

THE VALUE OF JAVANESE ETHNIC LEADERSHIP AND ITS RELEVANCE TO THE FUTURE DEVELOPMENT TREND OF EDUCATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS

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Abstract. *Javanese leadership was characterized by a rich culture and traditional Javanese values. Java was one of the tribes in Indonesia that has a strong cultural heritage, including in the field of leadership. In the Javanese tradition, leaders were regarded as figures who were respected and made role models by the community. In Javanese leadership there were several mottos or sentences that were often used. The mottos and sentences described the principles and values espoused in Javanese leadership, which involve humility, wisdom, consensus, concern for the people, and loyalty. Literature study on Javanese leadership was conducted to understand the principles, values, and characteristics of leadership that emerged in Javanese culture. This literature study helped in exploring a deeper understanding of the history, traditions, and worldviews that underlie Javanese leadership. Through the study of literature on Javanese leadership, we could gain deeper insight into the cultural, philosophical, and ethical aspects that underlie leadership in Javanese society. This can make a valuable contribution in the context of sustainable leadership development based on a rich cultural heritage. In the current Merdeka Belajar, the pioneering trend of Javanese leadership by Ki Hajar Dewantara emphasized the importance of continuity in self-development and enthusiasm to motivate others. In the context of education, the motto Ing Ngarsa Sung Tulada, Ing Madya Mangun Karsa, Tut Wuri Handayani could inspire educational leaders to continue to improve the quality of education and inspire all education activists.*

Keywords: *Culture; Education; Javanese; Leadership; Trend.*

1. INTRODUCTION

Culture has a powerful influence on the ways we perceive and exercise leadership. Javanese culture has a long tradition of developing a unique concept of leadership, which is shaped by Javanese cultural values, norms and practices. According to Soeripto (2018) in traditional Javanese leadership, there are several cultural values that are often upheld, such as wisdom, humility, partiality for the people, deliberation, and mutual cooperation. Javanese leadership also tends to emphasize social harmony, justice, honesty, and maintaining stability in the community. Wisdom can be the basis for making wise and strategic decisions, while humility can build good relationships with subordinates and create a harmonious work environment.

According to Hidayah (2018) leadership is now inspired by Javanese cultural values in the context of modern organizations. This includes an understanding of values such as wisdom, loyalty, partiality to the people, deliberation, and mutual cooperation, and how these values can be applied in organizational leadership to achieve effective goals. Javanese leadership in organizations could influence the relationship between leaders and team members, decision-making styles, communication, and conflict management. It aims to explore the potential and benefits of Javanese leadership in creating a harmonious, collaborative and high-performance work environment.

According to Nugroho (2010), in Javanese leadership, there is an emphasis on discretion and wisdom in decision making, as well as the use of deliberation to reach consensus. Humility is an important attitude practiced by Javanese leaders, reflecting respect for others and an understanding that power and influence must be used with humility. Taking sides with the people shows the importance of leaders in paying attention to the interests and welfare of

society as a whole. Mutual cooperation is also a principle emphasized in Javanese leadership, with cooperation and active participation from group or team members. The application of these Javanese cultural values can help in creating effective leadership in modern organizations. This can include ways to build good relationships with subordinates, motivate and inspire team members, and create an inclusive and high-performance work environment.

Articles written by Santoso (2018) highlight values such as simplicity, honesty, and mutual cooperation embodied in Javanese leadership and their relevance in an increasingly complex global context. Simplicity is one of the values that is often upheld in Javanese leadership. This reflects a humble attitude and avoids arrogance in leadership. Honesty is also emphasized, which involves integrity and openness in interacting with others. Mutual cooperation is a fundamental principle in Javanese culture, which emphasizes cooperation and mutual assistance in achieving common goals. In the increasingly complex context of globalization, these values can have important relevance. Simplicity can help leaders stay connected to employees and society as a whole, reducing social inequalities and increasing shared prosperity. Honesty is an important foundation in building trust and maintaining good relationships with business partners and related parties. Mutual cooperation can also promote cross-cultural collaboration and sustainable resource management in a global context.

The previous education system was considered to have left behind our rich cultural heritage. Millennial generation leadership in the curriculum then refers to western leadership concepts. In fact, Indonesia is a country that has a variety of noble values of the nation. One of these noble values is Ki Hajar Dewantara's concept of leadership. According to Ki Hajar Dewantara, the essence of education is an effort to internalize cultural values into children, so that children become whole human beings both spiritually and spiritually (Mujahid, 2022). In this literature review, by understanding and applying the values of Javanese leadership in education, an educational environment that is inclusive, ethical, collaborative and forward-looking can be built. This will have a positive impact on the development of student character, the quality of learning, and the relationship between education and society.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Javanese Culture and Leadership Values

Javanese culture is one of the most influential cultural traditions in Indonesia, encompassing language, arts, customs, spirituality, and social ethics. Leadership in Javanese society is traditionally viewed as a moral responsibility rather than a display of power. Leaders are expected to maintain social harmony, act wisely, and prioritize the welfare of the community (Koentjaraningrat, 1985; Geertz, 1960).

Key values in Javanese leadership include wisdom (prudence), humility (low profile), deliberation (consideration), honesty, simplicity, and mutual cooperation. These values shape leadership behaviors such as participatory decision-making, empathetic communication, and ethical conduct (Nugroho & Dharmmesta, 2010; Santoso, 2018).

2.2 Classical Javanese Leadership Concepts

Historical and philosophical texts reveal that Javanese leadership ideals have been articulated since ancient times. The Astabrata doctrine, for example, outlines eight virtues that a leader must embody, symbolized by natural elements and deities, such as justice, protection, generosity, and self-control. Similarly, ancient inscriptions such as the Tugu Inscription demonstrate early leadership practices that emphasized public welfare, environmental management, and long-term thinking.

These classical concepts highlight that leadership in Javanese tradition is inseparable from ethical responsibility and cosmic balance. A leader is expected to serve as a guardian of harmony between humans, nature, and the divine.

2.2 Javanese Leadership and Education

The relevance of Javanese leadership values in education is strongly reflected in Ki Hajar Dewantara's educational philosophy. The Guide System (*among*) emphasizes guidance rather than coercion, encouraging educators to become role models, motivators, and supporters of learners' growth. This philosophy aligns closely with contemporary educational goals such as character education, student-centered learning, and collaborative school leadership (Mujahid, 2022).

Javanese leadership values also support ethical and inclusive educational practices by promoting fairness, respect for diversity, and community involvement. These principles are increasingly important as educational organizations face complex challenges related to globalization, technological change, and social transformation.

3. RESEARCH METHODS

This study employs a qualitative narrative literature review method. Relevant literature was collected from books, peer-reviewed journals, conference proceedings, and authoritative reports related to Javanese culture, leadership, and education. The narrative approach was chosen to allow an in-depth and contextualized understanding of leadership values embedded in Javanese tradition.

The literature was analyzed thematically by identifying recurring concepts, values, and leadership principles. Sources were selected based on their relevance, credibility, and contribution to the research objectives. The analysis process involved synthesizing theoretical perspectives and empirical findings to construct a coherent discussion on the relevance of Javanese leadership values in contemporary educational organizations.

4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The analysis reveals that Javanese leadership values remain highly relevant to modern educational leadership. Principles such as wisdom, deliberation, and exemplary behavior contribute to ethical decision-making and trust-building within educational institutions. Leaders who embody *Ing Ngarsa Sung Tuladha* serve as moral exemplars, while *Ing Madya Mangun Karsa* emphasizes collaborative leadership and motivation. *Tut Wuri Handayani* highlights the importance of empowerment and support, particularly in fostering teacher professionalism and student autonomy.

Furthermore, values such as *gotong royong* and *ngayomi* strengthen community engagement and inclusive school culture. These values encourage leaders to align institutional goals with the needs of stakeholders, including students, teachers, parents, and the wider community. In the context of rapid educational change, Javanese leadership provides a culturally grounded framework that balances innovation with ethical responsibility.

4.1. Ethnic profile / identity and characteristics

Javanese ethnicity was one of the ethnic groups in Indonesia who inhabit the region of Java, the largest island in this country. Javanese people had a distinctive language, culture and traditions. They also had a strong system of values and customs that underlies their daily life. The Javanese were known for their local wisdom, friendliness, courtesy and diversity of their arts and culture. Javanese was one of the most widely used languages in Indonesia. Traditional performing arts such as shadow puppets, Javanese dance and gamelan music were also an important part of Javanese culture. The religion among the Javanese was generally Islam, although there were also adherents of other religions such as Hinduism and *Kejawen* (Javanese spiritual appreciation). Javanese customs also had a strong influence on weddings, traditional ceremonies and the social system of Javanese society. The Javanese ethnic group had a rich cultural heritage which includes art, architecture, art, literature, as well as a system of values

and ethics. Javanese culture was also reflected in life philosophies such as "*ngoko, krama, andhap asor*" (speak politely and in context), "*sumarah*" (maintaining balance and harmony), and "*gotong royong*" (cooperation and mutual assistance in the community). Javanese people had a distinctive language, culture and traditions. Javanese culture had developed over centuries and encompasses various aspects of life, including language, art, customs, religion and social values. The influence of Javanese culture in organizational leadership can be reflected in several aspects and practices which include:

- Discretion (local wisdom): Javanese culture values wisdom in making decisions. Leaders inspired by Javanese culture tend to consider various factors, including traditional values, shared interests, and the balance between the various parties involved, before making important decisions.
- Deliberation (collective discussion): Javanese culture emphasized the importance of deliberation in decision making. Leaders influenced by this culture tend to involve subordinates and team members in the decision-making process through open and inclusive discussions. This can create a sense of shared ownership and reinforce shared commitment to organizational goals.
- Alignment with the people (common interest): Javanese culture emphasizes common interests and alignments with the people. Leaders who are inspired by this culture will pay attention to the welfare and needs of subordinates and other members of the organization. They will strive to create an inclusive and fair work environment, and strive to maintain a harmonious relationship between leaders and subordinates.
- Simplicity: Javanese culture teaches the value of simplicity. Leaders who are influenced by this culture tend to show humility, do not show arrogance, and do not overuse power or resources. This simplicity creates a work climate that embraces cooperation and strengthens the relationship between leaders and subordinates.
- Honesty: Javanese culture values honesty and integrity. Leaders who are influenced by this culture are expected to be role models in terms of honesty and can be trusted by subordinates and other members of the organization. They communicate honestly, respect ethical values, and adhere to the principle of truth.
- *Gotong royong*: Javanese culture encourages a spirit of mutual coordination and mutual assistance. Leaders who are inspired by this culture tend to create a work culture that values collaboration, where team members work together to achieve common goals. This mutual cooperation can improve team effectiveness and overall organizational performance.

Javanese ethnic ancient tales (late issues)

- Tugu inscription: like the other inscriptions made during the reign of King Purnawarman, the contents of this inscription were also in the form of anustubh poetry. The Tugu inscription told about the excavation of the Cabdrabaga River by Rajadirajaguru and the excavation of a channel (river) named Gomati which is 11-12 kilometers long by Purnawarman. Information obtained from the Tugu Inscription indicates that the Tarumanegara Kingdom carried out the excavation to avoid natural disasters in the form of floods and droughts that occur during the dry season. The Tugu inscription is engraved on an elliptical andesite stone one meter high. On the stone inscription is engraved five lines of messages written using Pallawa letters and Sanskrit.
- Astabrata: it was wisdom about the path of wisdom in Javanese leadership. There were eight paths of wisdom that must be understood by a leader. That path was the path of the gods. Lacking just one, the position of leader will be lacking. Astabrata was a teaching about dharma or obligations of *Ratu Gung Binathara*. Asta means "eight" and brata means

"solicited". Thus Astabrata means eight practices, or eight qualities, or eight characters, as a form of the obligation of a king or *Gusti* to deal wisely with his people or subjects. Referring to the story of Rama's advice, eight gods must reside within a king, namely: Indra, Yama, Surya, Candra, Bayu, Kuwera, Baruna, and Brahma (Agni). None of the eight characteristics may be left behind.

4.2. Javanese ethnic leadership values

Javanese culture as important values in leadership. These values referred to philosophies and teachings that were upheld in Javanese society. Here was a brief explanation of the the values:

- **Wisdom (*Bathara Karma*):** Wisdom or Bathara Karma refers to the concept that all actions and decisions taken by leaders will have an impact on their own fate or karma and the people they lead. Leaders were expected to act with wisdom, consider the consequences of their actions, and take responsibility for the consequences of their decisions. The concept of Bathara Karma emphasizes the importance of integrity, morality and self-awareness in leadership.
- **Deliberation (*Madya Mami*):** Deliberation was an important principle in Javanese leadership which emphasizes the importance of consensus and dialogue in decision making. Traditional Javanese leaders do not only focus on personal power and authority, but they listen to the opinions and input of members of the community or group they lead. Through the process of deliberation, leaders seek mutual agreement and try to reach the best decision for the common interest. This principle of deliberation reflects an inclusive attitude and respect for diverse views in Javanese leadership.
- **Partiality with the people (*Ngayomi*):** The concept of partiality for the people or *Ngayomi* emphasizes that a leader must have sincere concern and concern for the interests and welfare of the people he leads. A Javanese leader is expected to be empathetic, fair and committed to serving the needs and interests of the people. The *Ngayomi* principle emphasizes that true leadership is not only about power and status, but also about social responsibility and service to the people.
- **Justice (*Adiluhung*):** The Javanese leadership emphasizes the importance of fairness in treating all people indiscriminately. Leaders are expected to act with objectivity, provide equal rights, and handle conflict fairly.
- **Collaborative Leadership (*Susuhunan*):** Javanese leaders tend to encourage collaboration and cooperation between themselves and their team members. They value the contributions and opinions of others, and encourage active participation in decision making.
- **Exemplary (*Kangjeng Rasa*):** A leader is expected to be a good example for others with his behavior, attitude and integrity. They strive to be role models for their subordinates and society in general.
- **Harmony (*Serasa*):** Javanese leadership emphasizes the importance of creating harmony in the relationship between leaders and subordinates, as well as among team members. Leaders are expected to be able to maintain good relationships, respect differences, and build a positive atmosphere.

Table 1. Dimensions and indicators of Javanese ethnic leadership values

Wisdom (<i>Bathara Karma</i>)	Deliberation (<i>Madya Mami</i>)	Partiality with the people (<i>Ngayomi</i>)	Justice (<i>Adi Luhung</i>)	Collaborative Leadership (<i>Susuhunan</i>)	Exemplary (<i>Kangjeng Rasa</i>)	Harmony (<i>Serasa</i>)
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Analytical Ability	Active engagement	Listen and understand the people needs	Fair and equal treatment	Encourage active participation	Integrity	Effective communication
Long Term Thinking Ability	Fairly listen	Build a close relationship with the people	Transparency in decision making	Appreciate the contributions of others	Consistency between words and deeds	Respect differences
Balance Between Logic and Intuition	Open discussion of problems	Serve with dedication	Enforce laws and regulations fairly	Collaboration and cooperation	Empathy and concern	Build cooperation
Learning and Adaptation	Appreciate diversity of opinion	Transparency and accountability	Fair resolution of conflicts	Prioritize common goals	Commitment to the common good	Manage conflict constructively
Reflection and Self Evaluation	Joint decision making	Involvement of the people in decision making	Appreciate diversity and differences	Provide support and recognition	Discipline and responsibility	Creating a positive atmosphere

Source: Koentjaraningrat, 1985

4.3. Javanese philosophy in Indonesian education

The meaning of the Guide System (*among*) in the sentence '*Ing Ngarsa Sung Tuladha, Ing Madya Mangun Karsa, Tut Wuri Handayani*' which comes from Javanese:

- Ing Ngarsa sung Tuladha; Ing (in), Ngarsa (front), sung (become), Tuladha (example/role model), then the meaning is: In front of being an example or role model, when becoming a leader or a teacher one must be able to set an example for everyone around him.
- Ing Madya Mangun Karsa; Ing (at), Madya (middle), mangun (doing), Karsa (spreading) meaning: In the midst of balancing or spreading, an educator in the midst of his busy life is expected to be able to arouse enthusiasm in his students.
- Tut Wuri Handayani; Tut (on), Wuri (behind), Handayani (encouragement) meaning: Behind making encouragement or pushing, an educator is expected to be able to give a moral boost and enthusiasm to students when the teacher is behind.

From the motto of Ki Hajar Dewantara, there is a spirit of high education for all Indonesian people. Teachers in Indonesia should learn from a father of education who has had a positive impact on the Indonesian nation, because it is in the hands of the teachers that the fate of the next generation of the nation and one of the responsibilities for the advancement of education in Indonesia are influenced by the teachers. Therefore, teachers must also contribute in a positive way and participate in channeling their abilities in the field of education as much as possible.

Tut Wuri Handayani has also been the official logo of the Ministry of Education and Culture since 1977 until now. Referring to the official website of the Ministry of Education and Culture, here is a complete description of the meaning of the Tut Wuri Handayani logo or symbol.

- The pentagonal field (light blue) depicts the life of Pancasila.
- The motto Tut Wuri Handayani is used by Ki Hajar Dewantara in implementing his education system. The inclusion of this motto completes our appreciation and respect for the late Ki Hajar Dewantara whose birthday has been made National Education Day.
- The Big Lights up with the Garuda Pattern. The lighting is a lamp specifically used in shadow puppet shows. The big light makes the show come alive.

- The Garuda bird (which becomes the big light) gives a picture of dynamic, mighty, capable and courageous nature to independently sail through the vast sky. Garuda's tail and wings are depicted with five each, which means: 'one word with Pancasilaist deeds'.
- Books are a source for all knowledge that can benefit human life.
- Color: The white color on the eagle's tail and wings and books means holy, clean and selfless. The golden yellow color of the flame means majesty and nobility of devotion. The light blue color in the pentagon area means unfailing dedication by having a deep outlook on life (view of life according to Pancasila).

Following are the principles of Ki Hajar Dewantara's thoughts in the world of education:

- Character education must use conditions that are in line with the national spirit.
- Must pay attention to the origin of life in art, civilization and religious requirements.
- Children need to be brought closer to people's lives.
- Prioritizing the cottage system.
- Teaching is part of education.
- Education in general is a guide in the life of growing children.
- Education is only a guide in the lives of growing children, meaning that the lives of growing children lie outside the skills or will of educators.
- The need for self-mastery in character education.
- In education one must be able to emancipate, meaning: stand alone, not depend on other people and be able to manage oneself.
- Education is a development effort.
- Role model system (Ing Ngarso Sung Tuladha, Ing Madya Mangun Karsa, Tut Wuri Handayani).
- Tri-con principle (continuity, convergence, and consistency).

Javanese leadership has a relevant connection with education today in several aspects. Here are some of those links:

- **Character Development:** Javanese leadership emphasizes the development of strong characters, such as wisdom, justice, deliberation, partiality to the people, and exemplary. Education today is also increasingly paying attention to the development of student character, with an emphasis on moral, ethical and leadership values. Javanese leadership values can be an important foundation in developing student character.
- **Participation and Collaboration:** Deliberation is one of the important values in Javanese leadership. Education is currently also increasingly encouraging active participation of students in the learning process and decision making. Collaboration between students, teachers and other related parties is an important aspect of modern education. The concept of deliberation in Javanese leadership can strengthen participation and collaboration in the educational context.
- **Ethics and Justice:** Javanese leadership emphasizes the principle of fairness and fair treatment of all individuals. In education, it is important to build a just environment, where all students are treated equally and have equal opportunities to learn and develop. The values of justice in Javanese leadership can strengthen the principles of ethics and justice in education.
- **Community Involvement:** The Javanese leadership emphasizes alignment with the people and community involvement. In education, involving local communities and society is an important factor in producing education that is relevant and has a positive impact. Collaboration between schools, teachers, students and communities can improve the quality of education and strengthen the link between education and real life.

- Cultural Values: Javanese leadership reflects the values of the rich Javanese culture. In the context of education, maintaining and respecting local cultural values is an important aspect in the development of sustainable education. Cultural values in Javanese leadership can provide a strong framework for developing education that reinforces cultural identity and promotes respect for diversity.

CONCLUSION

Integrity and exemplary leadership were important values in creating a culture of ethics and professionalism in schools. In the era of technological developments and globalization, integrity and exemplary leadership are a strong foundation for facing various challenges and maintaining the reputation of educational organizations. Having a clear vision and being able to make it happen will help educational organizations face future changes and challenges. A leader with visionary vision will be able to create transformation and innovation in education to meet the demands of the ever-evolving era. Providing guidance and support to teachers, staff and students creates an inclusive and empowered educational environment. Educational leaders who were able to provide direction and mentorship will help individuals reach their full potential, encourage collaboration, and strengthen the overall quality of education. By internalizing the values of Javanese leadership such as *Ing Ngarsa Sung Tulada*, *Ing Madya Mangun Karsa*, and *Tut Wuri Handayani*, educational leaders can strengthen their leadership in facing the future development of educational organizations which are increasingly complex and dynamic.

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