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## HEROISM-BASED HISTORY LEARNING AS AN IDEAL MODEL OF INDONESIAN HUMAN CHARACTER: IS IT POSSIBLE?

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### Abstract

*History learning has a strategic position to develop national character. Positive characters contained in historical material are important to continue to be developed. One of the important values is the value of heroism inherited by the heroes of this nation when fighting for the independence of the Indonesian nation. The spirit of this struggle needs to be revived to shape the younger generation's character. This is important because the character requires a process and an ideal model as a role model in its implementation in society. The heroes are one of the most appropriate models amid the lack of ideal models owned by the Indonesian nation.*



## INTRODUCTION

"A great nation is a nation that is willing and able to honour the history of its predecessors". Are we a great nation in this context? Is it true that we have paid attention to and respected the nation's heroes who sacrificed their lives and bodies for the sake of the homeland, people and country of Indonesia? These questions make us doubt and become stunned whether we are a nation that appreciates the history of the struggle of our heroes, considering that many of us do not understand the history of the nation's struggle. A visible indicator is that many members of our society and youth are not happy and interested in history lessons. History lessons at school have become uninteresting.

History teaching not only answers the question of what to teach but also about how the learning process takes place to instil values in students and convey the message behind historical reality. This learning process is not just about students mastering the subject matter. However, it is expected to contribute to the maturation of students' personalities so that they can respond and adapt to increasingly complex social and national developments and accelerating global demands.

The life of the Indonesian nation today is not as expected. The political events of 1998, which ended the New Order rule with its various euphoria, have left deep wounds in various aspects of society, national and state life. Various forms of rights violations continue to occur. Acts of violence and human rights violations, immoral behaviour and the decline of noble morals, anarchism and impatience, dishonesty and a culture of corruption, and the vulnerability of independence and national identity continue to decorate the life of our nation and state. The spirit of nationalism, heroism, self-sacrifice and gotong royong in our society is waning. We seem to have lost the character that we built over hundreds of years and even centuries.

As Marko & Pataca (2019) explain, empirically, one of the most worrying critical phenomena is the horizontal conflict that has led to the Balkanisation of our national life. This seems to go hand in hand with the shallowing of the values and spirit of nationhood that our founding fathers have fought for over the years. Our new generation seems to be experiencing alienation from the nation's historical heritage. In other words, we feel as if there is a "generation gap" in interpreting the values of the nation's history, and there has even been a situation that leads to a process of an "uprooted generation" (a generation that begins to uproot the roots of the nation's historical values).

The Indonesian people are now beginning to forget the history of the founding of this nation by the fighters in the past, who were willing to sacrifice property, relatives and even their own lives to realise the nation that we stand on today. Thus, the statement of one of the nation's founding fathers, Bung Karno, about "Red Coat" (never forget history) is appropriate. He reminded the generation of this nation to always remember the past/history of this nation. How the process of this nation was formed, do not let the peanuts forget the skin.

The statement seems to remind us that history has something that can be inherited. History is not a dead science but a study that can provide important insights and experiences that can be used to look to the future. As stated by the great historian Cicero, history is the teacher of life. The opinions of these experts further position the importance of teaching history as one of the fields of education or science that has an important position in instilling positive values that our younger generation can use in everyday life.

Another opinion also states that history will create a wise human being. History reflects on what we have done in the past to be the basis of our actions and behaviour in the present life and, at the same time, as a basis for further actions in the future. However, this seems contradictory to the facts that occur in the world of education in this country. As one of the subjects full of virtues and character values, history education seems to be neglected by current policymakers.

Furthermore, Supriatna (2015) said that history is a means of cultural inheritance in the context of the socialisation and enculturation process to realise the next generation's identity. The teaching of history contains moral values as a source of regulating and binding the behaviour of community groups so that group integrity is guaranteed. This is what is called the development of national character and personality. Under



these conditions, it seems interesting to re-examine the relationship between history learning and heroic values in the context of national character building to create Indonesian people with character.

## RESULT AND DISCUSSION

### 1. The Meaning of History Learning

In the context of the life of the nation and state, history learning has a strategic meaning. History learning is a process to help develop the potential and personality of students through historical messages in order to become wise and dignified citizens of the nation. History, in this case, is the totality of human activities in the past (Vickers 2013) and is dynamic. This means that the past is not something final but is open and continuous with the present and the future. Therefore, history can be interpreted as a science that systematically examines and studies the overall development of society and humanity in the past with all aspects of its events to then be able to provide an assessment as a guide for determining the current situation, as well as a mirror for the future.

Furthermore, history is also related to humanitarian issues and a theatre where humans become character players based on existing knowledge, experience, and role models. History will educate humans to understand "sangkan paran" and their existence (Kartodirdjo 1997) to strengthen self-identity and national identity, or identity as a nation. In this regard, learning history serves to foster historical awareness. Historical awareness is an intellectual orientation and a mental attitude to understand one's existence as a human being, a member of society, and a nation (Vickers 2013). Kartodirdjo (2005) asserts that historical awareness is nothing but self-awareness. Self-awareness can be interpreted as being aware of one's existence as an individual, and as a social being, including consciousness as a nation and as a creature of God. In this context, there are two dimensions in humans, namely, the dimension of the caliphate and the dimension of servitude.

With this understanding, history learning is required to be able to actualise at least two things, namely: (1) education and intellectual learning, (2) education and moral learning of the nation, a democratic civil society and responsible for the future of the nation (Kuntowijoyo 2005). The first demands that history learning not only presents factual knowledge but is required to provide critical thinking exercises, be able to conclude, and understand the meaning of a historical event according to scientific rules and norms. Questions about why and how are important to be developed in learning history. Meanwhile, the second pointer points to history learning oriented towards humanitarian education that pays attention to noble values, norms, and other human aspects.

By developing two things: intellectual education and moral education or humanitarian education, the direction of history learning is expected to achieve goals that support the achievement of national education goals. History learning will be able to underlie intellectual intelligence education, as well as underlying education oriented towards emotional intelligence and even spiritual intelligence, in order to improve the dignity of Indonesian human beings. In the implementation at school, the purpose of learning history is related to the existence of goals known as instructional effects and goals that "follow" or further goals called nurturant effects (Kartodirdjo 1997). Looking at this formulation, it is clear that in addition to cognitive aspects, the affective dimension occupies a fairly important portion of the learning objectives of history. However, in reality, there is criticism that our education tends to be intellectualised and more cognitive in nature.

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Likewise, the learning of history is still quite alarming. History learning is more rote and cognitive. As a result, history learning cannot reach the aspects of morality concerning emotional and spiritual intelligence. Our history learning is still rarely able to enter the affective domain, such as wise attitudes, fostering the spirit of nationality, and pride in the nation and country, let alone understanding the nature of himself as the highest manifestation of historical awareness, to bring up attitudes and actions as exemplified by our fighters and heroes.

## 2. Building Heroic Values

Learning history will develop the activities of students to examine various events, to be understood and internalised to themselves so that they give birth to examples for attitude and action. From these events, among others, there are also messages related to heroic values such as exemplary, self-sacrifice, love for the country, togetherness, independence, equality, nationalism and patriotism (Halwany 2021). Some of these values can be explored and developed through meaningful history learning. For this reason, the creativity of history teachers is very much needed. History teachers must explore and be able to transform these values into students.

In history lessons, many subjects or topics contain these historical values. For example, when discussing the colonial period, it is appropriate to re-actualise the values of identity and individual rights or human rights, human values, nationalism and patriotism, how Sultan Agung waged the resistance, Prince Diponegara, Cut Nyak Dhien, by I Gusti Ngurah Rai. These figures fought selflessly for the freedom of their homeland, to defend the people who suffered from the cruelty of the colonisers. Treasure, body and soul are at stake for the sake of self-esteem and sovereignty as a nation. These various forms of struggle can dichotomously actualise the values of independence. "Freedom is the right of all nations. Therefore, colonialism in the world must be abolished because it is not by humanity and justice". This one sentence from the Preamble of the 1945 Constitution can be creatively discussed in one or two meetings. Learners are invited to understand and appreciate the values of independence, humanity and justice to become part of their attitudes and behaviour. In this case, the teacher must be able to explain and convince learners that the colonisers' actions in the archipelago are very contrary to human values and justice as human rights. The most fundamental individual rights were taken away. There was no freedom of association, no freedom to express opinions and embrace religion fully.

When discussing topics related to the national movement period, educators need to emphasise the values of nationalism, unity among pluralism or diversity, tolerance and mutual respect. The Indonesian nation consists of various ethnic groups and groups. God has created these as the wealth and strength of the nation. God has taught us that He created mankind in tribes and groups so that we know each other and establish ties of friendship. If this is the case, then driven by a noble desire, namely the aspiration for independence, unity and togetherness, are realised. The effort to realise this unity was successful with the pledge of Youth Pledge, which stated one homeland, one nation: Indonesia, and upheld the language of unity, Indonesian. The Youth Pledge became a symbol of togetherness in diversity and, at the same time, provided a spirit to foster unity for the realisation of the ideals of independence. The Youth Pledge is a tangible manifestation of national silaturakhim, "and whoever wants to revive silaturakhim will have his age extended and his sustenance expanded." This is the concept of nationalism guided by moral and religious values, which Toynbee describes as nationalism guided by the universal values of higher religions (Notowidigdo 1959). Nationalism not guided by religious or moral values can be trapped in two tendencies. Firstly, secular, extreme nationalism can give birth to chauvinism. This form of nationalism was criticised by Toynbee, as it led to the Second World War that destroyed human civilisation. Second, a weak nationalism leaves its supporters without national pride



and identity. The latter is closely related to the cognitive-only learning model. Teachers can creatively discuss this material, for example, with the topic "Review of the Youth Pledge Text".

Furthermore, to discuss topics related to teaching materials in the independence period, teachers can actualise and instil relevant essential values in students, such as the values of independence, independence and responsible freedom, patriotism, leadership issues and role models, which our national fighters and heroes have demonstrated. To further foster awareness and stimulate learners' emotions, teachers as facilitators and motivators can teach learners to examine the biographies of certain fighters or heroes, for example, Bung Karno, Bung Hatta, Panglima Besar Jenderal Sudirman, Sultan Hamengku Buwono IX to get the values of struggle, leadership and exemplary.

Learning the topics and values of the independence period will be more "powerful" (very meaningful) if the teacher is creatively willing to touch and or use the perspective of spiritualism or moral values. (The above description has been mentioned a lot). An illustrative example of independence. Independence is the right of all nations. Independence is a human right as God's creation. Therefore, it is natural for the Indonesian people to try with all their might, with the full sacrifice of body, soul and property. The Indonesian people will fight for independence with the motto "freedom or death", accompanied by the spirit of sacrifice. This shows that Indonesian independence is a fundamental and very important stage for the existence of a nation. In reality, these heroic values have receded and been eroded by this nation's current interests and materialism.

### 3. The Relationship between Historical Value and Character Education

Value is a hidden concept in the human mind, not in the empirical world. Value relates to a person's view of good and bad, beautiful and not beautiful, worthy and not worthy, and fair and unfair (Kartodirdjo 1997). In general and local historical values in particular, Dieudé & Prøitz (2022) explain the close relationship between history and education. This close relationship will be seen when people embody historical values in real behaviour patterns. For this reason, historical awareness is needed. The historical awareness in question is an attitude of intellectual orientation, an attitude of soul that is necessary to properly understand the notion of national personality. This historical awareness leads humans to an understanding of themselves as a nation, to the nation's self-understanding, to the *sangkan paran* of a State, and to the question of what we are and why we are (Conti-Ramsden et al. 2018). Historical awareness, which is the crystallisation of historical values in the form of attitudes, is evidence that people understand their nation's history.

According to Kuntowijoyo (2005), learning history cannot be separated from its uses, namely, the intrinsic and extrinsic uses of history intrinsically, which contains the value of history as a science and knowing the past. History is an open science, the fact that history uses everyday language, not using technical terms. This openness allows anyone to claim to be a historian as long as the results can be accounted for as science.

Historical values are crystallised from the material taught at school or college. Interestingly, Kochhar's (2008) description is that there are ten values, namely: (1) Scientific or knowledge value: history provides excellent mental training. The memory and imagination taught by history are as much as those taught by geography and literature, (2) Informative value: history is a complete centre of information and provides a guide to finding a way out of all the problems faced by humans relating to science and art, language and literature, social and political life, philosophical speculation and economic growth, (3) Educational value: one of the best reasons to teach history to children is the educational value contained in it. It is quite logical to treat history like a painting compared to the facts learnt in other subjects, (4) Ethical value: history is considered a very important part of the school curriculum, especially in learning morality. This is because history is a voice that is forever heard, across centuries, the moral force of the law of right and wrong. History not only shows the meaning of great moral qualities, such as heroism, self-sacrifice, love of country, and constancy to duty, concretely and interestingly but is equipped with a set of examples that can be emulated (5) Cultural values: history can be a very effective instrument to shape the human mind more cultured. History can make us understand the present culture by explaining the origins of everything that exists, customs, habits,



and institutions, (6) Political value: history also helps political education in our country. History is often said to be the politics of the past, (7) The value of nationalism/heroism. As an instrument to arouse a sense of patriotism in children's minds, the usefulness of history is undoubted (8). International value: history is very useful for developing the roots of rational internationalism. Through the study of world history, students will realise that although different societies have different customs, habits, laws and institutions, they have been striving for the same goal, (9) Work value: knowing history opens up job opportunities to become qualified historians, and (10) Educational value: history not only helps students of different ages and abilities to find their place in the present by creating a reassuring relationship with the past but also indirectly contains a philosophy of meaningful origins in the future, which is the reason for hard human work in the present.

According to Supriatna (2015), if character education is to be effective and complete, it must include three design bases in its programming. Without these three bases, school character education programmes will only be a discourse. First, classroom-based character education design. This design is based on the relationship between teachers as educators and students as learners in the classroom. The context of character education is the relational process of the classroom community in the context of learning. The teacher-learner relationship is not a monologue but a dialogue with many directions because the classroom community consists of teachers and students interacting with the material. Understanding true virtues in this teaching context, including non-instructional domains, such as classroom management, classroom consensus, and others, help create a comfortable learning atmosphere. Second, school culture-based character education design. This design tries to build a school culture that can shape students' character with the help of school social institutions so that certain values are formed and internalised in students. To instil the value of honesty, it is not enough just to give moral messages to students. This moral message must be strengthened by creating a culture of honesty through the making of the firm and consistent school rules against any dishonest behaviour. And Third, community-based character education design. In educating, the school community does not fight alone. Communities outside educational institutions, such as families, the general public, and the state, also have a moral responsibility to integrate character building in the context of their lives. When state institutions are weak in law enforcement, when those who are guilty never get appropriate sanctions, the state has educated its people to become human beings who do not appreciate the meaning of a shared social order.

These three bases, of course, character education in history education, can be included in all three. This is because history/history education, in a broad sense, can be taught in the three bases of character education design. Through the continuity of character education based on historical values, it is hoped that the young generation of Indonesia will have a strong character without having to leave their identity as the Indonesian Nation.

## CONCLUSION

These are some illustrations of how to develop materials and implement history learning to revive the values of struggle and heroism to develop national character education. Many learning materials can be utilised to build these heroic values, which we can emulate amid the lack of models that we can make role models in the life of the nation and state today. Of course, this requires courage and creativity from teachers. Teachers need to change cognitive history learning into more meaningful and contextual learning and touch on affective aspects, emotional intelligence, and spiritual intelligence. Cognitive history learning will only give birth to satisfaction with a momentary duration. In contrast, history learning that can train emotional and spiritual intelligence will give birth to true historical awareness and can apply the values of struggle from the nation's heroes.





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