the discussion of education as a process of culture is one of the focuses in literature that raises a local culture-based education approach. In this study, education is not only a means to achieve academic prowess but also a medium for cultural preservation, identity formation, and strengthening national character. Some writings show that education that is disconnected from the culture of the people will produce a generation that loses its roots of identity and is easily dragged into the flow of globalization without a value filter [17].

In addition, the concept of "Freedom of Learning", which is now the direction of government policy, has been discussed in the literature that examines Ki Hajar's thoughts. Many studies consider that the spirit of Freedom of Learning is nothing but the actualization of Ki Hajar's views on freedom, freedom of thought, and learning that are adapted to the nature of the times and the nature of students. This literature tends to underscore the importance of educational personalization, differentiation of learning strategies, and recognition of the uniqueness of each individual in the educational process [18].

However, there are still limitations in the literature that directly link Ki Hajar Dewantara's thinking to the challenges of digital education, artificial intelligence, and globalization. The available literature is generally historical or philosophical, but not many have explored empirically how their ideas can be applied in the context of technology-based learning, online learning, or a dynamic and inclusive education system. This opens up space for further research to bridge the values of classical education with the needs of contemporary education, which are more complex and multidimensional [19].

Literature is also still minimal in critically examining the position of teachers and educational institutions according to the perspective of Ki Hajar Dewantara in facing today's educational disruptions. Existing studies tend to idealize the concept of teachers as role models and mentors, but there has not been much exploration of how this role can be carried out concretely in the limitations of the modern education system, which is full of administrative burdens and curriculum demands [20].

Overall, the literature review shows that Ki Hajar Dewantara's thinking remains relevant and significant in shaping meaningful, contextual, and characterful education. However, new literature is needed that connects the noble values of traditional education with technological developments, curriculum policies, and current social needs. This is where the urgency lies to compile an academic review that is not only descriptive-historical, but also analytical and applicative [21].

Table 1. Literature Review on Ki Hajar Dewantara's Educational Thought

Study Aspects	Focus of Studies in Literature	Key Findings	Research Gap
Philosophy of Education	On the other side of the aisle, in front of the crowd	This philosophy is considered an ethical guide in the educational process, emphasizing the role of teachers as guides, motivators, and role models.	There have not been many studies that directly link these values to the competence of today's teachers in the context of technology and digitalization.
The Concept of Among	Education with affection, respect for children's nature	Emphasis is placed on an approach that humanizes students and respects their freedom of thought.	There is a lack of empirical exploration of the implementation of the Among concept in modern classrooms and educational systems based on targets and assessments.
Freedom of Learning	Learning according to the nature of the times and the nature of children, anti-dogmatism	It is seen as the philosophical heritage that underlies the policy of the Independent Curriculum.	There has been no study that has in-depth compared the concept of Freedom of Learning version of Ki Hajar and the modern version of government policy.
Education as Culture	Education is a process of internalizing local cultural values	Education must be contextual and inseparable from the culture of the community	There are still few studies that explore curriculum strategies to integrate local cultures in digital-based and global learning.
The Role of Teachers and Educational Institutions	Teachers as spiritual and moral companions, schools as "gardens"	Educational institutions are idealized as places of fun and liberating	There is a lack of literature that answers the concrete challenges of teachers in implementing the humanist role in a rigid administrative burden and system.
Linkage with the Digital Age	The relevance of Ki Hajar's thought to education 4.0 and society 5.0	Thinking is considered to remain relevant to the modern context	The literature is more normative and has not touched on concrete strategies to adapt this thinking in the era of artificial intelligence and learning technology.

METHODOLOGY

This research uses a qualitative method with historical, social, and content analysis approaches [22]. The selection of this method is based on the characteristics of research that are exploratory, in-depth, and contextual in understanding Ki Hajar Dewantara's thinking as a national education figure and its relevance in contemporary education dynamics. The main focus of this research is to examine in depth the values, concepts, and philosophies of education initiated by Ki Hajar, as well as their implications for the current education system, especially in the context of the Independent Curriculum and the challenges of globalization.

Historical Approach

A historical approach is used to explore the context of Ki Hajar Dewantara's life, experiences, and contributions in building the Indonesian education system. Through this approach, the researcher traces the social, political, and cultural background during Ki Hajar's lifetime to understand how his educational ideas were formed and developed. Historical documents, original writings, archives of the Taman Siswa organization, and Ki Hajar's biography are the main sources analyzed [22].

Social Approach

In addition to the historical aspect, this research also utilizes a social approach to understand the interaction between Ki Hajar Dewantara's thought and the reality of society. Education does not stand alone, but interacts with social structures, cultural values, and the needs of the times. Therefore, this approach is important to explore the relevance of the idea of culture- and character-based education in a complex and dynamic modern society.

Content Analysis

Content analysis is used as the main technique in processing data sourced from documents, speech scripts, Ki Hajar Dewantara's writings, and related education policies, such as the Independent Curriculum document. Content analysis allows researchers to identify the main themes, symbols, values, and philosophical meanings contained in the text. This technique is also used to compare the principles of Ki Hajar education with modern concepts such as "Freedom of Learning", "character education", and "culture-based education".

Data Source

The main data in this study were obtained from primary documents such as books by Ki Hajar Dewantara, Taman Siswa manuscripts, as well as articles and speeches written directly by him. In addition, secondary data was obtained from literature reviews, scientific articles, educational journals, and policy documents from the Ministry of Education, Culture, Research, and Technology. The data is also strengthened by the interpretation of relevant education policies, including the implementation regulations of the Independent Curriculum.

Research Steps

1. Preliminary Studies

The researcher conducted an initial search of literature, documents, and manuscripts relevant to the life and thoughts of Ki Hajar Dewantara.

2. Data Collection

Data was collected through documentation, literature studies, and tracing of Ki Hajar's original works as well as relevant modern education policies.

3. Data Reduction

The collected data were selected and categorized based on themes: educational philosophy, the concept of independent learning, education as a culture, the role of teachers, and relevance in the modern era.

4. Content Analysis

The researcher interprets texts and documents to find patterns, hidden meanings, and the suitability of Ki Hajar's educational values with the current educational context.

5. Historical-Social Interpretation

Ki Hajar's thinking is analyzed in the historical frame and social dynamics of Indonesian society at the time, as well as its relationship to current educational challenges.

6. Conclusion Preparation

The results of the analysis are formulated into key findings that show the relevance, strength, and limitations of Ki Hajar Dewantara's thinking in shaping today's educational paradigm.

With this approach, research is expected to make a theoretical and practical contribution to the development of national education that is rooted in cultural values, humanist, and able to respond to the challenges of the times.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Brief Biography: Life and Role in Education

Ki Hajar Dewantara, who was born Raden Mas Soewardi Soerjaningrat on May 2, 1889, in Yogyakarta, was a nobleman.

Javanese who then devoted his life to the community through the field of education. He came from a royal family, but chose to leave his nobility in favor of a simple life and close to the people. His formal education began at the Europeesche Lagere School (ELS) and then continued to STOVIA, a medical school for indigenous people in Batavia, but he did not complete it due to health and financial problems [23].

. His participation in journalism and national movements began when he wrote a famous article titled "Als ik een Nederlander was" (If I Were a Dutchman), which denounced the injustices of the Dutch colonialists. As a result of this writing, he was expelled to the Netherlands along with two of his colleagues, Douwes Dekker and Cipto Mangunkusumo, known as the Three Series. During his time in the Netherlands, Ki Hajar deepened his knowledge of the Western education system, especially the emphasis on students' independence and personality [24].

After returning to the country, he built the Taman Siswa College on July 3, 1922, as a form of resistance against the colonial education system that was discriminatory and elitist. Through this institution, Ki Hajar develops educational ideas that are nationalistic, humanist, and culturally eliminated, as well as focusing on creating an independent national character. According to Tilaar, Taman Siswa is a tangible manifestation of the ideal to create education that is liberating and respects human dignity [25].

Table 2. History of the Organization and Work of Ki Hajar Dewantara

Era	Field	Activities/Roles	Organization/Institution
1900– 1910	Education	Studied at ELS (Europeesche Lagere School) and STOVIA (Bumiputera Medical School)	
1910 – 1913	Politics	Active as a journalist and writer of articles critical of the colonial government. Famous article: "If I were a Dutchman"	-
1912	Political/Social	Founded <i>Indische Partij</i> with Douwes Dekker and Tjipto Mangunkusumo (Three Series) to fight for Indonesian independence	Indian Party
1913 – 1919	Politics/Education	Exiled to the Netherlands by the colonial government because of his writings. There, he delved into Western education and philosophy.	Independent study in the Netherlands
1922	Education/Culture	Establishing <i>a Taman Siswa College</i> that provides nationality and culture-based	Student Park College

		education to indigenous people	
1922 – 1930	Education/Culture	A Philosophy of National Education: <i>A Philosophy of Education: A Philosophy of Education, A Philosophy of Education, A T</i>	Student Park
1930 – 1940	Education/Culture	Developing a culture-based national education system. Prioritizing learning that respects children's potential and nature.	Majelis Luhur Taman Siswa
1945 – 1949	Politics/Culture	Appointed as Minister of Education and Culture in the first cabinet of the Republic of Indonesia	Ministry of PPK (Education, Teaching, and Culture)
1950 – 1959	Cultural/Social	Involved in the preparation of national cultural policies. Active in intellectual discussions and publications related to education and national culture.	Cultural Institutions, National Board of Education
1959		He died on April 26, 1959, in Yogyakarta. He is remembered as the Father of National Education. His birthday was made National Education Day (May 2).	

Philosophy of Education: Tut Wuri Handayani, in Madya Mangun Karso, in front of Sung Tulodo

Ki Hajar Dewantara's thoughts on education are sourced from the cultural values of the archipelago, combined with the spirit to empower and empower humans. He emphasized the importance of education in developing all aspects of human potential: thoughts, feelings, and intentions [26]. The educational philosophy he created was based on three main mottos:

1. Ing Ngarsa Sung Tulada (in front giving an example): Education begins with a real example from teachers or leaders.
2. Ing Madya Mangun Karsa (while arousing enthusiasm): Educators must play the role of motivators who motivate students.
3. Tut Wuri Handayani (behind encouraging): Education should not be coercive, but rather offer freedom with direction.

The third principle not only serves as a method but also as a philosophy, reflecting Ki Hajar's view that education is a process that emphasizes inner independence, respect for the individual, and social responsibility. He called this principle the Among system, which is an approach that places teachers as caregivers, not students [27].

Furthermore, the idea of "education as culture" became the main basis for Ki Hajar's idea. He believes that education cannot be separated from culture, because human beings are formed and develop in a particular cultural context. Therefore, education must respect local values, traditions, and regional languages as part of the process to educate individuals who have character [28].

Views on Freedom of Learning

The concept of "Freedom of Learning" raised by the Ministry of Education and Culture was initiated by Ki Hajar Dewantara for a long time. He rejected the colonial education system that was rigid, dogmatic, and limited the creativity of the students. In his opinion, good education should respect the nature of children, both in terms of nature and time [29].

The concept of "Freedom of Learning" is a legacy of Ki Hajar Dewantara's ideas that existed before the existence of modern policies. For him, learning is a process that respects the laws of nature and the development of the times, including personal potential and social problems faced by each generation. He opposes a single and uniform education system and

instead encourages an approach that is contextual and adaptive to the social and cultural environment [30].

In today's digital age and globalization, the idea of Freedom of Learning has become very important. The current education system must be more flexible, creative, and responsive to technological advances and the diverse needs of students. The Principle of Independent Learning supports varied learning, which focuses on interests and talents, and encourages the ability to think independently. As explained by Rohman, Freedom of Learning is a step towards education that prioritizes humanity, not just producing labor [31].

In addition, the Freedom of Learning approach has very meaningful ethical and spiritual aspects in the era of digital disruption. Learning is not only about gaining information or technical skills, but it is also a process of forming identity and character. In this context, the teacher functions as a guide, not as a ruler; as a supporter, not as a controller. In his book "Education and Culture," Ki Hajar emphasizes that every child is born with a unique potential that needs to be developed naturally, without coercion. It opposes the same educational model for all and ignores the differences in students' social and cultural backgrounds. Freedom of Learning, for Ki Hajar, does not mean without a purpose, but is a learning process that is free to appreciate thought, creativity, and responsibility [32].

This thinking fits perfectly with the current educational context that is transforming towards differentiation, project-based learning, and personalization of learning. Freedom of Learning, according to Ki Hajar, is a bridge to form Indonesian individuals who are fully independent, able to think critically, and uphold the nation's human and cultural values.

Education as Culture

Ki Hajar Dewantara views education as a process that upholds culture. According to him, education is always related to the cultural context of the community. Ki Hajar Dewantara believes that education and the process of cultivation are interrelated and inseparable. Education should be able to instill values, norms, and cultural identities as a basis for facing the challenges of globalization that tend to make local culture fade away. He emphasized that education must be based on the nation's cultural values, because culture is a reflection of national characteristics. Education that is cut off from its cultural values will only produce individuals who are alienated from the community and lose their identity [33].

In this view, schools function not only as a place to impart knowledge, but also as a means to maintain and develop culture. Ki Hajar emphasized that the main goal of education is to create cultured human beings who can live in harmony with their environment and contribute to the progress of the nation. This concept is in line with the multicultural education approach that is now beginning to be implemented in various countries, including Indonesia [34].

As stated by Tilaar, education as a process of cultural appreciation is a comprehensive strategy for human development. In this case, learning must be connected to local values and traditional wisdom. Education not only forms academically smart individuals, but also has strong moral and social skills. Koentjaraningrat stated that education that focuses on local culture can strengthen cultural resilience and national identity. On the other hand, Sedyawati emphasized that by including local culture in education, students can develop into individuals who are not only intellectually intelligent but also resilient in cultural and spiritual aspects [35].

In today's global era, where technology brings so much foreign culture, education as a culture is becoming increasingly important. The learning process must be based on local culture so that students do not lose their identity. Ki Hajar emphasized the importance of using regional languages, traditional arts, and local values as part of the education system.

Thus, Ki Hajar Dewantara's view on education provides a relevant and solutive framework to face the challenges of education during the industrial revolution 4.0 and society 5.0,

namely by prioritizing education that is liberating, necessary from culture, and strengthening character formation [36].

The Relevance of the Concept of Independent Learning and Education as Culture in the Contemporary Context

In today's world, especially during the Industrial Revolution 4.0 and society 5.0, the idea of independent learning introduced by Ki Hajar Dewantara has regained its relevance. Freedom in learning refers to allowing students to develop their talents independently, without the pressures and coercion that distinguish creativity as well as critical thinking.

The Merdeka Curriculum that is being developed by the Ministry of Education, Culture, Research, and Technology is a form of applying Ki Hajar values in modern education policies. Different teaching approaches, character strengthening, contextual learning, and projects that strengthen the profile of Pancasila students are important steps to revive the spirit of education that upholds human values, engagement, and contextual relevance [37].

Education as a cultural process is also very important in the phenomenon of globalization, which tends to equate ways of thinking and values. Ki Hajar reminded that education that is cut off from its original culture will lose its direction and identity. Therefore, the education system must make culture a source of value, inspiration, and identity in forming a strong generation.

The Role of Teachers and Educational Institutions According to Ki Hajar and the Limitations of Their Thinking

In looking at Ki Hajar, a teacher is more than just a transmitter of knowledge; They are educators who have a moral and spiritual responsibility in educating the individual as a whole. A teacher should be a role model and a mentor who understands the nature of children and leads to personal and social freedom. In the approach in between, teachers are expected to apply gentle methods, respect children's freedoms, and make education a pleasant life experience [38].

For Ki Hajar, educational institutions are not a place that focuses only on academic results, but as a means to form character and humanize individuals. Therefore, school should ideally serve as a fun "garden", one that supports a love of learning, curiosity, and a drive to create. However, Ki Hajar's thinking also has limitations, especially in terms of implementing the education system in the digital age. His idealization does not directly address the challenges of the modern world, which is thick with technology, artificial intelligence, and globalization. Moreover, a very strong local cultural order can create obstacles to creating inclusive and competitive education at the international level. Nonetheless, these limitations can be overcome through the reinterpretation and development of his ideas in the appropriate context. Basic principles such as freedom of learning, education as a process of cultivation, and humanism in teaching remain relevant as the basis for facing today's challenges [39].

Analysis

Ki Hajar Dewantara's thoughts on education have very deep philosophical, cultural, and humanistic dimensions. It not only developed an alternative education system of its time but also offered an approach that remains relevant in today's educational context. Through the motto "Ing Ngarsa Sung Tulada, Ing Madya Mangun Karsa, Tut Wuri Handayani", Ki Hajar emphasized that education must be based on example, motivation, and empowerment. This idea places teachers as true educators, not just conveyors of information [40].

Furthermore, the concept of "Among" that he carries is an educational method that respects the inner independence of students. He rejected the rigid and dogmatic colonial education system and replaced it with an approach that liberated the potential of the individual. This concept is in line with the principle of "Freedom of Learning," which is now

adopted by the national education system, although its implementation still requires philosophical and contextual strengthening [41].

Ki Hajar also emphasized that education is a process of cultivation. This means that education cannot be separated from the social context and local cultural values. He believes that without attachment to culture, education will lose its meaning and direction. In the context of globalization and the digital era, this view is important as an effort to maintain the nation's identity in the rapid flow of global information. However, Ki Hajar's thinking also faces challenges in terms of adapting to modern technological developments. His ideas need to be reinterpreted to answer the problems of the times, such as digital-based learning, artificial intelligence, and student diversification. However, its basic values remain an important foundation in building a characterful, inclusive, and sustainable education.

CONCLUSION

Ki Hajar Dewantara's educational thinking is a very rich intellectual and philosophical heritage and is still very relevant to answer today's educational challenges. In answering the big question about the role of Ki Hajar Dewantara in the national education system, it can be concluded that he is not only a historical figure, but also the designer of an alternative education system based on humanitarian, cultural, and freedom values. His contributions ranged from the resistance to the discriminatory colonial education system to the establishment of Taman Siswa College as an educational forum that liberated indigenous peoples through an independent, contextual, and cultured approach. The essence of Ki Hajar Dewantara's educational philosophy lies in the principle of "Ing Ngarsa Sung Tulada, Ing Madya Mangun Karsa, Tut Wuri Handayani." This philosophy explains that education must be done with example, a spirit of guidance, and encouragement that liberates students. Education must be humanistic, not imposing will, and oriented to the potential and natural nature of each child. Teachers are not rulers, but companions who understand the nature of children's development and guide them to freedom of thought. The concept of "Freedom of Learning," which is currently a national education policy, is a continuation of Ki Hajar's grand vision. He rejects a uniform and restrictive education system and encourages learning differentiation, freedom of thought, and respect for the uniqueness of students. According to him, education is a process of culture, which is a process that not only transfers knowledge but also instills cultural values, local identity, and traditional wisdom. In the context of the current digital era and globalization, Ki Hajar's thinking remains relevant, even though it requires adjustments. His ideas must be reinterpreted so that they can still answer the needs of modern times, such as technology-based learning, artificial intelligence, and the need for a flexible and inclusive education system. Thus, Ki Hajar Dewantara's thinking is an important foundation in building a dignified, characterful, and sustainable national education system.

Acknowledgments

The author expresses sincere appreciation to Universitas Muhammadiyah Sumatera Barat and the Islamic University in Niger (IUN) for their academic support and scholarly environment that enabled the completion of this study. Gratitude is also extended to colleagues and researchers who contributed constructive insights throughout the development of this work.

Author Contribution

The author solely designed the research framework, conducted the literature review, analyzed the philosophical and educational perspectives related to Ki Hajar Dewantara, and prepared the full manuscript. All interpretations, arguments, and conclusions presented in this study are the author's independent work.

Conflicts of Interest

The author declares that there are no conflicts of interest regarding the research, authorship, or publication of this article.

REFERENCES

- [1] R. L. Insyarah and L. Yulifar, "Peranan Raden Ajeng Sutartinah Dalam Memperjuangkan Hak Pendidikan Untuk Perempuan Melalui Organisasi Wanita Tamansiswa Tahun 1922-1971," *FACTUM J. Sej. Dan Pendidik. Sej.*, vol. 8, no. 2, pp. 171–186, 2019, <https://doi.org/10.17509/factum.v8i2.22148>.
- [2] S. U. Agel, Z. Ngiu, R. Yunus, and Y. Adhani, "Peran Guru Pendidikan Pancasila Dan Kewarganegaraan Dalam Menanggulangi Masalah Kenakalan Remaja Di Sekolah Menengah Atas Negeri 1 Bokat Kecamatan Bokat Kabupaten Buol Sulawesi Tengah," *Jambura J. Civ. Educ.*, vol. 1, no. 2, pp. 67–76, 2021, <https://doi.org/10.37905/jacedu.v1i2.12799>.
- [3] A. T. Daga, "Makna Merdeka Belajar dan Penguatan Peran Guru di Sekolah Dasar," *J. Educ.*, vol. 7, no. 3, pp. 1075–1090, 2021, <https://doi.org/10.31949/educatio.v7i3.1279>.
- [4] Z. Kholidah, "Relevansi Pemikiran Muhammad Iqbal Dalam Pembentukan Karakter Siswa Di Era Millenium," *TA'LIM J. Stud. Pendidik. Islam*, vol. 1, no. 2, pp. 288–308, 2018, <https://doi.org/10.52166/talim.v1i2.953>.
- [5] B. M. Alindra and M. Y. A. Bakar, "Nilai-Nilai Patriotisme Mahmoeed Joenos Dalam Upaya Memajukan Pendidikan Islam Di Indonesia," *MadinaJurnal Stud. Islam*, vol. 7, no. 1, pp. 1–15, 2020, <https://doi.org/10.58518/madinah.v7i1.1308>.
- [6] R. Rusdiansyah, "Pendidikan Budaya;Di Sekolah dan Komunitas/Masyarakat," *IQRO J. Islam. Educ.*, vol. 3, no. 1, pp. 45–58, 2020, <https://doi.org/10.24256/iqro.v3i1.1430>.
- [7] N. Nasikhin, R. Raaharjo, and N. Nasikhin, "Moderasi Beragama Nahdlatul Ulama dan Muhammadiyah dalam Konsep Islam Nusantara dan Islam Berkemajuan," *Islam. Rev. J. Ris. Dan Kaji. Keislam.*, vol. 11, no. 1, pp. 19–34, 2022, <https://doi.org/10.35878/islamicreview.v11i1.371>.
- [8] L. D. Sanga and Y. Wangdra, "Pendidikan Adalah Faktor Penentu Daya Saing Bangsa," *Pros. Semin. Nas. Ilmu Sos. dan Teknol.*, vol. 5, no. September, pp. 84–90, 2023, <https://doi.org/10.33884/psnistek.v5i.8067>.
- [9] A. Syah and W. Basri, "Penanaman Nilai-Nilai Patriotisme Pada Pembelajaran Sejarah Di MAN 1 Kerinci," *J. Kronologi*, vol. 4, no. 3, pp. 172–182, 2022, <https://doi.org/10.24036/jk.v4i3.472>.
- [10] A. Jihan Tiara Sari, A. Hadziq Wardana, M. Nur Ilham Rosyid, E. Widiyanto, and A. Rasyad, "Tren Perkembangan Pendidikan Non-Formal di Indonesia," *J. Pendidik.*, vol. volume 7, no. 2, pp. 76–82, 2022, <https://doi.org/10.26740/jp.v7n2.p76-82>.
- [11] H. Suparlan, "Filsafat Pendidikan Ki Hadjar Dewantara Dan Sumbangannya Bagi Pendidikan Indonesia," *J. Filsafat*, vol. 25, no. 1, p. 56, 2016, <https://doi.org/10.22146/jf.12614>.
- [12] I. G. A. M. G. Mudana, "Membangun Karakter Dalam Perspektif Filsafat Pendidikan Ki Hadjar Dewantara," *J. Filsafat Indones.*, vol. 2, no. 2, pp. 75–81, 2019, <https://doi.org/10.23887/jfi.v2i2.21285>.
- [13] W. Herwina, "Optimalisasi Kebutuhan Murid Dan Hasil Belajar Dengan Pembelajaran Berdiferensiasi," *Perspekt. Ilmu Pendidik.*, vol. 35, no. 2, pp. 175–182, 2021, <https://doi.org/10.21009/pip.352.10>.
- [14] Zuriatin, Nurhasanah, and Nurlaila, "Pandangan Dan Perjuangan Ki Hadjar Dewantara Dalam Memajukan Pendidikan Nasional," *J. Pendidik. Ips*, vol. 11, no. 1, pp. 48–56, 2021, <https://doi.org/10.37630/jpi.v11i1.442>.
- [15] H. Mubarak, "Studi Literatur Menumbuhkan Motivasi Belajar Siswa Melalui Strategi Pembelajaran Berdiferensiasi Dalam Konteks Pedagogi," *J. Ilmu Pendidik. Nas.*, vol. 1, no. 1, pp. 01–07, 2023, <https://doi.org/10.59435/jipnas.v1i1.45>.
- [16] Yoser Yoli Wallangara, N. D. Y. Manik, N. Rismawati, and L. E. Jayadi, "Pengaruh Pendidikan Karakter Ki Hadjar Dewantara Dan Pendidikan Agama Kristen Dalam Membangun Karakter Anak Di Sekolah," *Indones. J. Relig.*, vol. 6, no. 1, pp. 1–13, 2023, <https://doi.org/10.46362/ijr.v6i1.16>.
- [17] P. M. Efendi, Tatang Muhtar, and Yusuf Tri Herlambang, "Relevansi Kurikulum Merdeka Dengan Konsepsi Ki Hadjar Dewantara: Studi Kritis Dalam Perspektif Filosofis-Pedagogis," *J. Elem. Edukasia*, vol. 6, no. 2, pp. 548–561, 2023, <https://doi.org/10.31949/jee.v6i2.5487>.
- [18] E. J. Prasety and D. N. Wijaya, "Wasita Rini: Pemikiran Ki Hajar Dewantara Dalam Pendidikan Perempuan," *Sutasoma J. Sastra Jawa*, vol. 10, no. 2, pp. 186–196, 2022, <https://doi.org/10.15294/sutasoma.v10i2.61907>.
- [19] R. N. Hidayah, "Pendidikan Anak Usia Dini Perspektif Ki Hajar Dewantara," *J. Stud. Islam dan Sos.*, vol. 9,

- no. 2, p. 1, 2019, <https://doi.org/10.56997/almabsut.v9i2.89>.
- [20] M. Subhekan and S. N. Annisa, “Eksistensi Keteladanan Pendidikan Karakter Dalam Perspektif Ki Hajar Dewantara,” *J. Geneal. PAI*, vol. 5, no. 1, p. 15, 2018, <https://doi.org/10.32678/geneologi%20pai.v5i1.1049>.
- [21] F. Rahayuningsih, “Internalisasi Filosofi Pendidikan Ki Hajar Dewantara Dalam Mewujudkan Profil Pelajar Pancasila,” *Soc. J. Inov. Pendidik. IPS*, vol. 1, no. 3, pp. 177–187, 2022, <https://doi.org/10.51878/social.v1i3.925>.
- [22] A. A. Aziz, R. Nurfarida, N. Budiyanti, and Q. Y. Zakiah, “Model Analisis Kebijakan Pendidikan,” *Tapis J. Penelit. Ilm.*, vol. 4, no. 2, pp. 11–26, 2020, <https://doi.org/10.32505/lentera.v1i1.1662>.
- [23] I. Suwahyu, “Pendidikan Karakter Dalam Konsep Pemikiran Pendidikan Ki Hajar Dewantara,” *Insa. J. Pemikir. Altern. Kependidikan*, vol. 23, no. 2, pp. 192–204, 2018, <https://doi.org/10.24090/insania.v23i2.2290>.
- [24] D. Akbar Albany, “Perwujudan Pendidikan Karakter pada Era Kontemporer Berdasarkan Perspektif Ki Hajar Dewantara,” *J. Humanit. Katalisator Perubahan dan Inov. Pendidik.*, vol. 7, no. 2, pp. 93–107, 2021, <https://doi.org/10.29408/jhm.v7i2.3393>.
- [25] D. Riyanti, S. Irfani, and D. Prasetyo, “Pendidikan Berbasis Budaya Nasional Warisan Ki Hajar Dewantara,” *Edukatif J. Ilmu Pendidik.*, vol. 4, no. 1, pp. 345–354, 2021, <https://doi.org/10.31004/edukatif.v4i1.1833>.
- [26] A. A. Rahmah and H. Hudaidah, “Ideologi Ki Hajar Dewantara Tentang Konsep Pendidikan Nasional,” *Berk. Ilm. Pendidik.*, vol. 1, no. 2, pp. 68–72, 2021, <https://doi.org/10.51214/bip.v1i2.94>.
- [27] A. Musanna, “Indigenisasi Pendidikan: Rasionalitas Revitalisasi Praksis Pendidikan Ki Hadjar Dewantara,” *J. Pendidik. dan Kebud.*, vol. 2, no. 1, pp. 117–133, 2017, <https://doi.org/10.24832/jpnk.v2i1.529>.
- [28] Eka Yanuarti, “Pemikiran Pendidikan Ki Hajar Dewantara dan Relevansinya dengan Kurikulum 13,” *J. Penelit.*, vol. 11, no. 2, pp. 237–266, 2017, <https://doi.org/10.21043/jupe.v11i2.3489>.
- [29] D. Irawati, S. Masitoh, and M. Nursalim, “Filsafat Pendidikan Ki Hajar Dewantara sebagai Landasan Pendidikan Vokasi di Era Kurikulum Merdeka,” *JUPE J. Pendidik. Mandala*, vol. 7, no. 4, pp. 1015–1025, 2022, <https://doi.org/10.58258/jupe.v7i4.4493>.
- [30] M. Claramita, “Revealing ‘Tut Wuri Handayani’ - A Student-Centred Learning Approach- by Ki Hajar Dewantara from The Early 20th Century: A Literature Review,” *J. Pendidik. Kedokt. Indones. Indones. J. Med. Educ.*, vol. 5, no. 1, pp. 1–14, 2016, <https://doi.org/10.22146/jpki.25295>.
- [31] I. M. Sugiarta, I. B. P. Mardana, A. Adiarta, and W. Artanayasa, “Filsafat Pendidikan Ki Hajar Dewantara (Tokoh Timur),” *J. Filsafat Indones.*, vol. 2, no. 3, pp. 124–136, 2019, <https://doi.org/10.23887/jfi.v2i3.22187>.
- [32] M. Marsono, “Penguatan Karakter Dalam Pendidikan Keluarga Menurut Pandangan Ki Hajar Dewantara,” *Guna Widya J. Pendidik. Hindu*, vol. 5, no. 1, pp. 102–114, 2018, <https://doi.org/10.25078/gw.v5i1.616>.
- [33] I. L., “Analisis Psikologis Komparatif Pendekatan Pembelajaran Ki Hadjar Dewantara Dan Benjamin S. Bloom,” *Didakt. J. Kependidikan*, vol. 13, no. 1, pp. 17–30, 2019, <https://doi.org/10.30863/didaktika.v13i1.326>.
- [34] A. M. Khasanah, “The Manners Concept According to Ki Hajar Dewantara and Hamka,” *Educ. J. Pendidik. Islam*, vol. 3, no. 2, pp. 1–19, 2019, <https://doi.org/10.21111/educan.v3i2.3577>.
- [35] N. Nurhalita and H. Hudaidah, “Relevansi Pemikiran Pendidikan Ki Hajar Dewantara pada Abad ke 21,” *Edukatif J. Ilmu Pendidik.*, vol. 3, no. 2, pp. 298–303, 2021, <https://doi.org/10.31004/edukatif.v3i2.299>.
- [36] A. F. Noor and S. Suyanto, “The Analysis of Character Strengthening Strategy based on Teaching of Ki Hajar Dewantara in Industry 4.0,” *Adv. Soc. Sci. Educ. Humanit. Res.*, vol. 335, no. ICESShum, pp. 1002–1009, 2019, <https://doi.org/10.2991/icesshum-19.2019.155>.
- [37] M. Salam, “Pembentukan Karakter Menurut Ki Hajar Dewantara dan Relevansinya dengan Pendidikan Islam,” *Kuttab*, vol. 3, no. 2, 2019, <https://doi.org/10.30736/ktb.v3i2.236>.
- [38] M. Faridhatul Anawaty, A. Safira, and R. Riski Ali Putra, “Asesmen Perkembangan Anak di Era Merdeka Belajar,” *J. Pelita PAUD*, vol. 8, no. 1, pp. 75–81, 2023, <https://doi.org/10.33222/pelitapaud.v8i1.3477>.
- [39] R. Rahayu, R. Rosita, Y. S. Rahayuningsih, A. H. Hernawan, and P. Prihantini, “Implementasi Kurikulum Merdeka Belajar di Sekolah Penggerak,” *J. Basicedu*, vol. 6, no. 4, pp. 6313–6319, 2022, <https://doi.org/10.31004/basicedu.v6i4.3237>.
- [40] D. Ilham *et al.*, “Caring Values in Islamic Religious and Moral Education on Merdeka Belajar Curriculum: A Study of Fifth-Grade Student and Teacher Books,” *AL-ISHLAH J. Pendidik.*, vol. 15, no. 4, pp. 4626–4639, 2023, <https://doi.org/10.35445/alishlah.v15i4.3763>.
-

- [41] L. Mumtahana, “Teaching Assistance of Merdeka Belajar Kampus Merdeka Program of the Islamic Education Study Program of Lamongan Islamic University,” *Munaddhomah*, vol. 4, no. 4, pp. 981–989, 2023, <https://doi.org/10.31538/munaddhomah.v4i4.639>.