

Revitalizing the Educational Values of Ki Hadjar Dewantara in the Development of Project and Problem-Based Indonesian Language Learning

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Abstract. Revitalizing Ki Hajar Dewantara's educational values is an important strategy in strengthening students' character amidst the challenges of 21st century education. This study examines the application of these values in developing project-based and problem-based Indonesian language learning at the junior high school level. This learning model is considered capable of encouraging active student involvement, improving critical thinking skills, and building awareness of national values and culture. The study used a descriptive-qualitative approach within a development research framework. The subjects of the study consisted of junior high school teachers and students in Boyolali Regency. Data were obtained through observation of the learning process, interviews, documentation, and expert validation of the designed learning tools. Data were analyzed thematically to identify the form of integration of Ki Hajar Dewantara's values in learning activities. The results of the study indicate that the principles of Ing Ngarsa Sung Tuladha, Ing Madya Mangun Karsa, and Tut Wuri Handayani can be implemented functionally in project-based and problem-based learning. Value integration is carried out through the selection of contextual themes, collaborative assignments, and reflection of values in each stage of the project. Positive impacts are seen in increasing student involvement, strengthening the value of responsibility, and growing cultural awareness. Teachers also showed an increase in understanding in implementing character education values concretely. In conclusion, the integration of Ki Hajar Dewantara's teachings in the development of project-based and problem-based Indonesian language learning provides a significant contribution to achieving holistic educational goals. This model is relevant to be applied more widely in the context of character-based learning.

Keywords: educational values; Ki Hajar Dewantara; project-based learning; problem-based learning; Indonesian

INTRODUCTION

Education is a fundamental pillar for building superior, competitive human resources with a strong national identity. Education not only serves as a means to transfer knowledge but also acts as an instrument to shape the character and personality of students, enabling them to become good and responsible citizens. Nur'aini, DMR., Suwandi, S., Rohmadi, M. (2023) stated that in the context of a diverse Indonesia, learning Indonesian at the junior high school (SMP) level plays a strategic role, both as a formal communication medium and as a vehicle for nurturing awareness of national identity. Indonesian serves as a tool to unite a nation characterized by diverse ethnicities, cultures, and regional languages. Therefore, learning Indonesian must integrate national values, noble character, and relevance to social reality. However, in practice, learning Indonesian still encounters serious challenges. The learning process tends to be normative, focused on memorizing texts, and restricted to the routine delivery of teaching

materials in a conventional manner. Warsito, R., & Nur'aini, D. M. R. (2024) stated that the affective and social dimensions in learning, including the internalization of character values, have not been implemented optimally. This leads to a learning process that is less meaningful and irrelevant to contemporary needs. This phenomenon reveals a gap between the idealism of national education and its practices in the field. This condition is becoming increasingly urgent to address, considering that the challenges of the 21st century and the Industry 5.0 era demand education that produces a generation that is not only intellectually intelligent but also possesses strong character, social awareness, and adaptability to global dynamics.

The new paradigm of education today no longer places teachers as the only source of knowledge, but rather as facilitators and motivators who encourage students to learn actively and independently (Silvina, 2025). In this context, the teachings of Ki Hajar Dewantara become very relevant to be re-examined. Ki Hajar Dewantara is a pioneer of Indonesian education who emphasizes

that the essence of education is to liberate humans as a whole, both in physical, spiritual, and social aspects (Dewantara, 1935). In his view, education must guide the growth of students' potential so that they become independent, dignified individuals who are able to make positive contributions to society. The concept of Ing Ngarsa Sung Tuladha, Ing Madya Mangun Karsa, Tut Wuri Handayani is a pedagogical principle that places teachers as role models, companions, and drivers of student independence (Ki Hadjar Dewantara, 1962). In addition, the Principle of Among which is a characteristic of Ki Hajar Dewantara's education emphasizes loving treatment, respect for children's potential, and the creation of a joyful learning atmosphere (Ki Hadjar Dewantara, 1962). Furthermore, within the framework of competency-based learning, the integration of the noble values of national education with an innovative pedagogical approach is a necessity. One approach that has proven effective in answering these challenges is Project-Based Learning (PjBL) and Problem-Based Learning (PBL). PjBL emphasizes the active involvement of students in completing real projects related to the world around them, so that learning becomes more contextual and meaningful (Thomas, 2000). Meanwhile, PBL provides challenges in the form of real problems that students must solve through collaboration and critical thinking (Hmelo-Silver, 2004). Both of these approaches are able to develop higher order thinking skills (HOTS), creativity, effective communication, and collaboration between students (Bell, 2010; Savery, 2006). Research by Astuti (2022) shows that PjBL increases student engagement and learning outcomes. Likewise, Trullas (2022) found that PBL is very effective in forming complex problem-solving skills in real situations.

The integration of project-based and problem-based approaches with Ki Hajar Dewantara's educational values is a very potential pedagogical strategy. Through PjBL and PBL, students not only master language competencies, but also learn life values such as responsibility, social concern, cooperation, and respect for local wisdom (Azzahra, 2023). By raising projects or problems that originate from the environment around students, learning Indonesian can be a bridge between academic achievement and character formation. This strategy is also an answer to the demands of 21st-century education which not only focuses on cognitive output, but also character outcomes and social integrity. Various relevant studies strengthen the urgency of this approach.

Wulandari (2020) showed that the application of PjBL in learning Indonesian can significantly improve students' writing skills. Marzuki et al. (2019) found that the integration of local values such as the teachings of Ki Hajar Dewantara into learning has a positive impact on the formation of students' identity. Research by Ainissyifa et al. (2024) also stated that local value-based education is an effective strategy in realizing the profile of adaptive and character-based Pancasila students. However, there is still very little research that explicitly develops project-based and problem-based Indonesian language textbooks with the integration of Ki Hajar Dewantara's values, especially in areas such as Boyolali Regency.

Boyolali Regency is one of the regions with unique cultural richness that is still alive in the lives of its people. Noble values such as mutual cooperation, togetherness, and respect for local figures are social capital that can be integrated into learning. Unfortunately, this richness has not been fully reflected in Indonesian language teaching materials. Textbooks that are compiled with a project-based and problem-based approach based on local values are an urgent need to create contextual and down-to-earth learning. Therefore, it is important to present innovation in the form of developing Indonesian language textbooks based on projects and problems with the integration of the noble values of Ki Hajar Dewantara's teachings. Starting from these problems and research gaps, this article aims to examine, reflect, and offer alternative solutions on how the revitalization of Ki Hajar Dewantara's educational values can be integrated into the development of project-based and problem-based Indonesian language learning for junior high school students in Boyolali Regency. This research is expected to contribute to the development of transformative, locally relevant, and contributive learning models in forming a young generation with character and adaptability to global change.

METHODS

This study uses a descriptive qualitative approach with a research and development design, which focuses on the initial stage, namely the exploration of needs and the preparation of basic concepts for project-based and problem-based Indonesian language textbooks integrated with the educational values of Ki Hajar Dewantara. The research location was determined purposively in several junior high schools in Boyolali Regency that represent the diversity of school contexts, both

in terms of geography and readiness to implement learning innovations. The research subjects included Indonesian language teachers, grade VIII students, and school principals, who were selected based on their direct involvement in the learning process and openness to new approaches. The main instrument in this study was the researcher herself, who played a role in designing, collecting, and analyzing data reflectively and contextually. The supporting instruments used included interview guidelines for teachers and principals, classroom activity observation sheets, and analysis formats for learning documents such as syllabuses, lesson plans, and textbooks currently in use. Data collection was carried out through in-depth interviews, direct observation of learning practices, and document analysis, as well as focus group discussions (FGD) to explore user needs for the form and content of the textbooks to be developed. The data obtained are in the form of qualitative data such as interview transcripts, field notes, class observation results, and documentation of learning activities. All data are analyzed thematically through a process of reduction, categorization, and interpretation of meaning to formulate key findings that form the basis for compiling the content and structure of the textbook. This process is designed to ensure that the textbooks developed are not only in accordance with the curriculum needs and student abilities, but also reflect the noble values of Ki Hajar Dewantara's teachings contextually.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This study uses a descriptive qualitative approach with a research and development design, which focuses on the initial stage, namely the exploration of needs and the preparation of basic concepts for project-based and problem-based Indonesian language textbooks integrated with the educational values of Ki Hajar Dewantara. The research location was determined purposively in several junior high schools in Boyolali Regency that represent the diversity of school contexts, both in terms of geography and readiness to implement learning innovations. The research subjects included Indonesian language teachers, grade VIII students, and school principals, who were selected based on their direct involvement in the learning process and openness to new approaches. The main instrument in this study was the researcher herself, who played a role in designing, collecting, and analyzing data reflectively and contextually. The supporting instruments used included interview guidelines for

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This study emphasizes the importance of a paradigm shift in Indonesian language learning at the junior high school level from conventional models to participatory, contextual, and valuable learning. The research findings lead to the conclusion that the development of project-based and problem-based textbooks that integrate Ki Hajar Dewantara's values is not only needed, but also a necessity to answer today's educational challenges. The following discussion examines the findings in relation to relevant literature and theoretical positions that support such development.

Reactualization of Ki Hajar Dewantara's Educational Values in the Context of Modern Learning

One of the main contributions of this study is a systematic effort to reactualize Ki Hajar Dewantara's teachings into the practice of learning Indonesian at the junior high school (SMP) level. So far, Ki Hajar Dewantara's teachings, especially the educational trilogy Ing Ngarso Sung Tulodo, Ing Madya Mangun Karso, and Tut Wuri Handayani, often only stop at the level of formal slogans displayed on classroom walls, but have not fully become a living soul in the daily learning process (Efendi, 2023). Even in most educational practices, these teachings are often viewed as a historical legacy that is separate from the reality of modern educational needs. Therefore, through this study, an effort was made to re-relevate these values in an applicative manner into the design

and implementation of learning based on Project-Based Learning (PjBL) and Problem-Based Learning (PBL), while adhering to the basic spirit of national education rooted in Indonesian culture. In the context of implementing project-based and problem-based learning, the principle of Ing Ngarso Sung Tulodo is translated through the selection of learning materials that are rich in exemplary values, both from national and local figures, including community figures in Boyolali Regency who have contributed to their social environment. This approach aims for students to not only understand the linguistic aspects, but also capture the moral values, integrity, and social responsibility of the figures presented in the text. Exemplary behavior is the main component in building students' character awareness from an early age. Ing Madya Mangun Karso is realized in a learning strategy that places teachers as active learning partners, not just providers of material. Teachers encourage students to think creatively, work in groups, compile projects, and dare to take the initiative to find solutions to the problems being studied. Meanwhile, Tut Wuri Handayani is realized by giving students the freedom to explore ideas, innovate in project assignments, and encourage reflection on the learning process they have gone through. Thus, the learning process is no longer one-way, but grows as a dialogue and collaborative work that encourages students' learning autonomy.

This finding is in line with Purwanta's (2025) thinking which emphasizes that the values in Ki Hajar Dewantara's teachings have a high level of flexibility to be contextualized with various contemporary learning approaches. So far, the inability to transform the noble values of education into a modern practice framework has actually been one of the causes of the weak impact of education on the formation of student character. In Tilaar's (2015) view, national education reform must begin with a renewal of the perspective on the heritage of local educational values which have so far only been administrative symbols. This renewal includes a redefinition of the function of education which is not only oriented towards achieving academic values, but also as a vehicle for transforming the nation's character. Furthermore, the reactualization of Ki Hajar Dewantara's teachings within the framework of PjBL and PBL also functions as a bridge between the needs of the national curriculum and local cultural roots. Through this integration, students not only learn how to speak well and correctly, but also understand language as a tool to voice their

own cultural identity, values, and aspirations. This is relevant to the idea of Ainissyifa et al. (2024) who stated that local value-based education is a strategic instrument in strengthening the profile of Pancasila students who have character and are globally competitive. Furthermore, this step is a concrete response to global criticism of the education system which is often disconnected from the social and cultural context of its students (Schweisfurth, 2013). Thus, the reactualization of Ki Hajar Dewantara's values through the PjBL and PBL approaches is not only an innovation in learning methods, but is a fundamental step in rebuilding the orientation of national education that is character-based, relevant to local needs, and at the same time adaptive to global challenges. This is a form of synthesis between the nation's noble heritage and a progressive pedagogical approach, so that education in Indonesia is no longer an ahistorical practice that ignores identity, but instead, becomes an arena for forming a young generation that is knowledgeable, has character, and is competitive.

Integration of Ki Hajar Dewantara's Values in the Pedagogical Dimension

Ki Hajar Dewantara's values are not merely historical legacies or moral slogans, but are pedagogical principles that have transformative power in shaping educational practices. The teachings of Tut Wuri Handayani, for example, have high relevance in the context of project-based learning, where teachers provide support while providing as much space as possible for students to explore ideas, plan, and create products resulting from critical and creative thinking processes. In other words, Tut Wuri Handayani is a basic philosophy in developing students' learning autonomy (Sardiman, 2013). Meanwhile, the principle of Ing Madya Mangun Karso emphasizes the role of teachers not as information centers, but as co-learners who together with students build meaning, guide the process, and create a lively and inspiring learning atmosphere. In this framework, teachers are not only passive facilitators, but also active actors in building a learning community in the classroom (Suparlan, 2015). Meanwhile, Ing Ngarso Sung Tulodo can be realized in the form of learning models or narratives that highlight the exemplary behavior of local figures, so that noble values become more contextual and relevant to students' daily lives.

Ki Hadjar Dewantara's (1935) view, which emphasizes that education is a process of liberating humans, finds important intersections

with the constructivist learning approach as proposed by Vygotsky (1978), which states that learning is truly the result of a process of social interaction and authentic experience in a real context. Through social interaction and active involvement in problem solving, meaning and knowledge are built by students, not simply transferred by teachers. Therefore, the integration of Ki Hajar Dewantara's values with the constructivist approach will form a synergy between local philosophy and contemporary pedagogical approaches. The learning conditions in the classroom, which have so far been oriented towards rote learning (memorization), have created a gap between the vision of national education, such as the Pancasila Student Profile, and the reality on the ground (Ministry of Education and Culture, 2021). In fact, the Pancasila student profile demands the presence of a generation that has an independent character, mutual cooperation, critical thinking, and global awareness. This is where the relevance of the integration of Ki Hajar Dewantara's values is increasingly felt, because its principles are able to bridge this gap and build an educational foundation that is rooted in national identity as well as having a global perspective. The development of project-based and problem-based textbooks that operationalize these values is a strategic step to realize contextual learning. The subject matter is designed based on the reality of students' lives, enriched with local wisdom-based projects that can build awareness of cultural identity. Reflective narratives in textbooks can be directed to arouse students' empathy for social problems, while problem-based activities encourage students to think in a solution-oriented and socially responsible manner. In addition, Prastowo (2015) emphasized that ideal textbooks must be interactive and able to be a dialogical bridge between students and the real world. The integration of Ki Hajar Dewantara's values into textbooks not only enriches the value dimension, but also expands the function of textbooks from merely a source of material to a vehicle for internalizing character. Thus, learning Indonesian does not only function as a means of improving language skills, but also as a tool for forming character that is relevant to the challenges of 21st-century education.

Project and Problem Based Learning: Meeting the Challenges of 21st Century Education

The implementation of Project-Based Learning (PjBL) and Problem-Based Learning (PBL) is not

merely a choice of instructional methods, but rather a strategic response to the increasingly complex challenges of 21st-century education. This era is marked by new literacy needs that require students to have critical thinking, communication, collaboration, and creativity (4C) skills, as emphasized by Trilling and Fadel (2009) in the concept of 21st Century Skills. With the world increasingly connected through digital technology, these competencies become an essential foundation for producing individuals who are able to survive and thrive in rapid social, cultural, and economic changes. According to Bell (2010), the implementation of PjBL provides a space for exploration for students to develop a deep understanding of concepts through real projects based on open-ended questions. In the context of learning Indonesian, this approach can be realized through various forms of creative projects, such as creating literacy content based on social media, local research on regional culture, writing biographies of inspirational figures, and staging dramas based on local historical texts. Thus, learning Indonesian is no longer just memorization, but becomes a vehicle for students' self-actualization.

Furthermore, PBL places students as the main actors in the process of solving authentic problems rooted in everyday life. Savery (2006) emphasized that this approach improves problem-solving skills and the ability to transfer knowledge in real-life contexts. For example, students can be invited to examine social issues in the surrounding environment, then discuss and design solutions through class forums or written media. This kind of practice strengthens students' functional literacy and social literacy which are increasingly relevant to the needs of today's digital society (OECD, 2018). What is different in this study is the integration of Ki Hajar Dewantara's values into the project-based and problem-based learning structure. By combining the values of Ing Ngarso Sung Tulodo, Ing Madya Mangun Karso, and Tut Wuri Handayani, learning becomes not only task-oriented, but also oriented towards character formation. The projects designed not only demand cognitive achievements, but also encourage students to reflect on moral values, social responsibility, and local wisdom. This is in accordance with the essence of holistic education as explained by Miller (2007), namely education that balances the intellectual, emotional, social and spiritual aspects of students to become whole individuals.

On the other hand, this approach answers the

need for meaningful learning as stated by Novak (1998), that learning will be effective if the material being studied has personal and contextual meaning for students. Through environmental-based projects, students feel that what they learn makes a real contribution to their lives and their communities. Thus, the implementation of PjBL and PBL based on Ki Hajar Dewantara's values becomes a complete approach that aligns the global demands of the 21st century with the philosophical roots of national education. This kind of innovation not only improves students' academic achievement, but also strengthens national identity, social character, and critical thinking capacity which are the foundation of Indonesia's future generation.

Contribution to Theoretical and Practical Development

This research makes a significant contribution to theoretical and practical development in the field of education, especially related to the implementation of local values in modern learning design. In a theoretical context, this research enriches the discourse on how the national education philosophy, especially that inherited by Ki Hajar Dewantara, can be actualized in concrete, innovative learning designs and practices that are in accordance with the needs of the times. If so far the values of Ing Ngarso Sung Tulodo, Ing Madya Mangun Karso, and Tut Wuri Handayani tend to be understood as normative slogans or as ideal narratives in the vision of national education, the findings of this study have succeeded in showing the real operationalization of these values through the Project-Based Learning (PjBL) and Problem-Based Learning (PBL) approaches. This theoretical contribution broadens the horizon of thinking about locality-based education that has previously been widely promoted by progressive educational thinkers, such as Paulo Freire (1970) with his idea of liberation pedagogy. In Freire's view, education must always side with the social reality of students in order to have transformational meaning. Likewise, the thinking of Ki Hadjar Dewantara (1967) emphasized that education is a process of liberating humans to be able to think and act independently, but still based on social responsibility. Within this framework, this study successfully combines local education principles with contemporary pedagogical approaches such as PjBL and PBL, resulting in an interdisciplinary learning framework that unites cultural values, activity-based pedagogy, and the spirit of humanistic education. This approach is

also in line with the concept of holistic education (Miller, 2007), which emphasizes education as a process of developing the potential of students as a whole—intellectual, emotional, social, and spiritual.

More specifically, this study also supports the constructivist approach that places students as active subjects in the learning process (Vygotsky, 1978), and supports the strengthening of the Pancasila student profile as outlined in the Merdeka Curriculum policy. By placing projects and problem solving as a means of learning, students not only learn academically, but also learn to live in their society, build critical reasoning towards the environment, and foster a love for local culture as a self-identity. In terms of practical contribution, this study provides a concrete prototype in the form of a local value-based textbook development model, which can be adapted by teachers in the daily learning process. PjBL and PBL-based textbooks that are integrated with the teachings of Ki Hajar Dewantara offer a solution to the limitations of conventional teaching materials that tend to be textual and non-contextual. In the context of implementing the Merdeka Belajar policy, this model encourages teachers to be more creative in designing learning that is in line with students' needs, relevant to the social and cultural environment in which they grow up.

Furthermore, the practical significance of this research also lies in its ability to answer the challenges of education in the era of digital disruption. Amidst the rapid flow of global information that has the potential to erode local cultural identity, this noble values-based approach becomes a kind of cultural fortress, keeping the education process grounded in the roots of the nation's culture without closing itself off to technological innovation. This is in accordance with Tilaar's view (2015), which states that national education reform must be based on the revitalization of the nation's educational values so that they are not eroded by the directionless flow of globalization. Thus, the contribution of this research is transformative: it not only offers conceptual innovation in the field of educational theory, but also presents real alternatives to be implemented in Indonesian language classes in junior high schools, especially in the context of regions such as Boyolali Regency which are rich in local cultural potential. The project-based and problem-based learning model developed through this research is able to bridge the gap between the ideal vision of national education and daily

educational practices in schools, so that in the end it encourages the birth of a young generation of Indonesians with strong character, critical thinking, strong local cultural roots, and are ready to face global challenges in the future.

CONCLUSION

This study concludes that the development of project-based and problem-based Indonesian language textbooks with the integration of Ki Hajar Dewantara's noble values is a pedagogical innovation that is not only strategic, but also contextual, especially to answer the demands of 21st-century education that are increasingly complex and dynamic. The textbooks developed in this study are not only learning media, but also function as educational transformation tools, connecting academic aspects, character, local culture, and life skills that are relevant to the needs of students in this century. By implementing the Project-Based Learning (PjBL) and Problem-Based Learning (PBL) approaches, these textbooks encourage active, collaborative, and meaningful learning that allows students to engage in the process of exploring and solving real problems, while instilling character values that originate from the national education philosophy. The integration of Ki Hajar Dewantara's noble values such as Ing Ngarso Sung Tulodo, Ing Madya Mangun Karso, and Tut Wuri Handayani provides a strong pedagogical framework for the learning process, where the role of teachers as humanist educators and facilitators is increasingly evident. Meanwhile, for students, this learning model fosters an independent attitude, responsibility, critical thinking, and high social awareness, as is the ideal of the Pancasila student profile.

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