

Relevance of Education Curriculum with Local Culture: Perspective of Islamic Education Management according To Ki Hajar Dewantara and Paulo Freire

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ABSTRACT

This article discusses the relevance of educational curriculum management to the integration of local culture of the community, with the approach of an Islamic education management perspective inspired by the thoughts of two great educational figures, Ki Hajar Dewantara and Paulo Freire. The purpose of this study is to analyze the educational curriculum in the perspective of Ki Hajar Dewantara and Paulo Freire and its relevance to the management of educational curriculum based on local culture in the context of Islamic education. The method used in this research is descriptive qualitative with the type of literature study, which involves analyzing literature such as books, journals, magazines, and other sources. The results show that Ki Hajar Dewantara's thought implies three main centers of education, namely family, school, and community, which are interrelated in shaping the character and independence of students. He emphasized the importance of understanding, living and applying local culture in the learning process, which is in line with the principles of Islamic education that prioritizes the relevance of education to the social and cultural context. Meanwhile, Paulo Freire, with his concept of critical education, emphasizes the importance of dialogical and empowerment processes, where learners are invited to understand their social and cultural realities as a basis for change.

INTRODUCTION

Education plays a vital role in shaping identity, morality, and skills (Solissa et al., 2024; Camiré et al., 2022). In globalization, maintaining education's relevance is challenging, especially in culturally rich Indonesia. Culture, reflecting community values and traditions, is key to character formation (Zahrika & Andaryani, 2023). Yet, the education system often overlooks local cultural uniqueness. Regional identity,

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shown in customs and traditions, is marginalized in the pursuit of global equality (Sharma, 2024). threatening cultural values and heritage. Cultural heritage is a shared asset needing preservation for future generations (Sarumaha, 2020; Adewumi, 2022) Thus, the education system must recognize and sustain regional cultural elements. Stakeholders should collaborate in planning, organizing, implementing, and evaluating the curriculum to achieve effective outcomes (Ramadhan & Suklani, 2023). The relevance of aligning the curriculum with local culture has been championed by key thinkers, including Ki Hadjar Dewantara and Paulo Freire (Mpuangnan & Ntombela, 2024). Both stress that education should go beyond formal knowledge transmission, focusing on character building and social awareness rooted in local cultural contexts.

Research (Ghita, 2019) states that according to Ki Hadjar Dewantara, education must be rooted in the national culture of local communities. Based on the Tri-Center of Education family, school, and community education occurs not only in the classroom but also through local values. Similarly (Salihin Salihin & Liesna Andriany, 2024), emphasized that the curriculum should reflect local wisdom. The main message is that students' character building should be based on culture, making education a tool to preserve the nation's identity rather than conform to global standards. Paulo Freire (Husni, 2020; Morais et al., 2023), shares a similar view, seeing education as a tool of liberation through dialogue and critical consciousness. He rejects models that treat students as passive recipients (Harris & Roter, 2024) Freire argued that the curriculum must align with the community's social and cultural life. (Quinn, 2011) added that empowering education helps students understand their social realities. A curriculum ignoring local culture can alienate students and hinder critical understanding (Baykut et al., 2022). Combining Dewantara and Freire's thoughts, relevant education should incorporate local cultural values. Such education fosters knowledge, cultural identity, and social responsibility (Syaikhudin, 2015). enabling students to face global challenges while staying rooted in local values.

This research aims to examine the relevance of the education curriculum to local culture in the perspective of Islamic Education Management inspired by the philosophies of Ki Hadjar Dewantara and Paulo Freire. In the era of rapid globalization, education faces the challenge of maintaining its cultural roots while preparing students to face global demands. Indonesia, with its rich cultural diversity, needs an education system that not only imparts knowledge but also fosters character and identity through local cultural values. However, the tendency to prioritize global standards often leads to the marginalization of local traditions and wisdom. By integrating local culture into the curriculum, education can foster a deep sense of belonging, cultural awareness and

social responsibility in students. This research seeks to provide insight into how incorporating local cultural values in Islamic Education Management can enhance the educational experience, ensuring it remains relevant to students' lives and their cultural environment.

Education that embraces local cultural values is essential for developing well-rounded individuals who are both globally competent and deeply rooted in their heritage. When the curriculum reflects the community's traditions and values, students can better understand themselves and their surroundings, fostering stronger connections to their identity. Such an approach promotes character development and encourages active participation in society. Education should not merely be about transferring knowledge but should also cultivate critical thinking, empathy, and a sense of purpose grounded in cultural awareness. By aligning the curriculum with local culture, Islamic Education Management can create learning environments that resonate with students' daily lives, making lessons more meaningful and impactful. This alignment also helps bridge the gap between formal education and real-world experiences, equipping students to face modern challenges while upholding their cultural values. Ultimately, a culturally relevant curriculum fosters both personal growth and a collective sense of identity, crucial for building resilient and responsible future generations.

RESEARCH METHODS

This research uses a qualitative descriptive approach. Qualitative methods are research methods used to explore and understand the meaning and social or humanitarian problems of a number of individuals or groups of people (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). This research uses a type of case study research. A case study is a type of research in which researchers carefully investigate a program, event, activity, process, or group of individuals (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). Data collection techniques in qualitative research include observation, interviews, and document/documentation studies. Data validity checks in this study used triangulation techniques, including four types, namely triangulation with sources, methods, investigators and theories (Wekke, 2017). Data analysis was carried out with steps: 1). Data reduction. Namely the author sorts various existing data into data that is considered important and that supports this research. So that from the data obtained, the author can provide a clear picture and make it easier for researchers to collect further data in order to achieve research objectives (Rosmita et al., 2024).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

Paulo Freire's Conceptual Thought

Silent Culture and Bank-style Education

In a culture of silence, the oppressed tend to take the treatment of the oppressors for granted (Zhussipbek & Nagayeva, 2021). There is a fear among the oppressed of the possibility of raising awareness about their oppression. This is a form of dehumanization, as language, which is supposed to be a tool for understanding and mastering the realities of life, has turned into silence. This silence is not something that is intentional, but rather because they are completely unaware that they are mute and have been silenced. According to Freire, to understand and master the reality of life, including realizing the silence, mastering language is important. Mastering language means having critical awareness in expressing reality (Sesfao, 2020).

Therefore, education that can liberate and empower is education that allows learners to hear their own authentic voices (Salisbury et al., 2023a). Education that is relevant for people living in a culture of silence is education that teaches them to hear their own voices, not outside voices, including the voice of the teacher. It was in this context that Freire struggled, with a call to liberate his oppressed and silenced people (Madhakomala et al., 2022). According to Freire, the main purpose of education is to make learners aware of the reality of their oppression, so that they can act for social change (Cavalcanti & Silva, 2024). This process of raising learners' awareness of oppression is what he calls conscientization (Fadli, 2020).

Bank-style education is a concept criticized by Paulo Freire, which refers to a traditional model of education where knowledge is seen as a commodity that is transferred to students. In this model, the teacher acts as the sole authority, providing information to passive learners who are expected to memorize and regurgitate it without critical engagement or understanding. Students are treated as empty vessels or “banks” where educators store knowledge (Delahunty & Kimbell, 2021). This approach discourages active participation and critical thinking, as students are not encouraged to question or engage with the material (Da Costa, 2024).

The relationship between teachers and students is hierarchical, with teachers holding all the power and knowledge. This dynamic reinforces social inequalities and limits the potential for transformative learning experiences (Madhakomala et al., 2022). In bank-style education, the focus is on rote memorization rather than understanding. Students are not encouraged to think critically about the information presented to

them, which can lead to a superficial understanding of the subject matter. Freire argues that this model of education is oppressive and dehumanizing. It fails to recognize the unique experiences and knowledge that each student brings to the classroom. Instead, he advocates a “problem-generating” model of education, where learners and educators collaborate to explore real-world issues, encouraging critical thinking and dialogue (Alam, 2014).

The bank-style model has been widely criticized for perpetuating inequality in education (Husni, 2020). Freire's ideas have inspired educators to seek a more participatory and democratic approach to teaching, emphasizing the importance of empowering students to take an active role in their learning process. In short, bank-style education is characterized by passive learning, authoritarian structures, and lack of critical engagement, which Freire criticizes as oppressive educational practices that hinder true learning and social transformation.

Contextualized Education: Contextualizing Culture

Paulo Freire's educational theory concept of local culture focuses on the importance of valuing and utilizing community culture in the educational process, especially for the oppressed. Freire believed that effective education should depart from the local and cultural context of learners, education that is relevant to the reality of learners' lives. The learning process should not be detached from their social, cultural and historical context. Local culture is not something that is inferior or should be changed, but is a source of strength that can help learners understand their reality. Using local cultural elements allows education to be more meaningful and participatory, and helps learners connect new knowledge to their own life experiences (Chiri Espejo, 2023).

Education should raise critical awareness of the social injustices that people experience, including cultural oppression. (Valladares, 2021). People often do not realize that they are culturally silenced, so through education, they must learn to appreciate and understand their own local cultural values as a form of resistance to oppressive cultural domination (Maria Bokel Reis & Soares dos Santos, 2021). Freire rejects educational models that impose knowledge and culture from outside in a top-down manner (bank approach). For him, this model is a form of cultural colonization that can alienate learners from their own reality. Therefore, education should value cultural diversity and seek to promote understanding and transformation from within local cultures.

From the above explanation, Paulo Freire's educational theory of local culture emphasizes the importance of education that is contextual, dialogue-based, and rooted in the culture of the community (Nasir et al., 2021). This education must liberate learners by encouraging them to realize the power of their own culture and fight for

social transformation that is relevant to their reality. Education should be rooted in the learners' cultural context. She argues that knowledge is not universal but is shaped by individuals' experiences and realities in their specific cultural settings. This means that educational practices should reflect and respect students' local culture, making learning more relevant and meaningful.

Ki Hajar Dewantara's Concept of Thought

Tri Center of Education

Ki Hajar Dewantara's educational philosophy, known as the Tri-Center of Education, emphasizes the integration of family, school, and community in nurturing students. This approach is foundational in Indonesian education, particularly in the context of the Merdeka Curriculum, which aligns with Dewantara's principles of student-centered learning and character development (Irawati et al., 2022). Dewantara advocated for education to occur in three main environments: family, school and community, ensuring holistic student development (Taufikin, 2021).

His philosophy emphasized the importance of cultural values and traditions, which are essential for national identity and character building. Dewantara's ideas are increasingly relevant in the face of challenges posed by the digital age and the need for strong character education, as highlighted in the context of Education 4.0 (Pratiwi & Artika, 2023). His educational concepts also support the professional growth of educators, promoting creativity and effective teaching methods (Diah Rahayu Isnaini et al., 2024). While Dewantara's philosophy is widely celebrated, some critics suggest that its implementation may face challenges in adapting to the rapidly changing educational landscape, requiring continuous evaluation and adaptation.

Panca Dharma: Cultural Principles

One of the characteristics of the evolution of an individual or society can be seen through the intricate patterns and dynamic qualities of culture that are artistically crafted and simultaneously woven into the fabric of a particular individual or community's existence. Consequently, for a nation, it is imperative to engage in efforts to nurture and advance the cultivation of individuals and collective societies. In this way, it emerges as the fundamental architect of a nation's identity, distinguishing it from others. The cultural essence of a nation serves as a reflection of its growth and achievements (U.N, 2020). According to Ki Hajar, preserving and enhancing a nation's culture does not only imply the act of maintaining and protecting it from external influences (Ghita, 2019).

Ki Hajar Dewantara's Panca Dharma is the philosophy of basic education in Indonesia, emphasizing five core principles: freedom, culture, nature, nationality and

humanity. These principles guide the development of a holistic educational framework that fosters independent and critical thinking among learners (Waghid, 2023). The second principle focuses on the importance of cultural awareness and appreciation in education. It encourages educators to incorporate local culture into the learning process, helping children understand their identity and heritage. This cultural integration is crucial to creating a well-rounded educational experience that respects and appreciates diversity (Masliyana & Muhammad Nasir, 2023).

Table 1. Similarities and Differences between the Identities of Ki Hajar Dewantara and Paulo Freire

Aspect	Ki Hajar Dewantara	Paulo Freire
Full Name	Raden Mas Soewardi Soerjaningrat	Paulo Reglus Neves Freire
Date of Birth	2 May 1889	19 September 1921
Place of Birth	Yogyakarta, Indonesia	Recife, Pernambuco, Brasil
Date of Death	26 April 1959	2 May 1997
Background	Descendant of Javanese nobility	Born to a middle-class family in Brazil
Contributions	Founder of Taman Siswa, a pioneer of national education in Indonesia. His concept of education includes the principles of “Ing Ngarso Sung Tulodo, Ing Madyo Mangun Karso, Tut Wuri Handayani”.	The initiator of critical pedagogy that encourages dialog-based education to empower the oppressed. Author of the famous book <i>Pedagogy of the Oppressed</i> .
Philosophy of Education	Education should liberate human beings, prioritizing character and nationality.	Education as a tool to liberate people from social and political oppression.
Famous Works	a. Thought Taman Siswa education b. Critical writings in <i>De Express</i>	a. <i>Pedagogy of the Oppressed</i> b. <i>Pedagogy of Hope</i>

Aspect	Ki Hajar Dewantara	Paulo Freire
Notable Achievements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Hero Indonesian National Hero b. Great influence in Indonesia's modern education system 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. The concept of dialog-based education is applied in various countries b. Received many international awards
Global Influence	Forming the basis of Indonesia's national education.	Became a reference for transformative education around the world.
Famous Quotes	"Everyone becomes a teacher, every home a school."	"Education does not change the world. Education changes people. People change the world."

Aligning Education with Local Identities

Preserving and Nurturing Local Identities

Culturally-infused education plays an important role in preserving and fostering unique local identities that often face challenges from the forces of globalization. The core of local identity includes the language, customs, traditions and principles that define a community. By focusing education on local culture, these aspects are not only taught, but vividly animated in the tapestry of everyday learning experiences (Zahrika & Andaryani, 2023). One of the important gifts of culture-infused education is its ability to weave significance directly into the fabric of students' lives. When the curriculum reflects the essence of local culture, learners feel that the knowledge they acquire resonates deeply with their personal experiences. They can recognize how their dialect, customs and cultural beliefs are interwoven with the educational journey. As a result, education transforms from a mere academic exercise to a gateway that invites students to explore their cultural heritage.

Moreover, culture-infused education serves as an important custodian of cultural heritage that may be threatened by the forces of globalization. While globalization offers tremendous opportunities for worldwide connectivity, it poses a dangerous threat of overshadowing or erasing local cultures amidst strong global flows of information and influence (Solissa et al., 2024). In this regard, embedding local cultural elements in the curriculum empowers communities to protect their distinctive cultural heritage. It ensures that the treasure of local values, traditions and languages can be cherished and passed on to generations to come.

Culturally rooted education goes beyond mere inclusivity and relevance; it serves as an important instrument in fostering a valued local identity while safeguarding a

distinctive cultural heritage. Important sources, including insights from UNESCO regarding the creation of culturally aware curricula, emphasize the importance of this methodology in protecting our cultural treasures (Riyanto et al., 2024). Culturally-infused methods not only foster a vibrant local identity but also amplify students' enthusiasm. When learners find their own stories in the curriculum, they tend to be inspired to engage in their education, as they feel that learning resonates strongly with their personal experiences.

Ki Hajar Dewantara's curriculum management is firmly rooted in his educational philosophy, which emphasizes learner-centered education and character development. Merdeka Curriculum, inspired by Dewantara's principles, aims to provide flexibility and relevance in education, allowing for a more personalized learning experience. This approach encourages active engagement and contextualized learning, aligned with Dewantara's vision of education as a means to empower students and develop their competencies. Merdeka Curriculum allows education units to tailor learning to student needs, reflecting Dewantara's emphasis on individual potential (Hasibuan et al., 2024). Dewantara's focus on moral and national education is in line with the objectives of Merdeka Curriculum, which seeks to foster integrity and patriotism in students (Endang Trisiana, 2023). The curriculum promotes student creativity and initiative, resonating with Dewantara's motto to guide students through active participation (Irawati et al., 2022). Dewantara's concept of education incorporates religious and ethical values, enhancing students' holistic development within the framework of Merdeka. Despite these strengths, challenges such as uneven teacher understanding and limited resources hinder the effective implementation of Merdeka Curriculum. Addressing these issues is critical to realizing Dewantara's educational ideals in the contemporary environment (Juliangkary et al., 2023).

Encouraging Cultural Diversity

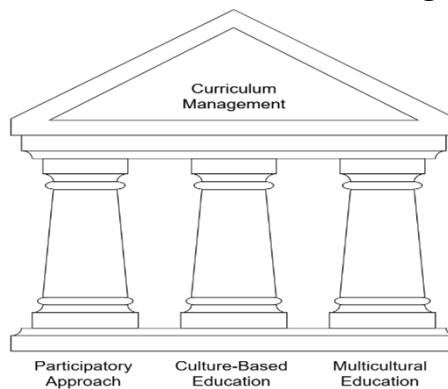
Curriculum management, as articulated by Paulo Freire, emphasizes the importance of a participatory and critical approach to education. Freire's philosophy advocates a curriculum that is not just a set of content to be delivered but a dynamic process that involves all stakeholders in education. This perspective is in line with contemporary curriculum management practices that focus on planning, organizing, implementing and evaluating educational programs to improve quality and relevance (Zuhriyah et al., 2024). A culture-centered curriculum plays an important role in championing the beauty of cultural diversity. When learners learn about their own heritage through culture-infused education, they pave the way to a richer understanding of the various cultures that inhabit our world. This enlightenment fosters a spirit of openness and acceptance of the vibrant tapestry of cultural

differences. In a study of elementary school students, CBL led to improved understanding of material concepts, with post-intervention scores increasing from 59% to 81% (Ali Topan et al., 2024).

Exploring one's own heritage through a culture-centered curriculum can illuminate the principles valued by their community. However, it also broadens the perspective that these principles are just part of a diverse set of values that evolve globally. Students discover a myriad of perspectives, interpretations and ways to honor life (Zahrika & Andaryani, 2023). In the realm of education in Indonesia, for example, students can delve deeper into their local heritage, encompassing Javanese, Sundanese, Balinese or the diverse tribes that inhabit different regions. However, this deep understanding can spark curiosity to explore other cultures in Indonesia and beyond. This paves the way for students to immerse themselves in the rich tapestry of cultural diversity that exists both locally and internationally.

In the field of multicultural education, learners are encouraged to embrace and appreciate the tapestry of cultures, while also appreciating the richness of different viewpoints and life stories. This fosters students' ability to engage with each other harmoniously, amidst a world that is becoming increasingly interconnected (Nur Latifah et al., 2021). A multicultural education approach teaches students about the myriad of histories, values and contributions woven into the fabric of various cultures around the world. Armed with this knowledge, students can appreciate how cultural diversity is a treasure trove that can offer a plethora of unique perspectives and solutions to the challenges facing our world.

Figure 1. Dimensions of Curriculum Management Perspectives of



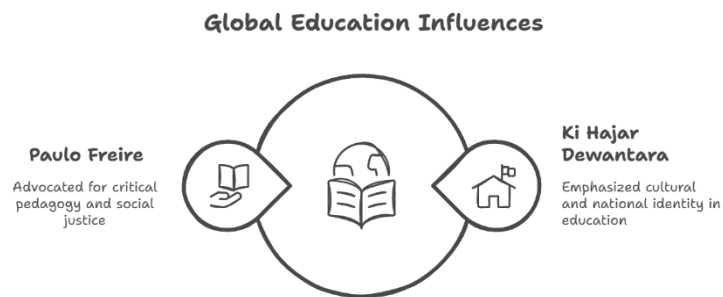
Local Skills Development

Ki Hajar Dewantara's curriculum management emphasizes integrating the philosophical values of education with its principles, fostering an inclusive and progressive learning environment. This approach fosters the development of character and individual potential, in line with the goals of the “Merdeka Belajar” curriculum for

holistic education (Hunaepi et al., 2023). A curriculum approach centered around culture also offers opportunities to weave relevant local skills into the educational framework. In an initiative to foster locally relevant skills in a culture-focused curriculum, the government is expected to emphasize the importance of incorporating skills such as traditional agriculture, local food preparation methods, or artisanal crafts that represent the area (Aiman Faiz, 2015). For example, in an agricultural community, students can explore traditional farming, local food processing methods, or craft skills that define their region. This provides a double benefit: firstly, students develop a deep appreciation for skills that have significance in their cultural setting, and secondly, they acquire practical abilities that can be applied in their daily lives.

The culture-based curriculum approach not only deepens students' understanding of local culture, but also provides real opportunities for them to develop skills that are useful in their daily lives. For example, when students learn traditional farming techniques through a culture-based curriculum, they can apply that knowledge in the management of their crops or family farms. In addition to producing better harvests, this also contributes to the preservation of traditional agricultural practices that are important to the community (Zahrika & Andaryani, 2023). Local skills play an important role in education by increasing community engagement, fostering local knowledge and improving educational outcomes. The integration of local skills into educational frameworks can lead to more relevant and effective learning experiences.

Figure 2. The influence of Global Education



In addition, traditional craft skills acquired through culture-based education can also provide economic opportunities for students. They can engage in the creation of craft products that integrate local cultural elements. These products can be sold in local and wider markets, opening up opportunities for entrepreneurship and contributing to the community economy (Aiman Faiz, 2015). Local literacy skills enable individuals to recognize and utilize local assets, increasing cultural and economic awareness within the community. Educators can support students in understanding

their local environment, fostering a sense of belonging and responsibility (Greany et al., 2024).

Conclusion

This research shows that a culture-based curriculum is important for maintaining local identity and increasing student engagement. When students' culture and experiences are reflected in learning, they feel more connected and motivated. The integration of local skills such as agriculture, cooking and crafts not only enriches learning but also equips students with practical skills relevant to daily life. The findings support Ki Hajar Dewantara's thoughts on culture-based education and Paulo Freire's on critical awareness of social injustice, especially in the face of global cultural dominance that can erode local wisdom.

Scientifically, this research provides a new perspective in the development of culture-based curriculum by emphasizing the importance of strengthening local identity, student empowerment, and contextual learning. It also contributes to enriching teaching methods that are relevant to the needs of society. However, this research is limited to the scope of the case and specific locations. Variables such as gender, age and survey methods have not been accommodated thoroughly, so further research is needed to produce a more comprehensive picture. A broader and more in-depth approach is expected to support education policies that are relevant, adaptive and targeted to all levels of society.

This research has some limitations that need to be corrected, the research approach has not fully explored the dynamics of the relationship between culture-based curriculum and national education policy, especially in the context of evolving globalization. Therefore, further research with a comparative approach between regions and longitudinal studies is needed to produce a more comprehensive and in-depth understanding.

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