

Revitalizing Character Education In The Digital Age Based On The Principle Of "Ing Ngarsa Sung Tuladha" By Ki Hajar Dewantara

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Abstract: This study examines the revitalization of character education in Indonesia by recontextualizing Ki Hajar Dewantara's principle "*Ing Ngarsa Sung Tuladha*" (to lead by example) within the dynamics of the digital age. Utilizing a qualitative literature review, the research identifies three core challenges hindering effective moral education: the erosion of professional teacher identity due to administrative overload, increasing ethical breaches in digital interactions, and fragmented policy implementation that fails to support value-based learning. The study finds that restoring teachers' moral leadership is essential for embedding ethical behavior in educational settings, both offline and online. To address these issues, an integrative character education framework is proposed, combining the *Among* pedagogical approach, the *Tripusat Pendidikan* system (family, school, and community synergy), and the 4N model (*Niteni, Nirokke, Nambahi, Nularke*) for value internalization. This model fosters the embodiment of ethical values through consistent teacher role-modeling, community involvement, and culturally grounded pedagogy. The study concludes that character education in the digital era demands a systemic transformation, restoring the teacher's role as a moral exemplar, aligning educational practices with local wisdom, and reinforcing ethical technology to cultivate morally resilient students equipped to navigate contemporary challenges.

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INTRODUCTION

Ing Ngarsa Sung Tuladha is the noble motto of Ki Hajar Dewantara, which now feels increasingly foreign amid rampant cases of moral violations in educational institutions. Education, in the view of Ki Hajar Dewantara (1962), is an effort to make a person have ethics, broad insight, and responsiveness to culture to preserve and advance culture and achieve happiness as human nature (Putri & Akhwani, 2023). The digital era has amplified ethical challenges in educational environments, particularly regarding the misuse of technology by educators. Studies indicate that the instant culture and individualism propagated through social media often marginalize traditional character values like discipline and respect (Hidayat & Subando, 2024). This shift has led to concerning instances where educators fail to uphold their role as moral exemplars. For example, a 2023 incident at SMA Negeri 1 Cililin involved a teacher allegedly assigning students to complete anatomically explicit tasks, which were later documented via digital platforms (Whisnu, 2025).

Such cases reflect a systemic failure to integrate Ki Hajar Dewantara's principle of '*Ing Ngarsa Sung Tuladha*', where teachers must lead by example into digital interactions. Further analysis suggests that power imbalances in teacher-student dynamics, compounded by patriarchal norms, often deter victims from reporting ethical violations (Heriyanti et al., 2023). These phenomena underscore the urgency of recontextualizing character education to address both physical and digital classroom spaces. Heriyanti et al., (2023) highlight that child victims of abuse often hesitate to report violations due to fears of being perceived as disrespectful toward authority figures or facing social stigma, which can exacerbate psychological harm and perpetuate cycles of misconduct. This reluctance is further compounded by

cultural norms that discourage questioning teachers, even in cases of ethical breaches. This phenomenon reflects the patriarchal culture that is still thick in the education system, where teachers are positioned as figures who should not be criticized, even when committing ethical violations. Based on the principles of the implementation of National Education, according to Law No. 20 of 2003, education is held democratically and fairly and non-discriminatory by upholding human rights, religious values, cultural values, and the plurality of the nation (UU Sisdiknas, 2003). Ki Hajar Dewantara rejects the authoritarian concept of education and emphasizes that education is the right of all children to learn to be spiritually and physically healthy for the perfection of their lives in the future (Astriani, 2018).

Data from the Indonesian Child Protection Commission (KPAI) in 2024 recorded 265 cases of sexual violence (KPAI, 2025). This phenomenon not only depicts the system's failure in protecting children, but also erodes the philosophical meaning of "Ing Ngarsa Sung Tuladha" which is the spirit of Ki Hajar Dewantara's education. Teachers should be role models in ethical aspects, instead of being involved in various cases of obscenity, harassment, and acts of violence against students. An educator should be able to provide examples of good behavior to their students with the educational background that has been taken and an understanding of the professional code of ethics (Siburian et al., 2024). Ki Hajar Dewantara (1889–1959) emphasized that teachers are called *pamong* in charge of nurturing with full attention at all times. The task of the teacher is to pay attention to the nature of the students, namely the interests, talents, and abilities of the students, so that the students can develop their potential to grow optimally according to their nature (Tarigan & Rahmadi, 2024).

However, in the current educational landscape, there is a paradigm shift that mistakenly reduces education to mere knowledge transfer, rather than value formation (Wahid & Hamami, 2021). This limited view risks producing a generation devoid of moral depth and cultural rootedness. The foundational values of Ki Hajar Dewantara, reflected in the Education Trilogy *Ing Ngarsa Sung Tuladha*, *Ing Madya Mangun Karsa*, and *Tut Wuri Handayani* remain universally relevant, especially in the face of today's moral and digital crises (Mujahid et al., 2022). Teachers must now embody these values not only in classrooms but also in digital spaces, where they serve as moral filters (Chasbiyah et al., 2024). This concept is an integral part of the educational philosophy carried out by Ki Hadjar Dewantara. The philosophy of education emphasizes the role of teachers as role models, learning partners, and student supporters in the educational process. Teachers are expected to be able to set a good example, be in the midst of students to build enthusiasm, and give wise direction (Ruth et al., 2023).

At its center is the Education Trilogy: teachers lead by example (*Ing Ngarso Sung Tuladha*), act as active, responsive partners in learning (*Ing Madya Mangun Karsa*), and support students from behind (*Tut Wuri Handayani*) (Ruth et al., 2023). This teacher-led model is combined with the *Ngemong*, *Momong*, *Among* approach, which emphasizes a caring, student-centered pedagogy (Muzakki, 2020). Together, they set the tone for guidance and nurture. The 4N values (*Niteni*, *Nirokke*, *Nambahi*, *Nularke*) form a learning scaffold: students attentively observe values (*Niteni*), imitate them (*Nirokke*), enrich them with understanding (*Nambahi*), and finally share or teach others (*Nularke*) (Dewanto et al., 2023). These elements operate within Dewantara's *Tri Pusat Pendidikan* framework: the family, school, and community environments work in concert to reinforce consistent values (Amin et al., 2024). Each element feeds into the next teachers model and nurture (*Trilogy + Among*), students internalize character via 4N, and supportive home, school, and community networks (*Tri Pusat*) amplify and sustain the cycle.

Each component reinforces the others to address contemporary crises in values and ethics. For example, Indonesia today faces a "crisis of moral values" rising corruption, violence, bullying, and similar problems exacerbated by disruptive digital media (Dewanto et al., 2023). In response, Dewantara's cycle underscores role-modeling and holistic character-building at every level. Teachers and parents are reminded to "be role models" (*ing ngarso sung tulodho*), while the *Among*-system approach ensures children are raised with affection and respect (Ritonga, 2022). The 4N process turns abstract values into lived habits, and the *Tri Pusat* linkage aligns family, school, and society around the same value. Together, this cyclical model revitalizes teacher exemplars and embeds digital - age character education: each sphere (classroom, home, community) mutually reinforces ethical behavior and digital literacy, helping young people navigate moral challenges in the modern era.

Recent scholarship has begun to apply Dewantara's educational philosophy to modern challenges, but key issues remain unexamined. For example, Purbonuswanto et al., (2024) develop a digital leadership model grounded in Dewantara's trilogy and find that Ing Ngarsa Sung Tuladha is "highly suitable" for guiding school principals in the digital era. However, their analysis is confined to principles and does not address moral deviations or ethical failures among teachers. Sutisna et al., (2019) underscore the importance of teacher role modeling in character education, noting that "every performance in front of students will be imitated" and that teachers must be "of noble character". However, this discussion is limited to conventional classroom settings and overlooks how digital era pressures can erode teacher moral authority or call for a contemporary reinterpretation of Dewantara's maxims. The novelty of this research lies in its explicit focus on redefining the role of teachers as moral exemplars within the digital learning environment by reinterpreting Ki Hajar Dewantara's principle of Ing Ngarsa Sung Tuladha. While prior studies have emphasized character education and digital leadership from an administrative standpoint, they often overlook the growing ethical misconduct among teachers and the erosion of their exemplary position in the eyes of students. This study fills that gap by critically analyzing how digital behavior compromises traditional values and proposes a revitalization of teacher character education through the integration of Dewantara's 4N framework—Niteni, Nirokke, Nambahi, and Nularke. This research offers a fresh, contextually grounded perspective on character formation and moral restoration in Indonesian education by combining classical philosophical values with a response to contemporary ethical crises.

Based on the above background, This study explores three key issues: (1) how to adapt Ki Hajar Dewantara's "Ing Ngarsa Sung Tuladha" principle into contemporary Indonesian education; (2) systemic and digital factors driving the decline of teacher role models and ethical standards; and (3) strategies to revitalize character education for students' ethical, intellectual, and cultural growth. The formulation of this problem is expected to be a foothold in comprehensively examining the urgency of revitalizing character education in the challenges of the digital era and the moral crisis that has hit the Indonesian education world. This research provides theoretical and practical benefits by enriching philosophical treasures through an in-depth analysis of the "Ing Ngarsa Sung Tuladha" principle as the foundation of character education revitalization and identifying structural factors that contribute to moral crises. Practically, the research results are recommendations for the implementation of holistic character education based on the Tri Dharma of Education, which is expected to form a school ecosystem conducive to forming student personalities that are moral, critical, and responsive to cultural values. This study uses a qualitative approach with a literature study method. The analysis results are based on an in-depth study of various literature sources relevant to the theme of character education and Ki Hajar Dewantara's thoughts.

METHOD

This study uses a qualitative approach using a literature review method. This approach was selected to enable an in-depth exploration of Ki Hajar Dewantara's character education philosophy, particularly the principle of "Ing Ngarsa Sung Tuladha", and its relevance in addressing the ongoing moral crisis in Indonesian education. The literature reviewed in this study was selected based on inclusion criteria that prioritized peer-reviewed journals, books, and reputable online sources published between 2015 and 2025, focusing on themes such as Ki Hajar Dewantara's Trilogy Concept, The Concept of Character Education, Implementation of Ing Ngarsa Sung Tuladha, Model Application in Character Building, Challenges of the Digital Era and Cultural Transformation. Exclusion criteria included unpublished theses and sources not directly related to the Indonesian educational context. The analysis involved thematic categorization, critical comparison of interpretations, and triangulation with current empirical data on moral issues in schools. The validity of findings was strengthened by comparing multiple sources to identify consistent theoretical patterns and referencing national educational regulations to ensure contextual accuracy. This study identifies the factors that cause weak teacher role models and increasing ethical violations in the educational environment, both in direct interaction and in the digital space. In addition, this study also formulates strategies and recommendations for the

implementation of character education based on Ki Hajar Dewantara values in shaping the personality of moral, intelligent, and cultured students.

Table 1. Criteria Inclusion and Exclusion

Criteria	Inclusion	Exclusion
Publication Year	Publish between (2015-2025)	Publish before 2015
Type of Publication	Peer-reviewed journals, books, and reputable online sources published	Unpublished theses and Sources not directly related to the Indonesian educational context
Topic Relevance	Ki Hajar Dewantara's Trilogy Concept, The Concept of Character Education, Implementation of Ing Ngarsa Sung Tuladha, Model Application in Character Building, Challenges of the Digital Era, and Cultural Transformation	Does not comprehensively cover the combined topics or focus only on partial aspects.

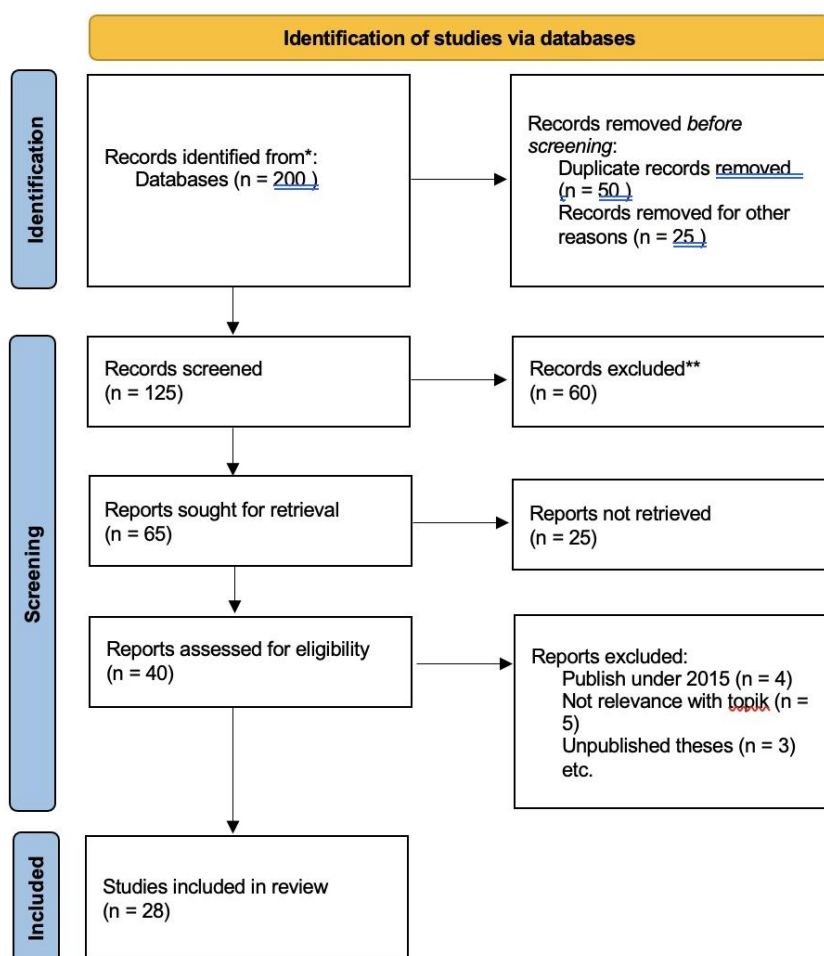


Figure 2. PRISMA Flowchart

The process of identifying and selecting studies in this review followed a systematic flow based on the PRISMA (Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses) guidelines. A total of 200 articles were identified through electronic database searches. Of these, 75 articles were removed prior to screening, consisting of 50 duplicate records and 25 records excluded for other reasons. Subsequently, 125 articles were screened based on their titles and abstracts. A total of 60 articles were

excluded for not meeting the initial criteria. From the remaining 65 reports selected for further review, 25 could not be retrieved, resulting in 40 reports that were fully assessed for eligibility. During the eligibility assessment stage, 12 reports were excluded from further analysis for several reasons, such as being published before 2015 (n = 4), not relevant to the research topic (n = 5), being unpublished theses (n = 3), and other reasons. As a result, 28 studies met the inclusion criteria and were included in the final review. The following Figure 1 presents the PRISMA flow diagram.

The researcher uses the literature study method because this method allows the researcher to conduct a comprehensive study of various thoughts, theories, and practices of character education that have been developed. Therefore, this method is relevant to explore the philosophical meaning and implementation of the principle of "Ing Ngarso Sung Tuladha" in depth and provide solutions based on scientific studies for the improvement of the character education system in Indonesia. The literature study method also supports the research objectives, namely providing philosophical analysis, identifying the factors that cause weak teacher examples, and formulating strategies for implementing contextual character education in the modern era.

RESULT

Based on a systematic content analysis of 28 recent literature sources (2017–2025), this study identifies three critical themes in the implementation of Ki Hajar Dewantara's "Ing Ngarso Sung Tuladha" philosophy. The main findings, presented in Table 1, reveal consistent patterns across three key areas: (1) the concept of character education and its relevance to the Indonesian education system, (2) the inhibiting factors in applying the "Ing Ngarso Sung Tuladha" principle, and (3) strategies and implementation of character education based on Ki Hajar Dewantara's values. These patterns reflect the urgency of recontextualizing the philosophy of teacher role modeling in the era of digital disruption. The following table presents the results of the literature review:

Table 2. Findings and Insights from the Literature Review

No.	Category of Findings	Key Quotations	Source
1.	The Concept of Character Education "Ing Ngarso Sung Tuladha" and Its Relevance to the Indonesian Education Context	The Concept of Patrap Guru, The Three Mong Principles, The Formation of Virtuous Character, The Implementation of the Role-Playing Method, Teachers' Socio-Emotional Competence	(Thaariq & Karima, 2023), (Fuadi et al., 2024), (Nita et al., 2023), (Cramer, 2018), (Reddig & VanLone, 2024), (Narpila et al., 2025)
2.	Factors Causing Inhibition of the Application of the Principle of "Ing Ngarso Sung Tuladha" in the Context of Indonesian Education	Degradation of Educational Philosophy Understanding, Challenges of the Digital Era and Cultural Transformation, Competency Gaps in Teachers' Leadership Values in the Modern Era, A Distorted Educational System, Inconsistent Educational Policies, Lack of Structural and Cultural Support Professional, Identity Crisis Among Teachers	(Wulandari et al., 2025), Rusli et al., (2024), Kusmawati, (2021), Wijayanti (2019), Masitoh dan Cahyani (2020), Ruth et al., (2023), Sari et al. (2023)

3.	Strategy Implementation Character-Based Based On Ki Hajar Dewantara Values	And Of Education Hajar	Ki Hajar Dewantara's Scaffolding Concept, 4N Model Application in Character Building, Ki Hajar Dewantara's Trilogy Concept	(Robiasih et al., 2021), (Wiryopranoto et al., 2017), (Boentarsono et al., 2017), (Masitoh & Cahyani, 2020), (Dewantara, 2013),
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Column 1 identifies the concept of character education as an integral part of Ki Hajar Dewantara's Educational Trilogy Concept, which places the teacher's role as a role model at the front (Ing Ngarsa Sung Tuladha), a motivator in the middle (Ing Madya Mangun Karsa), and an enabler at the back (Tut Wuri Handayani). Its implementation requires a deep understanding of the Patrap Guru (Teacher's Attitude) concept, along with the application of the Three Mong Principles (Momong, Among, and Ngemong) as ethical foundations for actions, speech, and thought.

Column 2 identifies and categorizes the inhibiting factors in implementing the leadership principle of Ing Ngarsa Sung Tuladha within educational settings. The findings reveal a significant degradation in the understanding of the educational philosophy underlying this principle and complex challenges due to the dynamics of the digital era and rapid cultural shifts. Furthermore, teachers have a noticeable competency gap in internalizing and applying leadership values aligned with modern demands. A distorted education system, inconsistent education policies, and a lack of structural and cultural support further exacerbate the difficulties in implementation. In addition, a professional identity crisis among teachers has emerged as a critical factor hindering the realization of their role as front-line role models for students.

Column 3 identifies various strategies and implementations of character-based education, referring to the values of Ki Hajar Dewantara. The findings indicate several key strategies that can be adopted to develop character education rooted in his philosophy. These strategies include the Scaffolding Concept, the 4N Model Application in Character Building, and the Educational Trilogy Concept of Ki Hajar Dewantara. Each of these strategies offers a distinctive approach to guiding, mentoring, and shaping students' character in accordance with the educational principles established by Ki Hajar Dewantara.

DISCUSSION

The Concept of Character Education "Ing Ngarsa Sung Tuladha" according to Ki Hajar Dewantara and Its Relevance to the Indonesian Education Context

One of Ki Hadjar Dewantara's greatest legacies is the concept of his trilogy in education, namely Ing Ngarsa Sung Tuladha (in front of giving examples), Ing Madya Mangun Karsa (in the middle of building enthusiasm), and Tut Wuri Handayani (in the back of encouraging). This philosophy reflects a holistic approach to education, with teachers who can be role models, inspirers, and motivators for their students (Mendikdasmen, 2024). The motto "Ing Ngarsa Sung Tuladha" is in line with the Patrap Guru concept initiated by Ki Hajar Dewantara in 1952. Teacher behavior is a teacher's behavior that becomes an example for students and society, as a term that must be imitated and developed into a character (Thaariq & Karima, 2023). Teachers have a vital role as spiritual and moral guides in shaping the character of students with noble and responsible morals. Especially in the technological era, teachers as life role models become moral and spiritual filters.

A teacher is required not only to understand technology, but also to use it ethically and responsibly as part of the example. One example is the use of digital platforms for creative learning, such as creating educational content that promotes moral values or using social media to share positive inspiration. Not the other way around, the abuse of technology for personal interests that violate norms, such as the case of teachers who recorded students drawing genitals for sexual purposes actually damaged the image of teachers as role models and betrayed the philosophy of Ing Ngarsa Sung Tuladha (Whisnu, 2025b). This behavior not only violates the professional code of ethics but also damages public trust and hurts the process of forming students' character. Teachers must always affirm their integrity in interacting with technology and be able to use it as a tool to strengthen educational values.

The principle of Ing Ngarso Sung Tuladha reflects the core expectation that teachers serve as moral exemplars, those who "lead from the front by example." This is further elaborated through the "Tiga Mong"

educational philosophy rooted in Javanese values: Momong, Among, and Ngemong (Fuadi et al., 2024). These three interrelated principles describe how teachers should nurture, guide, and model character education in a non-authoritarian, affectionate, and student-centered manner (Nita et al., 2023). Collectively, they support holistic student development in alignment with 21st-century educational goals. Here's the description:

- a. Momong in Javanese means to take care sincerely and affectionately. This principle is relevant to the trauma-informed teaching approach, where teachers create an emotionally safe environment. For example, a primary school in Yogyakarta applies this by using role-play exercises to help students regulate emotions, practice empathy, and learn respectful conflict resolution (Cramer, 2018). The effort aims to teach students to control their behavior (Reddig & VanLone, 2024). By embodying momong, teachers nurture emotional intelligence alongside academic growth.
- b. Among the means to set an example of the good and bad of everything, without coercion, so that the child grows and develops. This principle is relevant to the student-centered learning method. This method encourages teachers to give freedom to students in exploring their knowledge so that deep learning will be obtained and able to improve the quality of students. In practice, some schools implement learning contracts that allow students to set their own goals, promoting responsibility and intrinsic motivation (Antika, 2014). Teachers act more as facilitators than instructors, reinforcing Dewantara's idea of non-coercive education.
- c. Ngemong means observing, caring, and maintaining so children can develop themselves, be responsible, and be disciplined based on applicable values. The term Among is a teaching system with a honer, loving, and nurturing approach based on self-growth and the development of students' morals, souls, and bodies. The Among system is an education system based on family, natural nature, and independence so that students have social sensitivity, critical thinking, and work in an orderly manner. For instance, inclusive classrooms in Surakarta adopt ngemong through differentiated instruction and peer mentoring, helping students of various abilities develop discipline, teamwork, and social sensitivity (Wiryopranoto et al., 2017). This principle supports inclusive education with the existence of teachers who respect the diversity of students' potential.

The findings explain that a consistent and exemplary attitude from educators can shape the norms and ethics adopted by students, making the educational process not merely a transfer of knowledge, but also a means of character development (Noventue et al., 2024). As Ki Hajar Dewantara stated, education plays a vital role in strengthening human existence by helping individuals become more humane, cultured, independent from all forms of colonialism, and by providing space for the holistic development of cognitive, affective, and conative abilities. According to Ki Hajar Dewantara, as cited in Ndoa & Hulu (2023), education is a deliberate and integrated effort to liberate both the external and internal aspects of a person. Therefore, the existence of ethical education is essential in the pursuit of independence. He also emphasized that when reason (thought) and ethics (energy) are united, they give rise to actions that align with values and foster harmonious relationships between individuals and their social environment. Based on this philosophy, a national education system rooted in the nation's culture was born. According to Ki Hajar Dewantara, the essence of national education lies in the formation of character and ethics to develop individuals into complete human beings. This philosophy serves as the foundation for a national education system that prioritizes the enhancement of ethical values among the nation's youth (Rismana et al., 2024).

Teachers must be involved in character education developed by the Indonesian government (Narpila et al., 2025). Every educator needs different teaching qualities and methods. But a teacher with good character will instill goodness in his students. Teachers become role models both personally and publicly because what they do will get the center of attention, not only from students but also from the surrounding community. Therefore, teachers can be role models for students and the community as much as possible (Kandiri & Arfandi, 2021). In addition to excelling in spiritual aspects, teachers must also have qualities that are appropriate and worthy of being called teachers because of discipline, authority, independence, and responsibility. In the aspect of responsibility, teachers must have adequate knowledge

of Islamic teachings, moral and social norms, and try to practice these values and norms in daily life (Rismana et al., 2024). For teachers, being able to be a mentor in the process of developing students' personalities is a gift from Allah SWT.

The character education concept of "Ing Ngarsa Sung Tuladha" inherited from Ki Hadjar Dewantara emphasizes the importance of teachers as primary role models in shaping students' character, especially in the digital era that demands ethical awareness and digital responsibility. This philosophy is reinforced by the principle of "Tiga Mong" (Momong, Among, and Ngemong), which highlights a nurturing approach based on affection, independence, and care in education. A teacher's exemplary conduct serves as the moral foundation for students and the cornerstone for building a nation characterized by ethics, culture, and self-reliance.

Factors Causing Inhibition of the Application of the Principle of "Ing Ngarso Sung Tuladha" in the Context of Indonesian Education

The principle of "Ing Ngarso Sung Tuladha" proposed by Ki Hajar Dewantara serves as the philosophical foundation of Indonesian education, positioning educators as moral, intellectual, and spiritual role models for their students. However, in modern education, which is burdened by administrative pressures, performative demands, and technological infiltration, this principle faces various challenges that hinder its full and sustainable actualization. The paradigm shift toward outcome- and achievement-oriented education has reduced the meaning of education to a mere instructional process and knowledge transfer, thereby obscuring the role of exemplary conduct as the core of character formation in students (Wulandari et al., 2025).

The digital cultural transformation further complicates the educator's role as a figure of example. The previously personal-based teacher-student interactions have been replaced by digital communication that lacks affection. This makes it difficult for educators to present an authentic and inspiring model of role modeling in virtual classrooms (Rusli et al., 2024). Kusmawati (2021) emphasizes that a reinterpretation of the values of role modeling is necessary to remain relevant within the fast-paced, digitized learning ecosystem of the Industry 4.0 era. Another challenge lies in the leadership competency gap. Many educators understand Ki Hajar Dewantara's leadership principles theoretically but lack adaptive skills to apply them effectively in the dynamics of 21st-century education (Wijayanti, 2019; Sari et al., 2023). The technocratic orientation of the modern education system has neglected the humanistic, cultural, and ethical dimensions that are the essence of the "Ing Ngarso Sung Tuladha" principle.

The among system, which is Ki Hajar Dewantara's philosophical foundation, has also experienced serious distortion. Strict curriculum pressures and number-based evaluations have shifted educators' focus from character development to purely achieving academic targets (Masitoh & Cahyani, 2020). The misalignment between the rhetoric of "Merdeka Belajar" and bureaucratic practices in the field creates a paradox in implementing national education values. This condition is exacerbated by frequently changing education policies, causing disorientation and confusion in integrating role modeling principles into daily teaching practice (Ruth et al., 2023). Without consistent policies and clear direction, educators struggle to formulate stable leadership patterns that align with Ki Hajar Dewantara's philosophy.

The lack of structural and institutional cultural support further weakens educators' role as role models. Rigid school cultures, limited reflective spaces, and insufficient recognition of teachers' moral roles diminish the place of exemplary conduct within the education system (Wulandari et al., 2025). At the same time, high administrative burdens and evaluative pressures lead to a professional identity crisis among teachers, distancing them from their essential role as *pamong* caretakers who humanize the educational process (Masitoh & Cahyani, 2020). Thus, the implementation of the "Ing Ngarso Sung Tuladha" principle depends not only on individual commitment but also requires systemic reconstruction that encompasses school culture, education policies, structural support, and the restoration of educators' professional identity as transformative figures. A reflective, adaptive, and contextual approach is key to revitalizing role modeling as a moral and pedagogical force in shaping the nation's character amid the complexities of 21st-century education.

Strategy And Implementation Of Character-Based Education Based On Ki Hajar Dewantara Values

Ki Hajar Dewantara's philosophy emphasizes the importance of education that liberates, teaches with the heart, and instills moral and cultural values in students. In an era of dynamic social changes and complex global challenges, the implementation of value-based educational strategies inspired by Ki Hajar Dewantara becomes increasingly vital. This approach not only preserves the nation's cultural identity but also shapes a generation capable of competing globally without losing their sense of self. Below are educational strategies based on Ki Hajar Dewantara's values aimed at developing students' moral, intelligent, and culturally grounded personalities.

a. Scaffolding Concept of Ki Hajar Dewantara

The main element that shapes the character of Pancasila students is the ability to understand and respect cultural diversity, as well as having effective cross-cultural communication skills in interacting with others. In addition, reflection and responsibility for experience in the context of diversity are also important aspects. In their daily lives, students in Indonesia know the value of cooperation, which reflects the spirit of cooperation to ease the burden together. This value aims to create synergies that make work feel easier and more efficient. The aspects of cooperation include collaboration, concern for others, and the spirit of sharing. Independent Indonesian students show responsibility for their learning process and outcomes. This element involves self-awareness, sensitivity to situations, and the ability to self-regulate. On the other hand, students with critical reasoning can analyze information objectively, connect various data, evaluate, and draw conclusions based on in-depth analysis. These critical elements include the ability to access and process information, evaluate ideas, reflect on how to think, and make informed decisions. Creativity is a characteristic of students who can develop new ideas and create something original, useful, and have a positive impact. This creative element includes the process of generating new ideas and meaningful innovative actions (Robiasih et al., 2021).

According to Ki Hajar Dewantara, strengthening character education can be done with the Tricenter System or Tricenter of Education, namely the family, school, and community. The importance of a deep understanding of the role of educational agents emphasizes that the responsibility in the educational process does not only lie with one party, but is spread across three main environments. These three environments play a synergistic role in shaping individual character and personality, and complement each other in supporting a holistic educational process (Wiryopranoto et al., 2017). In practice, the three main pillars (family, community, and educational institutions) play an active role in building character through the habituation of positive values that are carried out continuously to form an established pattern of behavior.

To form the competencies of the younger generation following the concept of Pancasila Students, a more systematic approach is needed to instill character values. One effective method is to apply the 4N philosophy of Ki Hajar Dewantara, which consists of: (1) In-depth observation (Niteni), (2) Practice of imitation (Nirokke), (3) Creative development (Nambahi), and (4) Dissemination of values (Nularke). This gradual approach facilitates the deeper internalization of character values, transforming conceptual understanding into tangible, sustained action. The mechanism of internalizing values through the 4N approach begins with a process of critical observation, followed by behavioral replication, adaptation according to the context, and ends with the ability to share values with the environment. This process not only develops cognitive understanding, but also shapes habits and value communication skills (Boentarsono et al., 2017).

The results of the implementation of this model in various schools in Yogyakarta show a significant positive impact. All education stakeholders reported that this approach successfully integrated character education in various forms of learning, including in online learning situations. This model effectively develops various essential competencies such as critical reasoning, innovation, independence, and the ability to work together, while encouraging the active participation of all elements of society in the process of character education (Robiasih et al., 2021). Character formation according to the concept of Pancasila Students requires synergy between students, families, teachers, and education managers. This model offers a comprehensive framework for creating a generation that is not only of high integrity but also has global competencies relevant to future challenges.

Table 3. Visualization of the 4N Model Application in Character Building

Stages of 4N	Implementation in Schools	Character Building Objectives
Niteni (Observing)	Students observe positive behaviors from teachers or inspirational figures.	Instilling positive values through direct observation.
Nirokke (Imitating)	Students imitate the positive behaviors they have observed in their daily activities.	Developing good habits through the imitation of positive behavior.
Nambahi (Adding)	Students enhance positive behavior by adding their own initiative.	Encouraging creativity and initiative in practicing positive behavior.
Nularke (Spreading)	Students share their experiences and positive values with their peers.	Strengthening character values through sharing and collaboration.

b. The Concept of Being Hunted Down by the Devil

The concept of Among education developed by Ki Hajar Dewantara emphasizes a student-centered learning approach, with teachers acting as guides or teachers who accompany the development of students as a whole. The main goal of this system is to form individuals who are independent, characterful, and cultured, following the nature of nature and the times (Dewantara, 2013). Ki Hadjar Dewantara described the role of teachers in the Among system with the analogy of a farmer who takes care of his plants. In this view, teachers do not impose their will on students, but guide them according to their potential and natural nature. Each child is likened to a plant seed with unique potential to grow and develop according to its nature. Teachers, like farmers, cannot change the type of plant, but are in charge of caring, nurturing, and maintaining it to grow optimally according to its natural nature. This approach emphasizes the importance of understanding and appreciating each student's uniqueness and providing guidance appropriate to their needs and potential.

In the Among system, teachers play the role of teachers who accompany students with affection and without coercion. The main goal is to form an independent, characterful, and cultured human being, following the nature of nature and the times. Teachers are expected to be able to be role models (*ing ngarso sung tulodo*), arouse enthusiasm (*ing madya mangun karsa*), and encourage from behind (*tut wuri handayani*). These principles emphasize that education should be student-centered, value their freedom of learning, and foster discipline and self-understanding. With this approach, education focuses not only on knowledge transfer, but also on character formation and the development of individual potential as a whole. Teachers are expected to be able to create a conducive learning environment, motivate students to be active in the learning process, and provide space for them to develop according to their talents and interests. Thus, the Among system is an important foundation in realizing a humanist education oriented to the holistic development of students.

The application of the Among system includes the development of creative potentials (cognitive), sense (affective), and *karsa* (psychomotor) in a balanced manner (Dewantara, 2013). The personal independence of students is limited by the peaceful order of life together, which supports tolerance, harmony, family, deliberation, togetherness, democracy, responsibility, and discipline. Teachers are expected to be able to create a conducive learning environment, appreciate the potential of each student, and guide them towards optimal development. Therefore, it is hoped that education will focus on knowledge transfer and the formation of students' character and personality. The Among system aims to create individuals who are independent, responsible, and able to contribute positively to community life (Masitoh & Cahyani, 2020).

The curriculum concept at SD Negeri 1 Kedadongan adopts the principle of among system education in the style of Ki Hajar Dewantara, which is reflected in the implementation of the 2013 Curriculum and the Independent Curriculum. The focus is on the formation of students' character to become independent, populist, national, democratic, and familial human beings. The implementation of the among system is carried out through a holistic approach, with teachers who educate with compassion, provide examples, and guide students like their own children. Teachers also instill character values through affective learning, motivating students to be enthusiastic about learning, responsibility, and

discipline. Students are given freedom of expression according to their interests and talents, within certain limits, to develop their potential optimally (Masitoh & Cahyani, 2020). By applying the principles of the among system, SD Negeri 1 Kedadongan seeks to form students who have strong character, independence, and can contribute positively to community life.

c. The Concept of the Ki Hajar Dewantara Trilogy

Ki Hajar Dewantara developed an approach to ethics education through three stages known as *Ngerti*, *Ngrasa*, and *Nglakoni*. The first stage, *Understand*, emphasizes the importance of providing students with an understanding of the values of good and bad, as well as the norms that apply in society, nation, and religious life. With this understanding, it is hoped that students will be able to distinguish between good and bad behavior and understand the consequences. The second stage, *Ngrasa*, aims to internalize these values, where students are invited to feel and understand deeply the meaning of the knowledge that has been acquired. This helps them to calculate and distinguish between right and wrong actions. The last stage, *Nglakoni*, is the real application of the values that have been understood and felt into daily actions. Learners are encouraged to act according to their knowledge and feelings of goodness and take responsibility for the choices and actions taken. Through these three stages, Ki Hajar Dewantara emphasized the importance of the educational process, which focuses not only on cognitive aspects but also affective and psychomotor development, to produce individuals with character and responsibility in daily life (Yanuarti, 2018).

The implementation of Ki Hadjar Dewantara's Trilogy at SD Taman Muda Jetis Yogyakarta runs smoothly. Elementary school teachers provide good examples to students through both words and actions, embodying the motto *Ing Ngarsa Sung Tuladha*. As motivators, the teachers continuously encourage students to stay motivated in learning, especially those who experience delays and difficulties in their lessons, following the motto *Ing Madya Mangun Karsa*. The motto *Tut Wuri Handayani* is realized by teachers who support students in keeping growing naturally. Teachers strive to avoid giving punishments, but if necessary, the punishments are non-physical (Nugroho, 2018).

Character-based education strategies inspired by Ki Hajar Dewantara's values emphasize the importance of education that is liberating, student-centered, and instills moral and cultural values. The integrated implementation of the scaffolding concept, the among system, and Ki Hajar Dewantara's trilogy can shape students who are not only intellectually smart but also have strong character, independence, and cultural awareness. This approach involves the active roles of family, school, and community as the three main pillars in character building. Through the process of observation, imitation, innovation, and value dissemination (4N), students are encouraged to internalize and practice positive values continuously. The application of this strategy has proven effective in creating a humane and holistic learning environment, preparing a generation capable of competing globally without losing the nation's identity.

Limitation and Recommendation

This study relies solely on qualitative literature reviews, which limit the findings to existing published sources without direct empirical data from educational settings. The rapidly evolving digital environment may cause some references to lose relevance over time. Additionally, the focus is on the general Indonesian education context, without addressing regional cultural and socioeconomic variations. The perspectives of teachers, students, and parents were not directly involved, restricting insights into practical challenges and experiences in implementing the "*Ing Ngarsa Sung Tuladha*" principle.

Future research should incorporate empirical studies using mixed methods to capture the real-world application and challenges of character education in digital contexts. It is recommended that educational institutions develop practical character education modules grounded in local wisdom and Ki Hajar Dewantara's philosophy. Ongoing professional development for teachers focusing on digital ethics and moral leadership is crucial to strengthen their role as role models. Strengthening collaboration among family, school, and community (Tri Pusat Pendidikan) is essential to create a supportive ecosystem for character development. Finally, developing valid assessment tools to evaluate teachers' effectiveness as moral exemplars will help improve character education implementation.

CONCLUSION

The principles of character education of Ki Hajar Dewantara, especially "Ing Ngarso Sung Tuladha" (in front of setting an example), emphasized the importance of teachers' example in guiding students. Teachers must be role models in morals, spirituality, and behavior, both in the real and digital environment. This implementation can be realized through the approach of *momong*, *among*, *ngemong*, which emphasizes compassion, providing examples without coercion, and assisting students in their growth and development to form a generation of character according to the challenges of modern times. However, the weak role model of teachers and the increase in ethical violations in the educational environment are caused by various factors, such as a crisis of professional identity due to excessive administrative burden, the challenge of in-depth digital interaction, and inconsistent education policies. In addition, an overly dominant focus on academic targets often ignores the formation of students' character. To overcome this challenge, Ki Hajar Dewantara's values-based character education implementation strategy includes the application of the 4N philosophy (Niteni, Nirokke, Nambahi, Nularke), the use of an *among* system that supports the holistic development of students, and the synergy of the tricenter of education between families, schools, and communities.

To facilitate the effective implementation of character education, teachers are expected to integrate moral and character values into daily learning processes through the approaches of *momong*, *among*, and *ngemong*, which emphasize compassion, exemplification without coercion, and mentorship in the growth and development of students. Furthermore, the ethical use of technology is essential to promote moral values and foster educational interactions with students. Educational institutions should cultivate a culture that supports character development among students, for instance, through extracurricular activities rooted in local wisdom, such as scouting, traditional arts, and social initiatives that inculcate values of cooperation, leadership, and social responsibility. Policymakers are advised to formulate policies that support the implementation of character education based on local wisdom, including the provision of relevant modules and necessary resources. Subsequent research is anticipated to contribute to the development of character education modules grounded in local wisdom, consistent with Ki Hajar Dewantara's philosophy, which underscores the significance of education anchored in cultural and local values. Additionally, this research is expected to design assessment instruments to evaluate the effectiveness of teacher role modeling, which constitutes a fundamental aspect of education embodying the principle of "ing ngarso sung tulodo" (leading by example). In this manner, character education can be effectively integrated into the national education system, thereby ensuring the holistic development of well-prepared students to meet contemporary challenges.

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