

## Ki Hajar Dewantara's Pedagogical Study in Accommodating the Diversity of Student Potential

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**Abstract:** This study aims to examine the pedagogic principles of Ki Hajar Dewantara in learning and its relevance in increasing the potential of students. This research approach uses a descriptive qualitative approach with a library research method. Data was obtained through the analysis of various written sources, be it books, articles, and journals that discuss Hajar Dewantara's thoughts and pedagogic principles. The results of the study show that the educational concepts of Ki Hajar Dewantara, such as "ing ngarso sung tulodo," "ing madyo mangun karso," and "tut wuri handayani," are very relevant to be applied in an effort to develop students' potential holistically. This study recommends the application of these principles in the planning, implementation, and evaluation of learning in schools.

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**Keywords:** Ki Hajar Dewantara Pedagogics, Potential of Students

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### A. INTRODUCTION

Education acts as the main pillar in the progress of a nation because it has a crucial role in shaping individual character, improving the quality of human resources, and preparing the younger generation to face future challenges. In the era of globalization and rapid technological advances, the development of the education system is crucial to be able to adapt to various demands that are increasingly complex and continue to change dynamically. Therefore, Indonesia continues to strive to update its education system to remain relevant to the needs of the times in the era of globalization and rapid technological advances, the development of the education system is crucial to be able to adapt to various demands that are increasingly complex and continue to change dynamically. Therefore, Indonesia continues to strive to update its education system to remain relevant to the needs of the times (Rosyah, 2023).

The main essence of teaching and education activities is to foster individuals to become independent human beings, both in outward and inward aspects. An independent human being is an independent human being. That is, a human being who can rely on himself to organize his life and not always depend on others. Therefore, education is a place for students to grow as high as possible in order to become physically independent, namely independent humans and become inwardly independent, namely humans who are able to respect themselves and others. The natures of students can be the foundation in guiding them to live independently (Putri, 2019).

The current reality is not in line with expectations. Learning is still focused on the demands of the curriculum, without considering the differences in talent, interest and potential among students. The key to this problem lies in the role of educators. It is hoped that educators can meet the expectations of students and the goals of national education, by creating a learning process that is fun and in accordance with diverse interests, expectations, and talents (Bayumi, 2021).

One of the mistakes often made by educators is the lack of attention to the different characteristics of individual students in the learning process. As a result, some students have difficulty in achieving their best potential (Mulyasa, 2015). Wulandari and Sagita also explained that in general, the implementation of the learning process is still carried out uniformly for all students. This means that learning for students who are smart and have high motivation is still equated with learning for students who have learning difficulties and have low motivation. In addition, differences in learning styles owned by students have not received appropriate learning, so that all the potential possessed by students cannot be accommodated optimally. The level of readiness of students in receiving the next learning material is often not the main consideration, so their ability to connect between materials is still relatively low. As a result, learning outcomes are less than optimal, and some subjects are even considered scary and tend to be avoided. Therefore, the learning process needs to be designed by considering the diversity of students' individual characteristics, including their learning style, readiness level, and interests (Purwowododo, 2023).

Increasing the potential of students is crucial in the world of education because each individual has unique characteristics that are influenced by innate factors (heredity) and the environment. Therefore, classical learning that treats students the same is not appropriate. It is necessary to understand the differences of students to enable educators to design appropriate learning strategies, so that the potential of students can develop optimally. In the context of Indonesian national education, Ki Hajar Dewantara's thoughts are the main reference, especially in viewing education as a process of guiding the development of children's nature. Ki Hajar Dewantara stated that "education guides all the forces of nature that exist in children, so that they as human beings and members of society can achieve the highest possible safety and happiness" (Dewantara, 1977).

This view places education not only as a process of knowledge transfer, but as a pedagogical effort to develop all dimensions of the learner's potential, whether physical, intellectual, social, or moral. The vision of education is to ensure that every child has the opportunity to grow and develop into an individual capable of achieving the highest level of safety and happiness in life. The application of Ki Hajar Dewantara's Pedagogics in increasing students' potential is very important because this approach places students at the center of learning and emphasizes their overall development. Ki Hajar Dewantara's pedagogics are based on the principle that every child has a natural nature and age nature that needs to be respected. Educators are tasked with guiding, not forcing, so that the potential of students develops naturally and in a balanced manner. This is reflected in his famous teaching: "Ing ngarso sung tulodo, ing madyo mangun karso, tut wuri handayani."

In this pedagogical framework, educators must be able to be role models, encourage and encourage students, while still respecting their freedom and independence in learning.

In modern learning practices, Ki Hajar Dewantara's pedagogical principles have high relevance, especially in facing the challenges of globalization and rapid socio-cultural change. According to Tilaar, transformative education is education that respects social change while still placing learners at the center of the learning process (Tilaar, 2002). Thus, Ki Hajar Dewantara's pedagogics can be a conceptual foundation for developing learning that is humanistic, creative, democratic, and focuses on improving the potential of learners holistically. This research aims to examine Ki Hajar Dewantara's pedagogical principles in learning and their relevance in enhancing students' potential. A deep understanding of this concept is expected to contribute to the development of educational practices in Indonesia that are more in line with national values and the times.

## **B. METHOD**

This research uses a descriptive qualitative approach with a library research method. Data was collected by analyzing various written sources, including books, articles and journals that discuss Hajar Dewantara's thoughts and his pedagogical principles. The main focus of this research is to identify and analyze the application of these principles in the context of learning to enhance learners' potential. The results of the analysis are then used to draw conclusions regarding the relevance and effectiveness of Hajar Dewantara's pedagogics in today's education.

## **C. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

### **1. Ki Hajar Dewantara's Philosophy of Education**

The discussion of education in Indonesia cannot be separated from the central role of Ki Hajar Dewantara, known as the Father of National Education. Born Raden Mas Soewardi, he changed his name to Ki Hajar Dewantara in 1922. Ki Hajar was born in Yogyakarta on May 2, 1889, and his birth date was later designated as National Education Day through Presidential Decree of the Republic of Indonesia Number 316 of 1959. Ki Hajar Dewantara is known as the main figure who pioneered the birth of the education system in Indonesia. During the Dutch colonial period, he founded the Taman Siswa College on July 3, 1922. Through this educational institution, Ki Hajar Dewantara has a vision that the Indonesian people can achieve independence physically and mentally (Febriyanti et al., 2021).

Ki Hajar Dewantara is a national hero who played a major role in politics and education. He not only came up with various ideas and concepts, but was also actively involved in the struggle to free the Indonesian people from Dutch and Japanese colonization. Ki Hajar Dewantara's contribution to independence was realized through his struggle in the field of education, one of which was reflected in the establishment of the Taman Siswa education system. Through this institution, he showed his commitment in fighting for the right to education for the Indonesian people. The presence of Taman Siswa is an important milestone in the history of national education, because it contains basic educational values that are still relevant and used today. This institution is also a form of resistance to the colonial education system which is commercial, materialistic and individualistic. Therefore, the establishment of

Taman Siswa by Ki Hajar Dewantara aimed to create a more humanist education system and was based on the philosophy of “memayu hayuning bawana”, which is to maintain world peace and harmony (Wiryopranoto, 2017).

The essence of education according to Ki Hajar Dewantara is to direct all the potential of children so that they, as individuals and members of society, can achieve maximum safety and happiness (Dewantara, 1977). Thus, the purpose of education is to develop the potential of students so that they grow into complete, safe and happy human beings. To achieve this goal, the role of educators is very important. Educators must be able to become guides who understand, guide, and develop the potential of each student. When the educational process runs in harmony with the soul, interests, and natural abilities of students, they will more easily achieve happiness in life. Ki Hajar Dewantara emphasized that “Children live and grow according to their own nature, educators only care for and guide the growth of that nature” (Dewantara, 1977). In this concept, education is not imposing, but rather guiding that respects the natural character of students.

The core of Ki Hajar Dewantara's educational philosophy is change. Education must always develop from time to time and never be static, education must run dynamically following various advances in accordance with the nature of nature and the times. If education and culture remain static, then both will lead to destruction. Therefore, education must always change and adapt to the times. Changes in education are eternal and must occur, and these changes occur in the context of diversity. Ki Hajar Dewantara suggested three frameworks of change, namely:

a. Nature of the Situation

The nature of the situation includes two aspects, namely the nature of nature and the nature of the times. Ki Hajar Dewantara revealed that the education of students is closely related to these two natures. The nature of nature is related to the "nature" and "form" of the environment in which the student is located, while the nature of the times is related to the "content" and "rhythm". This means that in educating students, an educator must pay attention to environmental conditions and the development of the times.

b. Principle of change

The principle of change based on the Trikon Principle includes: (1) Continuity, meaning that the development carried out must be sustainable, carried out continuously with careful planning. It is important to have a critical dialogue about history, and in moving forward, we must not forget the fundamental cultural values of society; (2) Convergence, meaning that the development carried out can take inspiration from various external sources, but must be adapted to existing needs. Education should focus on humanizing human beings and strengthening human values; and (3) Concentric, meaning that the development of education must remain based on our own personality. Education should respect diversity and provide freedom to learners, as each individual moves according to their own orbit. Education should be liberating, that is, let children develop according to their own paths.

c. Changes in Character

According to Ki Hajar Dewantara, the Budi component consists of three elements, namely Cipta (thought), Rasa (feeling), and Karsa (will), as well as Character related to Raga (energy). Character is a combination of Creation (cognitive) and Karsa (affective) which produces Work (psychomotor). Good education in the family is the basis for forming good character. The role of parents is as educators and role models who guide the development of their students' character. To achieve harmony or balance in character, there needs to be harmony between Creation, Taste and Work in human life.

Suratman (Noviani et al., 2017) explained that the Ki Hajar Dewantara education system is based on five main principles known as Pancadarma Taman Siswa. The first principle is the principle of independence, which emphasizes the importance of self-discipline based on noble values, both in individual life and as part of society. Independence here is not just freedom, but also the ability to control oneself and live an orderly and peaceful life independently. The second principle is the principle of nature, which affirms that humans are part of nature and will achieve true happiness if they live in harmony with nature that supports their development. Finally, the fifth principle is the principle of humanity, which means that each individual has a responsibility to cultivate human values through purity of heart, compassion for others, and concern for God's creatures. Overall, these five principles create a comprehensive educational framework, aiming to form independent, cultured, national, and humane individuals, so that they are able to face the challenges of the times with full responsibility.

## **2. Pedagogic Impelmentation of Ki Hajar Dewantara in Increasing the Potential of Students**

Ki Hajar Dewantara's pedagogic vision includes two important things, first, uniting the uniqueness of the nature of students with the demands of the development of the times as well as the preservation and development of culture; Second, implementing an AMONG system that provides space for educators to understand the distinctive characteristics of each child and develop these characteristics into potential that is beneficial for their personal growth. This vision is in line with the current direction of national education policy. These similarities are evident in an educational approach that respects the diversity of students through the provision of services that are tailored to the differences in unique characteristics, needs, and potentials in each educational unit. The concrete implementation of this vision in learning is known as differentiated learning (Santika, 2023). The principle of "education that is in accordance with the nature of nature and the nature of the times" Dewantara (1977) is an important foundation in responding to today's educational challenges. In the context of differentiation, educators are required to adjust methods and approaches according to the dynamics of the times and the needs of students, both from intellectual and emotional aspects.

By integrating Ki Hajar Dewantara's pedagogic values in the learning process, educators not only carry out their roles as teachers, but also as character coaches and

facilitators of the growth and development of children's potential. Values such as freedom of thought, culture as the basis of education, and compassion in education will create a more meaningful and holistic learning ecosystem. This is in line with the thinking Zubaedi (2011) which states that character-based education and local culture as taught by Ki Hajar is very important in forming an independent and responsible generation.

The pedagogic implementation of Ki Hajar Dewantara in increasing the potential of students through differentiated learning is an educational approach that favors the development of the potential (nature and uniqueness) of each student. The principle is that each student has a different nature and must be guided to develop optimally according to his character and abilities. Ki Hajar emphasized that education must guide all the natural strengths of children so that they can grow and develop naturally, not shaping children according to the will of educators. This is reflected in his statement: "Children live and grow according to their own nature. Educators can only guide the growth of that nature" (Dewantara, 1977). In line with these principles, differentiated learning allows educators to adjust learning methods, materials, and approaches based on differences in students' readiness, interests, and learning styles.

Ki Hajar Dewantara emphasized the importance of a humanistic and contextual learning approach. This approach is seen in the role of educators as "pamong" who accompany students in the learning process, not as masters of the material, but as supervisors and facilitators. The results of the study show that the pedagogic concept offered by Ki Hajar consists of three main stages, namely planning, implementation, and evaluation of learning. The three stages are aimed at respecting the diversity of students' potential and building an independent education system based on cultural awareness.

a. Learning Planning

Learning planning is a very crucial first step in the pedagogic process. Learning planning based on the teachings of Ki Hajar Dewantara must recognize the diversity of students' natures that are unique and cannot be equated with each other. Learning planning must be prepared based on the educator's understanding of the nature and condition of students. Educators need to understand the potential, interests, and needs of each student. Educators are tasked with guiding, not forcing the natural growth of students. This is in line with Ki Hajar Dewantara's statement "Children live and grow according to their own nature. Educators only care for and guide that nature." (Dewantara, 1977).

Learning planning must also take into account the development of the times, as the so-called "nature of the times", so that students are able to live according to the guidance of modern life. In the planning stage, educators need to conduct initial mapping by recognizing differences in students' interests, readiness, and learning styles through diagnostic assessments. The results of these assessments form the basis

for designing varied and flexible learning strategies, including differentiation of learning content, processes, and products.

At this stage, educators design learning activities that suit the needs and characteristics of students, as well as the learning goals to be achieved. Planning includes the selection of materials, methods, media, and learning strategies to be used. This must be adjusted to the abilities and potential of students so that the learning process can run optimally. Good planning also considers the diversity of students, so that the strategies used can accommodate various learning styles and abilities in the classroom. Ki Hajar said that "children are not empty vessels that can be filled with anything, but seeds that must be grown according to their nature" (Dewantara, 1977). Therefore, learning planning must be flexible and adaptive.

#### b. Implementation of Learning

The implementation of learning is the stage where the planning that has been made is applied in teaching and learning activities in the classroom. At this stage, educators play an active role in facilitating students to manage classes, as well as providing support and motivation to encourage student participation. The implementation of learning also involves the use of appropriate methods, such as discussion, experimentation, or collaboration, to create a dynamic and interactive learning environment. In addition, educators must also be able to adjust to the dynamics of the classroom and the conditions of students, as well as take a humanistic approach to build a positive relationship between educators and students.

At the stage of implementing learning, educators carry out the principles of the among system, which is an education system based on the values of freedom and nurturing. In this system, educators are not the only source of knowledge, but companions and guides in the learning process of students. Learning is designed in such a way that each student can choose a learning method that suits him/her, in a fun, inclusive, and liberating atmosphere. The principle of the among system explains that educators play a role:

- 1) "*Ing ngarso sung tulodo*", meaning in front of giving an example. Educators are role models for every student. An educator who stands in front of the class not only delivers material, but also displays exemplary attitudes and behaviors. An educator should be a person who is able to set an example, both in speech, attitude, and in responding to daily problems. Because students not only learn from books, but also from the attitudes and habits of the adults around them. Educators should be able to provide examples of good habits and attitudes so that they can be emulated by their students. Every step and behavior of educators must be considered for good and bad. Educators must think about every action taken because they are the ones who are admired and imitated by their students.
- 2) "*Ing Madya Mangun Karsa*", meaning in the middle of creating opportunities for initiative. In the midst of the learning process, educators need to be present as friends who arouse enthusiasm and provide space for students to grow and take initiative. Here, students not only receive knowledge passively, but are invited to

think critically, collaborate, and express themselves according to their character and interests. As an educator, they are required to be more creative and innovative in designing learning that is not boring, but rather fun and meaningful.

- 3) "*tut wuri handayani*", meaning behind to give encouragement. An educator must be able to be an encourager, give trust, and allow students to develop in their own learning space. Educators do not demand with pressure, but lead with love. When students feel supported, not judged, then the learning process will not be a burden. Learning becomes an activity that they enjoy, and knowledge is not something to be feared, but to be sought with joy.

The motto of Ki Hajar Dewantara is not just a series of wise words, but as a guide to the life of a true educator. In the hands of educators who live these values, education can be a bridge for students to find their best selves and realize the future they dream of. These three simple sentences form a strong foundation for educators to understand how they should be present in the midst of students. An educator must have these three qualities in order to become an educator who can be an example for students (Putri, 2019).

In its implementation, educators must be able to create a learning atmosphere that frees students to think, create, and act according to their best potential. As emphasized by Ki Hajar Dewantara, "Independence is to guide the growth of children's lives according to their own nature (Dewantara, 1977). This principle is very relevant to modern student-centered learning approaches.

#### c. Learning Evaluation

Learning evaluation is the last component that is very important to know the extent to which learning objectives have been achieved. The evaluation of learning in Ki Hajar Dewantara's pedagogics does not only focus on cognitive assessment, but also pays attention to the moral, social and emotional development of students. According to him, education must form a whole human being, not just "intelligence". As he put it, "The progress of human life is not only measured by the intelligence of his brain, but also by the progress of his morals". (Dewantara, 1977).

Learning evaluation must contain the process of student development in cognitive, affective, and psychomotor aspects. Evaluations help educators to identify strengths and weaknesses in learning, as well as provide constructive feedback for future improvement. In addition, the evaluation also provides an overview of the effectiveness of the learning methods and strategies that have been implemented, as well as the extent to which the approach used is able to accommodate the various needs of students.

Overall, these pedagogic components interact with each other to create a holistic and meaningful learning process. All of these components cannot be separated, as each contributes to shaping an optimal learning experience for students. By designing and implementing good planning, running the learning process effectively, and conducting proper evaluations, holistic and sustainable educational goals can be achieved.



### **3. The relevance of Ki Hajar Dewantara's pedagogic principles in increasing the potential of students**

Ki Hajar Dewantara's pedagogic principles are a legacy of educational thinking that remains relevant to the dynamics of 21st century learning, especially in an effort to increase the potential of students holistically. Ki Hajar Dewantara views that education is actually a process of guiding the nature of children, both natural and contemporary natures towards the highest progress and happiness (Dewantara, 1977). This emphasizes that every child has unique potentials that need to be guided and developed by educators, not forced through uniform standards. In other words, education must be on the side of children, acknowledge their uniqueness, and provide space for independent growth.

One of the important aspects of Ki Hajar Dewantara's pedagogics is the spirit of education that humanizes humans. This is reflected in the motto of his leadership trilogy: *Ing ngarsa sung tulada, ing madya mangukarsa, tut wuri handayani*. In the principle of "ing ngarsa sung tulada", educators are expected to be role models, both in attitudes, values, and behavior. This example will shape the character of students through observation and imitation, building discipline, integrity, and a sense of responsibility in them. Furthermore, the principle of "ing madya mangukarsa" emphasizes the importance of the presence of teachers in the midst of students to foster the spirit of learning and encourage creativity. In this context, teachers do not act as information centers, but rather as facilitators who encourage learning initiatives. This approach is in line with the concept of differentiated learning, where teaching strategies are tailored to the needs and characteristics of each student.

The third principle, "tut wuri handayani", shows that educators have an important role in providing motivation and support from behind. Educators do not always need to appear dominant, but it is enough to be a figure who is able to create a sense of security and comfort for students to express and develop. A positive learning environment will increase students' confidence, so that they are encouraged to explore their talents and interests independently. Through the among system, educators are positioned not as rulers, but as role models, companions, and encouragers who encourage students to grow naturally and meaningfully.

The relevance of this principle is increasingly evident in the Freedom of Learning policy initiated by the Ministry of Education and Culture. Nadiem Makarim (Rosihuddin, 2024) who stated that Merdeka Learning is an educational transformation that aims to ensure that all parties, including students, educators, parents, and the community, have equal and meaningful access to education. The three indicators of the success of this program include the creation of effective learning, the equitable involvement of students in the education system, and the reduction of gaps in access and quality of learning. This program also emphasizes the importance of infrastructure recovery and strengthening technological literacy, in line with Ki Hajar Dewantara's thoughts on the importance of adapting education to the nature of the times.

The application of Ki Hajar Dewantara's pedagogic principles is able to increase students' active participation and confidence because they feel valued in the learning process. This approach allows educators to recognize the differences in learning styles and potential

of each student, as well as adjust the approach to be more personal and humane. Ki Hajar Dewantara also emphasizes a balance in the development of *cipta* (mind), *rasa* (feeling), and *karsa* (will), which supports the holistic education model, which is to form students who are not only intellectually intelligent, but also empathetic, moral, and socially independent (Siregar, 2022).

Sulaiman Kurdi in his research stated that there was a significant increase in student values and attitudes based on a humanistic approach, namely from 40% to between 75% to 89%, compared to the previous condition which only ranged from 36% to 63%. These findings indicate that humanistic approaches are effectively used as a learning method that emphasizes the development of cognitive, affective, and psychomotor aspects (Aiman, 2022). Thus, Ki Hajar Dewantara's pedagogic values not only form an ethical framework for the educator profession, but also become a strong foundation for a learning system that focuses on developing the full human potential. These principles remain relevant and can be the main reference in answering current and future educational challenges.

#### **D. CONCLUSIONS AND SUGGESTIONS**

Ki Hajar Dewantara's pedagogic thinking makes a very important contribution to the world of Indonesian education, especially in an effort to increase the potential of students as a whole. According to Ki Hajar, education is not solely oriented to academic achievement, but aims to guide children to grow and develop according to the nature of nature and the nature of their times by respecting the uniqueness and potential of each student. Hajar Dewantara's pedagogic principles have strong relevance in modern education. The application of the concepts of "*Ing Ngarso Sung Tuladha*," "*Ing Madya Mangun Karsa*," and "*Tut Wuri Handayani*" can create an inspiring learning environment and support the development of students' potential. Through the among approach, educators are placed as teachers who accompany students with love, not imposing their will, but guiding according to the needs and characteristics of each child.

Based on the results of the study, the application of Ki Hajar Dewantara's pedagogic values in learning requires commitment from various parties. Educators as the main actors in learning are advised to better understand and apply a student-centered approach by paying attention to their nature, interests, and diversity of potential. The among approach that emphasizes the role of educators as guides, motivators, and role models needs to be revived in educational practices in schools. Educational institutions are also expected to develop a school curriculum and culture that is in line with Ki Hajar Dewantara's educational values, especially in building an independent, dialogical, and learning atmosphere that shapes the character of students. The government needs to support these efforts through policies that place the national education philosophy as the main foundation in education reform. In addition, further research on the concrete application of Ki Hajar pedagogic in the context of modern learning is also needed so that his ideas do not only become historical discourse, but also become actual solutions in answering today's educational challenges.

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