

Understanding Ki Hadjar Dewantara's educational philosophy

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Abstract

This article aims to describe the philosophy proposed by Ki Hadjar Dewantara *ing ngarsa sung tuladha, ing madya mangun karsa, tut wuri handayani* interpreted using Schleiermacher's hermeneutics. By doing grammatical and psychological interpretation, the authors explored issues on understanding how the philosophy affected Ki Hadjar Dewantara's life. It was done by apprehending the background condition, which inspired his vision, thinking framework, and other related thinking concept. Ki Hadjar Dewantara's vision is an educational concept, which implements local wisdom in the middle of the harsh life of colonialism. The philosophy of Ki Hadjar Dewantara comes from the meaningful local wisdom that both teacher and leader should be in the front performing model or example, in the middle to build intention, and behind to motivate learners/public.

Keywords:

Ki Hadjar Dewantara; Schleiermacher; hermeneutics; education

1 INTRODUCTION

We cannot separate education from the history of education development, which is prominently affected by Ki Hadjar Dewantara. Ki Hadjar Dewantara is an education figure who is also the mastermind of Indonesia's education philosophy *ing ngarsa sung tuladha, ing madya mangun karsa, tut wuri handayani*, and eventually becomes education symbol in Indonesia. However, it is not fully implemented in education. Young generation's partial understanding or even null understanding on the philosophy may be the source of the problem. Based on the preliminary study conducted on the Department of Christian Education in a Theological Seminary in Ungaran, most of students on the first and third grade have not understood the meaning of philosophy. They only know *Tut Wuri Handayani* as the symbol of education without having complete understanding on it. In addition, the implementation of the philosophy cannot be clearly seen on the educational practices. It is believed that education, which implements the philosophy proposed by Ki Hadjar Dewantara, will create golden generation. Wardani mentions that teachers should understand the philosophy and shape their character in order to succeed the effort of creating golden generation (Wardani, 2017). Teacher's character needs to be done because, before applying the philosophy in their teaching, teachers should be able to teach and implement the philosophy on themselves, value dialogue, and have good commitment on their profession as teachers (Koesoema, 2017). However, young generation has tried to understand and implement the philosophy to shape their character (Wardani, 2017). Some other studies have seen the implementation of the philosophy in teaching and character education of the students and teachers (Dwikurnaningsih, 2017; Karyawanto & Ms, 2018; Samuel, Miranda, & Luhsasi, 2017; Saptandari, Harvey, Sewell, & Bimler, 2015; Waluyanti, Santoso, Munir, & Utami, 2017).

To support the character education in Indonesia, we should have full understanding on the philosophy proposed by Ki Hadjar Dewantara. It was born from the effort to have independent people. Therefore, we need to revisit the philosophy to have better understanding. In order to do that, Schleiermacher's hermeneutics is employed because it is the art of understanding, listening (rather than speaking), and reading (rather than writing). In this case, the writer will try to comprehend and read the meaning behind the philosophy *ing ngarsa sung tuladha, ing madya mangun karsa, tut wuri handayani*. Hardiman claims that language may die so it is difficult to catch its whole meaning, and living language is difficult to be understood because it may be changing (Hardiman, 2018). In this article, the writer aims to understand the philosophy from the psychological interpretation of *ing ngarsa sung tuladha, ing madya mangun karsa, tut wuri handayani*. Based on the background stated above, this study has two research questions: 1) What is the grammatical interpretation of *ing ngarsa sung tuladha, ing madya mangun karsa, tut wuri handayani*? 2) How is the mental world of the innovator of the philosophy *ing ngarsa sung tuladha, ing madya mangun karsa, tut wuri handayani*? Therefore, this study aims to 1) present the grammatical interpretation of *ing ngarsa sung tuladha, ing madya mangun karsa, tut wuri handayani*; and 2) describe the mental world of the innovator of *ing ngarsa sung tuladha, ing madya mangun karsa, tut wuri handayani*.

2 METHOD

To have good understanding on the grammatical interpretation and the mental world of the innovator of *ing ngarsa sung tuladha, ing madya mangun karsa, tut wuri handayani*, Schleiermacher's hermeneutics is employed. It is used as there is misunderstanding affected by prejudice on a text. The reader of the text needs to have deeper dialogue with the author of the text. It is done by having grammatical dialogue and world mental dialogue (psychological interpretation of the author). The reader (the interpreter) needs to understand the point of view as a whole so the reader must have linguistics competence related to the text being interpreted because it is needed to do grammatical interpretation (Sumaryono, 2017). As the author of the education philosophy, Ki Hadjar Dewantara, had great understanding on Javanese, the writer of this article needs to access various references to help him understand the meaning of the philosophy well.

World mental interpretation is also called psychological interpretation. It aims to have better understanding on the psychological, cultural, and ideational condition, which affects the writer. The reader (the interpreter) should be able to

understand the writer's humanity world or the writer's psychological side. Psychological interpretation of the writer needs to be done as a text is greatly influenced by the writer's condition. Therefore, to understand a text like what the writer wants to deliver, we need to understand the writer's psychological condition. Hardiman explains that to do grammatical interpretation, we have to do the psychological interpretation as well and they need to be done at the same time (Hardiman, 2018). Sumaryono also mentions that to make interpretation, we have to do grammatical and psychological interpretation at the same time (Sumaryono, 2017). Psychological interpretation is done in four steps: first, understanding the integrity and the direction of the text; second, identifying the text objectively; third, finding the way of Ki Hadjar's Dewantara's thinking; fourth, finding secondary thinking related to Ki Hadjar Dewantara's life (Hardiman, 2018). However, not all steps were done.

3 RESULTS

3.1 The Philosophy's Meaning

The description of the meaning of the philosophy *ing ngarsa sung tuladha, ing madya mangun karsa, tut wuri handayani* here is a result of the effort to understand the grammatical interpretation and the psychological condition when Ki Hadjar Dewantara wrote it. The philosophy was born as a part of his struggle against colonialism. In the middle of his struggle, Ki Hadjar Dewantara encouraged people to be independent and he came up with the archipelago's wealth as a part of his struggle. In this case, he used Javanese to proclaim the philosophy. The meaning of *Ing Ngarsa Sung Tuladhais* that as a good leader; a leader should be able to be a role model. Samuel, Miranda, dan Luhsasi explain that the meaning of *Ing Ngarsa Sung Tuladhais* derived from *ing ngarsa* meaning at front, *sung* meaning I, and *tuladha* meaning giving a model (Samuel et al., 2017). Therefore, it means that a teacher should give role model when they teach. Koesoema explains that the teacher should model how to behave in daily life, apply the value of life, and act as a learner (Koesoema, 2017). In addition, Dwikurnaningsih adds that the philosophy *Ing Ngarsa Sung Tuladha* emphasizes on the ability of a teacher to be a role model so that students can listen to the teacher's advice and imitate the teacher (Dwikurnaningsih, 2017).

Role model is important to create a free and independent person who can stand on his/her own feet. The reason why a teacher should give a good example to be imitated by the students is that it is related to Ki Hadjar Dewantara's idea in *Trina*, an acronym of *niteni*, *nirokake*, and *nambahi*. *Niteni* means remembering or recalling the previous knowledge, *nirokake* means imitating what has been learned, and *nambahi* means developing things that have been learned before (Supriyoko, 2017). *Trina* is an image on how a student should learn, and *Ing Ngarsa Sung Tuladhais* related to the things the teacher should do. Beside *Trina*, giving example should be related to the idea of three prohibitions: treasure, throne, and woman. For Ki Hadjar Dewantara, a teacher should not pursue wealth, hound position, and have scandal (Supriyoko, 2017). If a teacher pursues wealth and justifies various ways to hoard treasures, hounds position to enrich himself/herself, and has scandal, the teacher is not a good model for the students. A teacher with that bad character will not be able to create students who have good personality and character to build the nation. The presence of teacher who can give a good role model may avoid students' compulsion to do good things as the students are exposed to good things showed by the teacher. Febre claims that if students are exposed to good models, the students will develop the same good value which then affects their life (Febre, 1952). It is the reason why Febre thinks that the philosophy is always related to *among* method.

Ing Madya Mangun Karsais derived from *ing madya* meaning in the middle, *mangun* meaning developing, and *karsa* meaning will / desire, so *Ing Madya Mangun Karsa* means in the middle, developing will (Samuel et al., 2017). In education implementation, Dwikurnaningsih explains that *Ing Madya Mangun Karsa* means that a teacher as an educator should continuously build students' enthusiasm and ideas to be creative to create something (Dwikurnaningsih, 2017). To create innovative and creative person, *Ing Madya Mangun Karsa* should be implemented in teaching so the teacher should be in the middle of the students encouraging their will to be independent people. Students who are enthusiastic and creative are a result of education, which help students, develop that traits. Therefore, the teacher has a role to build the students' will and intention so that they can help themselves (*sarira*), help the nation, and other people in the world (*manungsa*). The expectation is related to *Trihayu* which includes *memayu hayuning sarira, memayu hayuning bangsa*, dan *memayu hayuning manungsa* (Supriyoko, 2017). Febre mentions that education practice, which implements the philosophy, will show an effort to train students to develop themselves by searching useful knowledge for their own self-development. The process of building without specific pressure is highly connected to the concept of freedom. Freedom proposed by Ki Hadjar Dewantara does not mean that there will be no punishment; it refers to the freedom of developing oneself to the positive side. In line with *Ing Ngarsa Sung Tuladha*, both philosophy are related to the nurturing method / *Among* method (Febre, 1952).

Tut Wuri Handayani is derived from *tut wuri* and *handayani*; *tut wuri* means following from behind and *handayani* means encouraging or motivating. Therefore, *Tut Wuri Handayani* means that it is necessary to give encouragement from behind (Samuel et al., 2017). Supriyoko explains that the meaning of *tut wuri handayani* is that education should be done by giving chances to students to develop themselves, and when the students are off the tracks, the teacher should give guidance. For young learners, *handayani* portion should be more dominant, while for adult learners, *tut wuri* portion should be more dominant (Supriyoko, 2017). In addition, Dwikurnaningsih emphasizes that *tut wuri handayani* put higher expectation to the teacher to do their responsibility to give guidance, support, and shows the right tract for the students' life and creativity (Dwikurnaningsih, 2017). To develop intelligence, *tut wuri handayani* is highly bound to balance. Ki Hadjar Dewantara emphasizes that education should balance intelligence with personality (Supriyoko, 2017).

From the interpretation above, Ki Hadjar Dewantara's philosophy is a dynamic educational concept and called *Among* method. In *Among* method, an educator can be at front to give model, in the middle to develop will, and behind to give encouragement. *Among* method includes all educational process as a whole which is related not only to teaching method but also to educational process involving teachers and students as learning subject (Karyawanto & Ms, 2018). *Among* method enables a teacher to do his/her role in accordance with the condition. Harsoyo, astute, and Rahayu reveals that it is not only the teacher's responsibility, the headmaster also can create democratic educational system to encourage school citizens' participation in education (Harsoyo, Astuti, & Rahayu, 2018). With *Among* method, education should not emphasize only on the cognitive aspect, it is also the teacher's responsibility to develop students cognitive, affective, and psychomotor skills (Saptandari et al., 2015).

3.2 Psychological Interpretation

3.2.1 The nation and citizen's life condition

The nation condition colored Ki Hadjar Dewantara's life, which motivated him to struggle in education. His philosophy is also a symbol of his opposition on colonialism, which tended to be obstructive. Ki Hadjar Dewantara stressed the use of the following concepts: *Momong*, *Among*, and *Ngemong*. Facing the fact that Indonesia was colonized and uneducated society, Ki Hadjar Dewantara initiated an educational system which would create physically independent Indonesian citizens, who are free from poverty and stupidity, and morally independent too, which can be seen from their ability to have autonomous thinking, make decision, and democratic mental. For him, teaching and education are useful to free people to be independent citizens. He believed that education in Indonesia could be developed (Anisah, 2015; Samho, 2013; Tauchid et al., 1961). Koesoema mentions that by giving his ideas and thought on education, Ki Hadjar Dewantara fought colonialism in Indonesia (Koesoema, 2017). His spirit to have autonomy and independence in Indonesia becomes the background of the philosophy *ing ngarsa sung tuladha, ing madya mangun karsa, tut wuri handayani*. The aim of the philosophy is to have teaching and education in which the teacher can be at front to give model to the students, in the middle to encourage the students to develop themselves and be independent, and give motivation and encouragement. Wahuno states that in the philosophy, the teacher acts as tutor who stay with the students and give enough portion to develop culture (Mahuno, 2017). Culture and education cannot be separated from Ki Hadjar Dewantara's concept; therefore, Hudaya and Nugraha think that Ki Hadjar Dewantara's philosophy is taken from Javanese local wisdom (Hudaya & Nugroho, 2013). Although Ki Hadjar Dewantara's idea on education is affected by Montessori, his ambition to put the nation on liberty and stand on its own feet, local wisdom has been an integral part of education.

3.2.2 Ki Hadjar Dewantara's Thinking Framework

The effort to develop the nation in terms of mental development, Supriyoko states that child development is influenced by two factors: *Dasar* and *Ajar*. For Ki Hadjar Dewantara, *Dasar* is God-given, but *Ajar* is a result of educational process. To develop a nation, we need to educate the citizens with *Ajar* about *Trisentra* (three centers) of education: family, school, and society (Supriyoko, 2017). With educational concept in the philosophy, it is expected that it will be guidance for students' development (Tauchid et al., 1961). Febre explains that the guidance is expected to bring about people who are independent in feeling, thinking, and acting (Febre, 1952). Therefore, a teacher should be a person who can do these things: *Momong*, *Among*, dan *Ngemong*. Samho states that it can be implemented in an unforceful education system. The concept means that in teaching, nurturing, instead of coercion, becomes the main point (Samho, 2013). It also means that education should have family atmosphere. Education implementing this philosophy yields competences that can be applied in the family. Teachers who apply this will be parents who can give role model for the students, build the students' intention, and motivate the students (Tauchid et al., 1961).

4 IMPLICATION

From the findings and discussion above, it can be clearly seen that if education system applies the philosophy, will create independent generations who are independent in feeling, thinking, and acting so they can compete with other nation. To reach the goal, a teacher should teach like students' parents who give role model, build the students' intention, and motivate the students. Waluyanti, Santoso, Munir and Utami reveal that *ing ngarsa sung tuladha* get 4.39, *ing madya mangun karsa* get 4.61, and *tut wuri handayani* get 4.33. The philosophy is in the top 12 of 21 century character education (Waluyanti et al., 2017). Therefore, by *Among* method, a teacher is implementing character education to his/her students. By giving good example, the teacher can be a good role model, and by building the students' intention and giving encouragement, the teacher can help students be independent. Santoso and Priya shows that by using *Among* method, education will have family atmosphere and full of love, a sense of justice and ability to sacrifice, discipline and full of initiative, and responsibility (Santoso & Priya, 2016). Not only in relation with students, *Among* method will also encourage teachers to improve their competences: personality competence, social competence, supervisor competence, and managerial competence (Harsoyo et al., 2018). The competence improvement is needed in character education as the teacher's character is model and create good atmosphere for learning (Waluyanti et al., 2017). The same thing should also be done by the headmaster, the philosophy *ing ngarsa sung tuladha, ing madya mangun karsa, tut wuri handayani* demands the headmaster to have good character so he can lead well, boost passion, and motivate the teachers and the students as well (Setiyadi, 2013).

5 CONCLUSION

The philosophy proposed by Ki Hadjar Dewantara is taken up from the local wisdom and has great meaning that both a teacher and a leader should be at front to give model, in the middle to build intention, and behind to motivate. It was

born from Ki Hadjar Dewantara's spirit to fight colonialism and be an independent nation, which can stand on its own feet. The turmoil of the Indonesian struggle for independence colored the Ki Hadjar Dewantara's spirit of education. In addition, the influence of Montessori encouraged Ki Hadjar Dewantara to build education without coercion, but with a family atmosphere where the teacher presents as a guide who can do the following things: *Momong*, *Among*, and *Ngemong*. This philosophy cannot be separated from his various other thoughts such as *Trina*, *Trihayu*, the concepts of teachers who are *Momong*, *Among*, and *Ngemong*, and *Trisentraof* education.

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