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# Conceptualization of the Three Centers of Education and Its Relevance to the National Education Political System

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**A B S T R A C T**

The concept of three centers of education, introduced by Ki Hajar Dewantara, emphasizes that education is not only the responsibility of schools, but also involves families and communities as the main centers in shaping individual character and competence. These three elements have complementary roles and cannot be separated in a holistic education process. In the context of the Indonesian National Education System, the implementation of this concept has significant implications for the formulation of policies, curriculum development strategies, and pedagogical approaches that are oriented towards the needs of students as a whole. The synergy of these three centers is the key to the success of education that is able to form Indonesian people who are intellectually, emotionally, and spiritually intelligent. The national education system demands the integration of cross-sector policies, increased community participation, and strengthening the capacity of parents as primary educators. A collaborative approach is also needed between schools and the surrounding environment to create an inclusive and sustainable education ecosystem.

## 1. Introduction

The three centers of education are all humans will always be in the development of three educational institutions, namely schools, families and communities. These three educational institutions are integrated with each other in developing society. With the existence of these three centers of education, it explains that the education process lasts a lifetime, never stops (Bariyah, 2019). Education that has morality and character, as well as the development of reasoning and skills that support the future of the nation's children, is built by these three environmental elements simultaneously (Nugroho et al., 2024).

Character or morals are a combination of will, feelings, and thoughts that become a strong unity (Salihin & Andriany, 2024). Parents carry out their obligations to

educate children in the family, because of the limitations of parents in educating children at home, the education process takes place at school, then the community becomes a facilitator for students to actualize their abilities and skills in their social life (Rosyadi et al., 2022).

The family as the first center of education plays a role in forming basic values, character, and ethics. The overall order of human life is used as a basis for understanding the order of educational life. Simply put, we can see in the reality of life that humans are born in a family environment, the family as the smallest group of society is greatly influenced by the behavior of society. The reciprocal relationship between family and society as a means of the educational process.

Educational institutions are the main spearhead in strengthening and developing personal character for students in the world of education (Saprianingsih et al., 2024). Schools as centers of formal education are responsible for providing knowledge, skills, and cognitive development systematically. The Indonesian government has determined the importance of character education by issuing various regulations and policies governing the implementation of character education in the school environment (Ma'sumah et al., 2024).

Society is an environment that has a major influence on children's development. Society consists of a group of people who live in the same area and are connected through close social relationships (Saeful & Ramdhayanti, 2020). The role of society greatly influences education, including its goals and practices. The values applied in education should be in line with the values that develop in society (Suharyani et al., 2024). Society provides a contextual space that supports the application of values and skills that have been acquired. The synergy of these three centers is the key to the success of education that is able to form Indonesian people who are intellectually, emotionally, and spiritually intelligent. Therefore, there needs to be an institution that regulates education intensively.

Independent learning in Ki Hajar Dewantara's view is philosophically reflected in the concept of three centers of education that encourage students to achieve change and be able to adapt to their environment where the spirit of freedom is the basic essence of education (Fauzi et al., 2024). The independent learning policy initiated by the government contains four main policies, namely national standard school exams, national exams, learning implementation plans, and regulations for accepting new zoning students (Mulyadi et al., 2022).

The independent learning policy set by the government reflects the direction of the educational political system that is oriented towards decentralization and empowerment of the three centers of education, namely family, school, and community, in order to create a more independent, inclusive, and participatory learning ecosystem according to the needs and potential of students which aims to improve the quality of national education that is relevant to the challenges of the times and is able to produce a generation that is able to face an increasingly developing era.

## 2. Methodology

This research approach uses qualitative methods using literature review methodology. Literature study strategy is a systematic approach used by researchers to collect data and information related to discourse, including data collection, analysis, management, and interpretation (Adlini et al., 2022).

Data collection methods include library research, where researchers collect information by reviewing various sources, including scientific publications, library books, and other related materials related to the relevant research theme, namely the comparison of education in Indonesia and Brunei Darussalam. These data and information sources include various types of literature such as books, articles, magazines, mendeley websites, google scholar, and publish or perish that are relevant to the research theme. In processing data from literature sources, researchers carry out several stages including selecting topics, collecting information and data sources from books and articles, reading literature for new ideas, making summaries, and analyzing data for conclusions. Finally, the research results are compiled according to procedures, checked with the latest literature, and analyzed for relevance to provide an in-depth understanding of the urgency of understanding characteristics in learning.

## 3. Result and Discussion

### *Three Education Center Concept*

There are three educational centers that have a major role called the three centers of education. The existence of the values of the three centers of education is a driving factor that influences the behavior of each individual. The concept of the three centers of education was put forward by Ki Hadjar Dewantara (Febrianti & Ismail, 2025).

First, education in the family environment. The family is the first and most important center of education, the family environment is the first and main foundation for instilling moral values, forming habits and normalizing behavior that will later be applied by individuals when they are involved in national and state life (Amaliyah, 2021). Since the emergence of human morals until now, family life has always influenced the growth of morals or character of each human being. In the family environment, parents can instill all the seeds of spirituality that are in accordance with their spirituality. This is the most important right of parents and should not be prevented by others, so parents act as teachers, as educators and as social examples for their children.

Second, education in the school environment. Schools are special educational centers that are obliged to strive for intellectual intelligence along with the provision of knowledge. School education is a continuation of the family environment that individuals previously encountered in carrying out their life

processes. Education received at school is a manifestation of parents' efforts towards their children with the aim of supporting their progress in life.

Third, education in the community environment. The perfection of education in society will be realized if the people concerned, namely parents, community leaders, teachers with children, are united in understanding in the fields of religion, politics and nationality so that the three-center education system will be achieved (Suparlan, 2015). The community environment has a role in providing input to the school so that good communication is established and the achievement of goals is in one direction so that child development is directed to be able to behave and behave well in the existing environment (Putri et al., 2024). The community environment is considered important because this environment will be a place for students in the future to fully actualize themselves based on the potential they have previously developed. The abilities possessed by each individual can be realized through their role in overcoming problems that will be encountered in the community environment.

***Principles of the Three Centers of Education***

The principles in the three educational centers that are applied are the implementation of the among system, each tutor as a leader in the educational process is required to act Ing Ngarso Sung Tulodo, Ing Madya Mangun Karsa and Tut Wuri Handayani (Tarigan et al., 2022). It can be interpreted that the role of teachers as the root and spearhead in running the wheels of national education.

First, ing ngarso sung tulodo (in front giving an example). That as a teacher must be able to provide a good example and various things for example speech, attitude, politeness, behavior and others (Ruth et al., 2023). So it can be concluded that the behavior of students can be influenced by their teachers, therefore as teachers must always introspect whether they have really given a good example to their students or only conveyed knowledge without teaching good morals.

Second, ing madya mangun karsa (in the middle of raising the will). Being an educator must know that teachers must be able to be role models and also friends for students who can embrace, motivate and encourage their students (Wardani et al., 2024). This aims to arouse and shape the intention of students to always make their teachers role models, because no matter how small things come out of their role models, they will become a reference for their students.

Third, tut wuri handayani (giving encouragement behind). An educator must always provide positive motivation for all of his students. That humans are greatly influenced by motivation. Therefore, educators are expected to be able to arouse students' motivation in order to realize their desires. So that the task of educators is to help students develop, discover and seek the abilities they have (Fawaid, 2021).

The education system used by Ki Hajar Dewantara is known as the among system, a system derived from the Javanese among language, namely mong or momong, which means caring for children. Teachers or lecturers are called pamong whose

job is to educate and teach children all the time with affection (Nuri, 2016). This among system means that education is not a form of forcing children to learn but also not allowing children to develop without direction (Noventari, 2020). The goal of the among system is to create students who are faithful, pious, intelligent, free in body and soul, have noble character and have skills.

***Relevance of the Three Centers of Education in the National Education System***

Efforts in the field of education in building character and creating the soul of a young generation with integrity, nationalism and an attitude of defending the country have actually been applied in the current independent curriculum. However, this plan cannot run optimally if it is not supported by the learning environment. The role of the family, school and community environments which are understood as the three centers of education have a very meaningful impact on efforts to strengthen character education (Ghifari & Rahmat, 2024). The process of strengthening character education is actually an obligation and responsibility for every education actor. Therefore, collaboration between the three centers of education needs to be maximized to unite perceptions and future goals, especially in efforts to strengthen character education for the younger generation.

The synergy of the three education centers in strengthening education is realized by establishing good coordination. According to (Fanny, 2020) the collaboration of the three education centers in supporting the implementation of character education programs in Indonesia is realized in the following three models. First, the one-way model is realized by providing a guidebook to parents of children, conducting training to provide direction to parents to build habits in creating morals in the family environment, presenting rules to be obeyed together by parents and students and providing a suggestion box or service to facilitate communication with each other. Second, the two-way model is realized in terms of providing a liaison book to parents of children, providing a consultation schedule that connects parents and schools to interact with each other and provide information related to problems faced in the child's development process and striving for the implementation of activities that involve the role of students and parents so that they can make meaningful contributions. Third, the all-way model is realized in the form of reciprocity between all components of the educational environment as a whole. The success of student character development is a shared responsibility that needs to be maximized by both the family, school and the wider community.

The family environment is the main foundation in the formation of children's character. Therefore, the family is considered the most crucial environment in carrying out the socialization of character education. The educational environment needs to see this opportunity by inviting parents of students to be able to collaborate in trying to implement character education comprehensively. Policies that encourage family involvement in children's education are very important. For example, parent education programs or policies that educate parents about their role in supporting their children's education outside of school. Educational policies that support equalizing the quality of education throughout Indonesia will create a more inclusive education system. Fair and equitable education, by facilitating remote or

underdeveloped areas, will ensure that every individual has the same opportunity to learn and develop.

Schools as a place for children to develop after receiving education from their parents also have the same responsibility. The school environment needs to strive so that students not only gain general knowledge but also learn and understand leadership values. Leadership and independent learning behavior are very relevant to the current independent curriculum achievement indicators. The curriculum strives for students to be directed to have a leadership spirit so that they will be able to become professional educators in the future. Good leadership will direct students to improve their collaboration and communication skills. The role of the community is often used as a reference to provide input to schools in designing educational curricula to suit the needs of the community. Collaboration between schools and the community can create a conducive environment if maximized properly solely to develop the character of the nation's children (Romadhoni & Pramadani, 2022). Policies that strengthen collaboration between schools and the community, such as internship programs, skills training, or community-based education, will create an education system that is more connected to the real needs of the community. That way, the education provided in schools will be more relevant and useful in everyday life.

Through collaboration between the three centers of education, it is hoped that it will be able to strengthen national education as a superior generation for the future. The synergy that is established between the three centers of education is attempted to be implemented optimally so that educational goals can be achieved.

The relationship between educational politics and the Three Centers of Education towards the National Education System is very strategic and integral. The national education system in Indonesia, which is stated in the National Education System Law (Law No. 20 of 2003), requires the involvement of various parties, including the government, families, schools, and the community. The educational policy implemented by the state will directly affect how the national education system is run through regulations that are policy, budget, and supervision.

The idea of independent learning promoted by the Minister of Education and Culture is in line with Ki Hadjar Dewantara's thoughts on ideal education in Indonesia. The essence of independent learning is to provide freedom of thought to students and teachers, which aims to form a free character and soul. With this freedom, students and teachers are encouraged to explore knowledge from their surroundings, not solely relying on predetermined learning materials.

If implemented in the Indonesian education system, the concept of independent learning has the potential to shape students with character, because they are accustomed to learning and developing knowledge based on the conditions of the surrounding environment. This approach encourages the growth of concern for the environment through direct learning experiences in the field, which ultimately builds self-confidence, skills, and adaptability in society. These values are important to cultivate, because to become an individual who is useful to the

environment, a caring attitude, practical skills, and the ability to adapt in various situations are needed.

The Minister of Education and Culture has decided on four new policies within the framework of independent learning. First, the National Standard School Examination is abolished and replaced with an assessment organized by each school, giving teachers the freedom to assess students' abilities. Second, the National Examination is shifted to a minimum competency assessment and character survey, which includes aspects of literacy, numeracy, and student character. Third, the Learning Implementation Plan is simplified so that teachers can focus more on the needs of students. Fourth, the zoning system in New Student Admissions is expanded to increase equal access to education in various regions (Ministry of Education and Culture, 2019).

The policy is in line with the ideals of Ki Hadjar Dewantara, who emphasized the importance of balance between cipta (mind), rasa (feeling), and karsa (will) in the education process. The idea of independent learning initiated by the Minister of Education and Culture is closely related to efforts to develop character education. So far, the education system tends to focus on mastering knowledge, while aspects of character and skills are often neglected.

## 4. Conclusion

The three-center education system used by Ki Hajar Dewantara is known as the among system, a system derived from the Javanese among language, namely mong or momong, which means caring for children. Teachers or lecturers are called pamong who are tasked with educating and teaching children all the time with affection.

Through collaboration between fellow tri-center education, it is hoped that it will be able to strengthen national education as a superior generation for the future. The synergy that is established between the three tri-center education centers is attempted to be implemented optimally so that educational goals can be achieved. Therefore, it requires the involvement of various parties, including the government, family, school, and community. The education policy implemented by the state will directly affect how the national education system is run through regulations that are policy, budget, and supervision.

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