

CHARACTER EDUCATION BASED ON RELIGION AND CULTURE AS AN ALTERNATIVE SOLUTION TO DEVELOPING CIVIL SOCIETY

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This study aims to investigate about: innovative ideas of education based on religion and culture implemented by K.H. Ahmad Dahlan and Ki Hadjar Dewantara and dimensions of education based on religion and culture in their educational concepts as a foundation to deal with situations during the era.

The results of the study are as follows. First, K.H. Ahmad Dahlan combining general knowledge and religious teaching. This was intended to provide the students with a balance between intellectual intelligence and spiritual intelligence. Ki Hadjar Dewantara emphasized more on education based on local culture. The Tamansiswa educational institution that he established had the primary philosophy of self-independence and the foundation of nationalism, aiming to materialize education that developed national culture to fight against colonial culture by inculcating independent spirit. Second, K.H. Ahmad Dahlan's education was based on Islamic teachings, namely faith, knowledge, and deeds. In principle, a religion was not only cognitive in nature but had to be put into practice as well. Meanwhile, according to Ki Hadjar Dewantara, education had to take into account of a balance among the growths of a child's characters, intellect, and physical aspects in order to develop perfectly.

Subtheme: 2. Moral education: models, theories, and paradigms

Type of Presentation: Individual paper (30 minutes)

A. INTRODUCTION

Kyai Haji Ahmad Dahlan (hereafter written K.H. Ahmad Dahlan) and Ki Hadjar Dewantara were two educational figures that Indonesia possessed during the Dutch colonial period. Both of them developed concepts of education adjusted to the social, cultural, and religious conditions in Indonesian society. They not only created concepts of education for the indigenous people who were under occupation at that time but also actively took part and were directly involved in the field of education; they struggled to provide education for the indigenous people by establishing Muhammadiyah and Tamansiswa educational organizations. These organizations developed the indigenous people's independent spirit on the basis of socio-cultural strengths on the one hand and the religious strength on the other.

K.H. Ahmad Dahlan viewed that the social conditions which were unfavorable in terms of economic, political, social, and cultural aspects because of the occupation and the religious life which was not based on Al Qur'an and Hadith resulted in fatalistic and static attitudes, namely accepting poor conditions and suffering as things given. To deal with this, awakening new awareness was necessary to make people possess self-reliance to change themselves. For people possessing religious faith, referring to teachings in Al Qur'an and Hadith is believed to be a way to develop self-identity and self-reliance, courage to struggle against vice (oppression), and the will to develop

virtue (independence) (Sodiq A. Kuntoro, 2006:138). This becomes a foundation of Muhammadiyah's struggle in education.

Unlike K.H. Ahmad Dahlan, who absorbed a lot of Islamic modern values to develop human civilization, Ki Hadjar Dewantara was influenced more by new perspectives of education in the West and elaborated his educational theories using the nation's cultural values (especially Javanese culture). From the educational theory perspective, he was influenced by Montessori's theory of education, emphasizing respect for children's independent spirit, freedom in learning, and attention to children's interests and needs (Sodiq A. Kuntoro, 2006:141). Teachers' main duty is not giving knowledge to children but guiding them to learn in accordance with their developmental interests and needs. Violence, punishment, and force are not used to educate children in order that they can develop their independent spirit.

Muhammadiyah education that develops Islamic values and general knowledge manifested in K.H. Ahmad Dahlan's concept of education and education based on the national culture that Ki Hadjar Dewantara developed have goals parallel to those of the national education. In general, Islamic education has a primary mission of humanizing human beings, namely making them capable of developing all their potentials to function maximally in accordance with the rules stated in Al Qur'an and Hadith so that finally they will become whole human beings (Marzuki, 2011:467). Meanwhile, culture-based education that Ki Hadjar Dewantara developed aims to educate children so that they can feel, think, and work independently in the scope of attaining harmony and peace in life togetherness (Abdurrachman Surjomihardjo, 1986:88). The combination of these two principles results in a concept of character education parallel to the goal of the national education, namely making whole Indonesian people who have not only intelligence but also good conduct as well as love and pride of the nation and country.

B. CHARACTER EDUCATION IN K.H. AHMAD DAHLAN'S CONCEPT OF EDUCATION

K.H. Ahmad Dahlan combined scientific knowledge and religion to improve the poor life condition that people experienced during the colonial era. A strategy to face social changes due to modernization, according to K.H. Ahmad Dahlan, can be made by referring to Al Qur'an by eradicating fatalistic attitudes and blind obedience. Such a strategy according to Abdul Munir Mulkhan (1990:9) can be made by awakening the *ijtihad* (thinking) spirit and motivation through the improvement of logical and rational thinking capability and by studying social realities. Therefore, the object of the preaching movement by Muhammadiyah that K.H. Ahmad Dahlan established is

developing innovative spirit and motivation in all social strata, from the laypeople, the poor, the rich, to the intellectual.

The process of character education that K.H. Ahmad Dahlan applied to his students was gradually carried out with certainty. The courage to act or to do good deeds was something more important than merely reading and memorizing as many Al Qur'an verses as possible. Memorizing many Al Qur'an verses without understanding and implementing the contents was not beneficial enough according to him. Therefore, the method that he applied in teaching his students was not only reading and memorizing Al Qur'an verses, but also understanding the meanings and implementing them or doing good deeds in daily life.

The foundation of K.H. Ahmad Dahlan's good conduct education is Islamic teachings consisting of three pillars as mentioned before, namely religious faith, scientific knowledge, and good deeds; these become the basis for all educational attempts that he made. Religious faith (belief) in the heart becomes the primary pillar, followed by scientific knowledge to support the belief that one has. After possessing religious faith and belief, one will be willingly do good deeds in accordance with the religious rules. These are parallel to the character education theory by Lickona (1991:51), who states that character has three interrelated aspects, namely moral knowing, moral feeling, and moral behavior. It begins with knowing all good things, followed by willingness (in the heart) to do all good things, and finally followed by doing all good things. These three aspects, according to Lickona, are constructed of the habits of thoughts, feelings, and actions; to attain them, it is necessary to have knowledge to judge what is right, concern about what is right, and action to do what is right.

C. CHARACTER EDUCATION IN KI HADJAR DEWANTARA'S CONCEPT OF EDUCATION

Educating, according to Ki Hadjar Dewantara, is not only improving the intellectual aspect, but also simultaneously enhancing the moral (inner strength, character), thought (intellect), and physical aspect of a child. In addition, Ki Hadjar Dewantara (1977a:323) also emphasizes the importance of education based on culture, which attempts to enhance good moral as maximally as possible by developing thoughts, feelings, and willingness. Education of the cognitive aspect (thought or intellect) is already clear; up to the present, it becomes the first priority in our educational system. However, the affective aspect (feelings and willingness) is often neglected. A good personality is not given but it must be developed through a long process.

Education of good moral based on the nation's culture is developed and exemplified by teachers or *pamong*. The concept of "*tringa*", namely *ngerti* (knowing), *ngroso* (feeling), and

nglakoni (doing), combined with the instructional method with the *among* (caring) system, becomes an instructional system applied in Tamansiswa, with the slogan *Tutwuri Handayani* (Literally, it means 'From the rear, the teacher motivates the students'). With such a system, Ki Hadjar Dewantara made an alternative to colonial education which was too intellectual in nature by developing education based on the nation's culture, including humanity, independent spirit, respect for parents, politeness, ethics, nationalism, and struggling spirit, in order that education develops students as a whole which enhances their personality and character.

The process of education of good moral by Ki Hadjar Dewantara is carried out in four stages that he took from Islamic principles, namely *syari'at* (law), *hakikat* (essence), *tarikat* (path), and *ma'rifat* (knowledge). The *syari'at* stage is the process of making children under age have good habits, the *hakikat* stage is the time of providing insight into or understanding of all virtue after they are grown up, the *tarikat* stage is a process of making them aware of the obligation to do good deeds, and the *ma'rifat* stage is the highest stage in which the grown-ups are capable of distinguishing between vice and virtue and selecting the better for themselves.

Good moral becomes the main goal of the learning process that Ki Hadjar Dewantara conducted. Educating according to him is not only improving the intellectual aspect as the schooling system by the Dutch colonial government at that time, but also simultaneously improving the good moral (inner strength, character), thought (intellect), and physical aspect of a child.

D. COMBINATION OF K.H. AHMAD DAHLAN'S AND KI HADJAR DEWANTARA'S CONCEPTS OF CHARACTER EDUCATION

These two figures' common interests in education are that they emphasize education of personality and good moral conduct. The cultivation of children's personality and good moral conduct becomes the first priority indispensable in the learning process. When the Dutch colonial government implemented intellectual education unceasingly, these two figures were brave enough to make a decision to implement education with different concepts. Their educational goals not only emphasize the intellectual or cognitive aspect, but also develop children's good characters. Islam, which is full of teachings emphasizing norms regarding the relationship among human beings and that between human beings and God, becomes the foundation of K.H. Ahmad Dahlan's education of good moral conduct. Meanwhile, character sensitiveness cultivated through a variety of art activities and an introduction to the nation's culture becomes the foundation of Ki Hadjar Dewantara's education.

Both K.H. Ahmad Dahlan and Ki Hadjar Dewantara emphasize the importance of the cultivation of good moral conduct that can be maximized in the boarding educational system. K.H.

Ahmad Dahlan's and Ki Hadjar Dewantara's concepts of the boarding system aim to develop children's physical and spiritual aspects. The understanding of religious teachings and their implementation as well as the preparation of prospective leaders become the goals of the Muhammadiyah boarding system. The Tamansiswa teaching institution, based on Ki Hadjar Dewantara's initial concepts, emphasizes more on education in the boarding system as an alternative that he offered in anticipating education which becomes more and more intellectual in nature. Education focusing on only intellectuality makes humanity feeling perish and emphasizes only illusions. Both figures view that the boarding system is an appropriate model for character education.

If their views are combined, they can represent educational perspectives that, besides emphasizing religious norms, highly respect the nation's cultural values in developing students' characters. Up to the present, character education in Indonesia is still in the process of searching after the most appropriate format. If Pancasila becomes the foundation of the implementation, character education has to conform to all principles in Pancasila. The first principle, belief in God, cannot be separated from the components of the implementation of the nation's character education. Religion, which becomes the foundation of K.H. Ahmad Dahlan's character education, is an alternative for the character education implementation in Indonesia, combined with the education of good moral based on the nation's culture that Ki Hadjar Dewantara developed. Moreover, if they are studied in more detail, these two figures' basic ideas of character education are in line with actual theories on character education at present, such as those proposed by Lickona (1991) and Bohlin (2005).

The similarity of K.H. Ahmad Dahlan's and Ki Hadjar Dewantara's concepts of character education is that they emphasize the principle of exemplary models and the importance of awareness through a dialogic process in the inculcation of characters to avoid indoctrination. The teacher, who is a substitute for parents and is simultaneously an elder figure at school, has a responsibility of providing examples first before teaching all good things to the students. Such a condition is parallel to the theory on the character education implementation according to Pearson, (2000:246), who states that the ideal character education program is an attempt collaboratively made by administrators, teachers, counselors, and parents. Administrators, teachers, and counselors share two duties. One is encouraging the parents' involvement and the other is providing models for the students. Modeling plays a special role as the core of a program. First, a good character has to be inculcated in the perspective of "do as I do", not "do as I say". Such a theory is in line with what both K.H. Ahmad Dahlan and Ki Hadjar Dewantara did in the character education implementation.

Besides exemplary models, both K.H. Ahmad Dahlan and Ki Hadjar Dewantara viewed that character education had to reach the levels of awareness and implementation. The attempts to attain awareness are made through a dialogic process. K.H. Ahmad Dahlan held a principle that embracing a

religion means doing good actions; the verses from Al Qur'an are not only learned in terms of their meanings but also applied in terms of their instructions. Before his students applied the verses that they had learned, he did not teach the interpretation of other verses. Similarly, Ki Hadjar Dewantara emphasized that it was important for children to have a habit of behaving well in accordance with our culture, to inculcate the awareness of the love of culture, and to strongly hold and highly respect the nation's culture. Every teacher is obliged to teach characters to the students spontaneously because according to him character education is not necessarily implemented as a separate subject, but it is integrated into all subjects through the *syari'at*, *tarikat*, *ma'rifat* and *hakikat* stages.

E. CONCLUSIONS

With similar backgrounds, K.H. Ahmad Dahlan and Ki Hadjar Dewantara implemented education that not only emphasized the intellectual aspect but also developed the students' integrity and personality. Combining the concept of good moral conduct education that K.H. Ahmad Dahlan developed and character education that Ki Hadjar Dewantara implemented is an alternative to formulating an ideal concept of character education for Indonesian people. Both concepts aim to make Indonesian people possess independent spirit, good moral conduct, and good characters. Character education is implemented through an educational process which is based on the family, dialogic, and holistic. The concepts of exemplary models and dialogic processes to find out the roots of the problems and their solutions are applied as an attempt to attain awareness.

Character education in good moral conduct education according to K.H. Ahmad Dahlan and moral education in Ki Hadjar Dewantara's perspective has a similar conceptual foundation. Both can be analogous to a twin movement, struggling to develop independent spirit for indigenous people although they have different foundations, namely religion and culture. Their concerns over the conditions of the people under occupation made them think of educational concepts with the same principle in essence. Both emphasized education to build students' characters. Simplicity, discipline, independent spirit, and good moral conduct become the main goals of both educational concepts. The learning process according to these two figures has a similarity in that both emphasize the principle of exemplary models and an awareness process through dialogs. The teachers play an important role in building the students' characters at school; they are obliged to provide good examples for the students in all aspects of knowledge taught to them, in addition to giving inspiration to them through dialogic learning processes.

Both K. H. Ahmad Dahlan and Ki Hadjar Dewantara struggled for independence by defending the religion and the nation's culture. These two are highly respected by our nation. The

local cultural values constituting the national culture become important part in the development of character education to face global challenges which are getting more and more powerful at present. The field of education has to compete with materialistic values and scientific values are separated from the religion and culture. Materialistic values can destroy the religion and the nation's culture so that it is necessary to build characters based on religious and cultural values besides humanity values.

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