

THE STRATEGY OF THE INDONESIAN NATION'S STRUGGLE TO ACHIEVE AND MAINTAIN INDEPENDENCE FROM AN EDUCATIONAL PERSPECTIVE

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ABSTRAK

This study aims to examine the strategies of the Indonesian people in achieving and maintaining independence and their relevance to history education. Indonesia's struggle for independence was a long and dynamic historical process, evolving from localized armed resistance to a nationally organized movement through education, organizations, and political action. This research employed a qualitative approach using a library research method. Data were collected from history books, scholarly journal articles, and official documents related to Indonesia's independence struggle and theories of history and character education. Data analysis was conducted descriptively by interpreting historical facts and linking them to educational perspectives. The findings indicate that changes in Indonesia's struggle strategies were influenced by the growth of national consciousness, the role of education, and adaptive responses to social and political conditions. Strategies to defend independence, such as guerrilla warfare and the people's total defense system, reflect values of participation, solidarity, and collective responsibility.

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INTRODUCTION

Education is essentially a conscious and planned process to shape individuals who are not only intellectually competent, but also possess character, identity, and responsibility as citizens (Ki Hadjar Dewantara, 2004; Law of the Republic of Indonesia Number 20 of 2003). In the context of Indonesian national education, history learning plays a strategic role because it functions as a medium for transmitting national values, nationalism, and historical awareness to students (Piaget, 1970). However, in practice, history learning is still often oriented towards memorizing facts and chronologies of events, thus being less able to encourage students' in-depth understanding and critical reflection on the meaning of history for the life of the nation and state (Nasution, 1977).

One of the historical materials that has great potential in shaping national character is the study of the strategies of the Indonesian people's struggle to achieve and maintain independence (Hasan, 2012). The history of the Indonesian people's struggle was not born instantly, but through a long process influenced by the experience of colonialism since the arrival of the Portuguese and Dutch in the 16th century (Ricklefs, 1993; Sugiyono, 2013). Colonization that lasted for more than three centuries has caused systemic suffering in the economic, social, political, and cultural fields, which is reflected in the practice of exploitation of natural resources, social discrimination, and restrictions on access to education for the indigenous population (Kuntowijoyo, 2005). These conditions gradually gave rise to a collective awareness among Indonesian society of the importance of resistance as an effort to maintain the dignity, identity, and sovereignty of the nation (Piaget, 1970; Sugiyono, 2013).

In the initial phase, resistance against the colonialists was carried out through physical struggles of a local and regional nature. This resistance was generally led by local figures with a traditional power base, but was not supported by national coordination and a solid struggle organization (Kuntowijoyo, 2005). As a result, this resistance often failed due to the imbalance in military power between the people and the colonialists and the weak consolidation between resistance groups (Putra, 2018). From an educational perspective, this historical fact reflects the importance of the values of unity, organization, and collective awareness as prerequisites for a successful struggle, which need to be instilled through reflective and contextual history learning (Hasan, 2012). Without an understanding of these strategic aspects, history learning risks being reduced to mere heroic stories detached from its substantive meaning and educational value for the formation of students' national character (Wineburg, 2001).

Fundamental changes in the Indonesian nation's struggle strategy began to appear in the early 20th century, along with the development of modern education and the emergence of educated indigenous people (Ricklefs, 1993). The birth of national movement organizations such as Budi Utomo marked a new chapter in the Indonesian nation's struggle based on national and intellectual awareness, where the struggle no longer relied solely on physical strength, but was developed through organizational, educational, and political channels (Kuntowijoyo, 2005). Furthermore, organizations such as Sarekat Islam and the Indonesian National Party expanded the basis of the struggle by involving the people in a broader and more organized manner, thus strengthening national consolidation in the effort to achieve independence (Nasution, 1977; Sugiyono, 2013).

From an educational theory perspective, this condition aligns with Ki Hadjar Dewantara's view that education should function as a tool for human liberation and empowerment (Vygotsky, 1978). Education not only shapes intellectual intelligence but also fosters social and national awareness. Therefore, the success of Indonesia's national struggle is inextricably linked to the role of education in fostering critical awareness, solidarity, and a national vision that transcends regional interests (Hasan, 2012).

After the Proclamation of Independence on August 17, 1945, the Indonesian people were again faced with a major challenge: defending their independence from the Dutch colonialists' attempts to regain power (Piaget, 1970). In a situation of limited weaponry and an imbalance in military power, the Indonesian people developed adaptive struggle strategies, such as guerrilla warfare and the concept of total people's defense, which placed the people as the primary subject of the struggle (Tamansiswa,

2013). Through these strategies, each individual contributed according to their capacity and role, thus embodying the values of participation, collective responsibility, sacrifice, and social solidarity. These values are strongly relevant to the goals of character education, particularly in fostering attitudes of togetherness, nationalism, and civic responsibility (Vygotsky, 1978).

A problem that arises in the current educational context is the limited amount of history instruction that links the nation's struggle strategies with the development of critical thinking skills and the formation of students' character. History instruction often stops at introducing important events, figures, and dates, without inviting students to analyze the strategies, context, and relevance of the values of these struggles to the challenges of modern life (Zed, 2008). However, according to Benjamin Bloom's cognitive theory, meaningful learning must encourage students to reach higher-order thinking domains, such as analysis, synthesis, and evaluation, rather than simply memorizing information (Bloom et al., 1956).

Furthermore, the constructivist approach to education emphasizes that knowledge is built through an active process by students in linking learning experiences to the social and cultural contexts in which they find themselves (Sugiyono, 2013). Therefore, the Indonesian nation's struggle strategies should be studied not only as historical facts, but as a source of values and reflections for building students' national identity (Hasan, 2012). With this approach, history learning can serve as a means of internalizing the values of nationalism, love of the homeland, and responsibility as citizens, as emphasized in the goals of national education (Ministry of Education and Culture of the Republic of Indonesia, 2003).

Based on this description, it can be concluded that the study of the Indonesian nation's struggle strategy has very strong relevance in the context of education. The contextual and reflective integration of this material into history learning is expected to address the problem of students' low historical awareness and national character (Zed, 2008). Therefore, research and writing articles that examine the Indonesian nation's struggle strategy from an educational perspective are important as an effort to strengthen the role of history education in shaping a generation with character, critical thinking, and national insight (Hasan, 2012).

METHOD

This research uses a qualitative approach with a literature study type of research (library research). A qualitative approach was chosen because this study aims to deeply understand the meaning, dynamics, and educational values contained in the Indonesian nation's struggle strategy, rather than to measure variables quantitatively. Qualitative research emphasizes the exploration of meaning and contextual understanding of a social and historical phenomenon, making it relevant for use in the study of the nation's struggle and its implications for education (Creswell, 2009).

The literature review method was used because the primary data sources came from various literature relevant to the research focus. This literature includes national history books, scientific journal articles, official documents, and scholarly works discussing the Indonesian struggle for independence, physical and non-physical resistance strategies, and studies of historical education and character education (Miles, 1994). Through this literature review, researchers can systematically trace the development of the Indonesian nation's struggle strategies while linking them to relevant educational perspectives and theories, thus gaining a comprehensive and in-depth understanding.

The data sources in this study consist of primary and secondary sources. Primary sources consist of scientific works and history books that directly discuss the Indonesian nation's struggle to achieve and maintain independence, while secondary sources include journal articles, previous research results, and educational policy documents relevant to history learning and strengthening national character (Miles, 1994). The selection of data sources was carried out selectively, taking into account the credibility of the authors, the relevance of the substance to the research focus, and the freshness of the information to ensure the data used has adequate academic validity.

The data collection technique was carried out through documentation, namely by identifying, inventorying, and reviewing various written sources relevant to the research focus. This documentation process includes critical reading activities, systematic recording, and grouping data based on main themes, such as physical and non-physical struggle strategies, the role of education in the national struggle, and the values of the struggle relevant to history learning (Creswell, 2009). The documentation technique was chosen because it is able to provide comprehensive historical and conceptual data and allows researchers to conduct in-depth analysis of the meaning and context of the phenomena being studied.

The data analysis in this study was conducted using descriptive-qualitative analysis with stages that include data reduction, data presentation, and drawing conclusions. Data reduction is done by selecting and focusing on data relevant to the research objectives, data presentation is done by compiling the findings in a systematic narrative form according to the discussion flow, while drawing conclusions is directed at formulating the meaning and educational implications of the Indonesian nation's struggle strategy (Kuntowijoyo, 2005).

The analysis was conducted interpretively by linking historical facts with educational theories, particularly history education, character education, and meaningful learning. This interpretive approach enabled researchers to not only describe historical events but also interpret their educational values contextually and reflectively (Creswell, 2009; Hasan, 2012). Thus, the analysis went beyond presenting historical data, but aimed to deepen understanding of the relevance of the Indonesian nation's struggle strategies in the context of education.

To maintain the validity of the data, this study uses source triangulation, namely by comparing information obtained from various literature, history books, and relevant scientific references. Source triangulation is carried out to minimize the subjectivity of interpretation and increase the credibility of research findings (Creswell, 2009). In addition, researchers also check the consistency of arguments with the educational theories used, so that the resulting conclusions have a strong theoretical basis and can be academically accounted for (Kuntowijoyo, 2005).

RESULT and DISCUSSION

The Strategy of the Indonesian Nation's Struggle in Historical Perspective (Expanded Analysis)

Based on the analysis of various literature sources, it was found that the Indonesian nation's struggle strategy to achieve and maintain independence experienced dynamic and contextual development (Kuntowijoyo, 2005; Ricklefs, 2008). This dynamic nature indicates that the struggle was not a linear or uniform process, but rather a historically contingent phenomenon shaped by changing socio-political, economic, and cultural conditions. Each phase of the struggle reflects a specific response to the structural pressures imposed by colonialism, as well as the evolving capacity of Indonesian society to organize, resist, and articulate collective aspirations.

In the early phase of colonialism, the struggle strategy was dominated by armed physical resistance that was local and regional in nature. This resistance was triggered by colonial oppression that directly affected people's lives, such as economic exploitation, forced labor, and the deprivation of social and cultural rights (Putra, 2018). These forms of resistance can be understood as spontaneous reactions rooted in immediate grievances rather than long-term strategic planning. From a historiographical perspective, such resistance reflects what can be termed as "proto-national" movements, where identity was still largely localized and had not yet transformed into a unified national consciousness.

However, limited weaponry, weak coordination between regions, and the lack of a comprehensive national consciousness meant that this resistance was unable to significantly end colonial domination (Ricklefs, 1993). This limitation highlights an important analytical point: the

effectiveness of resistance is not solely determined by courage or militancy, but also by organizational capacity, strategic coherence, and ideological unity. The absence of these elements resulted in fragmented struggles that were easily suppressed by a more organized colonial power.

These findings demonstrate that a purely physical struggle, without the support of collective strategy and national consciousness, has limitations in confronting organized colonial forces. In the context of history education, this is crucial for students to understand so that they view the independence struggle not only in simplistic or heroic terms, but rather as a long process fraught with strategic learning and historical reflection (Hasan, 2012). This perspective encourages a shift from a hero-centric narrative toward a structural and analytical understanding of history, where students are invited to examine the interplay between agency and structure.

Significant developments in the Indonesian nation's struggle strategy began to emerge in the early 20th century, with the birth of national movement organizations such as Budi Utomo, Sarekat Islam, and the Indonesian National Party. These organizations became a vehicle for the consolidation of the struggle, no longer relying solely on physical strength, but rather on strengthening political awareness, national unity, and structured popular mobilization (Kuntowijoyo, 2005). This phase marks a paradigmatic shift from localized resistance to organized nationalism, where the struggle began to be framed within a broader vision of nationhood.

The struggle strategy in this phase emphasized the importance of education, political communication, and organization as instruments of the struggle for independence, which subsequently formed the foundation for the emergence of modern Indonesian national consciousness (Ricklefs, 1993). In this context, education functioned not only as a means of intellectual development but also as a tool for ideological dissemination and political awakening. The emergence of print media, schools, and discussion forums contributed significantly to the formation of a shared national identity.

Education as a Strategic Factor in the National Struggle (Deepened Perspective)

The study's findings indicate that education played a central role in the transformation of the Indonesian nation's struggle strategy. The emergence of educated indigenous people who gained access to modern education was a driving factor in the emergence of national consciousness and organized political struggle (Kuntowijoyo, 2005; Ricklefs, 1993). These educated elites acted as intermediaries who translated colonial experiences into political discourse, thereby mobilizing broader segments of society.

From an educational theory perspective, these findings align with Ki Hadjar Dewantara's idea that education serves as a means of human liberation and emancipation. Education not only shapes intellectual intelligence but also fosters social awareness and national responsibility as the foundation of national and state life (Ki Hadjar Dewantara, 2004). This perspective situates education within a transformative paradigm, where learning is directed toward empowering individuals to critically engage with their socio-political realities.

In the context of history learning, this fact demonstrates that education is not merely a product of independence but also a crucial instrument in the process of achieving it. Therefore, the Indonesian nation's struggle strategy must be understood as the result of the interaction between socio-political conditions and the educational process that shapes the mindset and collective consciousness of society (Vygotsky, 1978). Vygotsky's sociocultural theory reinforces this argument by emphasizing that cognitive development is inseparable from social interaction and cultural context.

History learning that emphasizes the connection between education and the national struggle will help students understand that social and political change can be achieved through education oriented toward critical, reflective, and transformative awareness (Wineburg, 2001). This approach transforms history from a passive body of knowledge into an active tool for social understanding and change.

Strategies for Maintaining Independence and Its Educational Values (Analytical Enrichment)

Following the Proclamation of Independence on August 17, 1945, the Indonesian people's struggle strategy underwent another transformation. Studies have shown that in the face of Dutch

military aggression, the Indonesian people implemented a guerrilla warfare strategy and the concept of total people's defense as a form of adaptation to the imbalance of military power and unfavorable geographical and political conditions (Nasution, 1977). This strategy reflects a high level of adaptability and strategic innovation in response to asymmetrical warfare conditions.

In this strategy, the people played a key role in the struggle, acting as fighters, logistics providers, and information keepers, thus making the struggle to maintain independence a collective movement involving all levels of society (Vygotsky, 1978). This collective participation illustrates that independence was not merely achieved by elite actors or military forces, but through the active involvement of the broader population.

From an educational perspective, the strategy of total people's defense reflects the values of active participation, social solidarity, sacrifice, and collective responsibility. These values are highly relevant to the goals of character education, particularly in fostering a sense of togetherness, patriotism, and social awareness in students (Hasan, 2012). In this sense, historical events serve as a living laboratory of values that can be internalized through contextual learning.

Therefore, the strategy of maintaining independence is not only important as a historical study, but also as a source of contextual and applicable educational values in history learning and strengthening national character (Wineburg, 2001). This reinforces the argument that history education should move beyond factual transmission toward value-oriented and reflective learning.

History Learning and Critical Thinking Development (Theoretical Deepening)

The analysis shows that studying the strategies of the Indonesian people's struggle has great potential in developing students' critical thinking skills. Through analyzing changes in struggle strategies over time, students are encouraged to understand the cause-and-effect relationships, socio-political contexts, and internal and external factors that influence historical events (Hasan, 2012; Wineburg, 2001). This analytical process trains students to think historically, not just chronologically.

This learning process aligns with Benjamin Bloom's cognitive theory, which asserts that meaningful learning occurs when students are able to reach higher-order thinking domains, such as analysis, evaluation, and synthesis, rather than simply memorizing factual information (Bloom et al., 1956). By engaging with historical complexity, students develop the ability to interpret, critique, and construct knowledge.

History learning that emphasizes solely the memorization of events and figures has the potential to neglect the strategic dimensions and reflective value of history itself. As a result, history tends to be understood as a static collection of past facts, detached from the realities of students' lives (Zed, 2008). This pedagogical limitation must be addressed through innovative teaching strategies that prioritize inquiry, discussion, and problem-solving.

Therefore, integrating the study of the Indonesian nation's struggle strategies into history learning needs to be directed at developing students' analytical and reflective abilities, so that history can serve as a relevant learning resource for understanding current challenges and preparing students for the dynamics of life in the future (Hasan, 2012). In this context, history education becomes a bridge between past experiences and future possibilities.

Educational Implications and Relevance in Learning (Strengthened Argumentation)

Based on these results and discussions, it can be understood that the Indonesian nation's struggle strategy has significant implications in the educational context. History learning that integrates contextual analysis of struggle strategies can strengthen students' historical awareness, nationalist attitudes, and national character (Hasan, 2012). This integration ensures that learning is not only informative but also transformative.

Furthermore, this approach encourages a more meaningful, dialogical learning process, and is oriented towards developing critical thinking skills, as students are trained to analyze, reflect on, and

evaluate historical events in depth (Bloom, 1956). Dialogical learning positions students as active participants in constructing knowledge, rather than passive recipients.

Thus, the results of this study confirm that the study of the Indonesian nation's struggle strategy is not only relevant in the realm of historiography, but also has strategic value in the world of education. The integration of this material into history learning is expected to be able to address the problem of students' low understanding of history and national character, while simultaneously strengthening the role of education as a means of forming citizens who are aware of history, have character, and are responsible in the life of the nation and state (Hasan, 2012; Law of the Republic of Indonesia Number 20 of 2003).

Conclusion

This study confirms that the strategy of the Indonesian nation's struggle is a dynamic, adaptive, and contextually shaped process that evolves in response to changing socio-political conditions from the colonial period to the post-independence era. The transformation from localized armed resistance to organized national movements, and later to collective strategies for defending independence, demonstrates that the success of the struggle was not determined solely by physical force but by the development of national consciousness, strategic coordination, and collective participation.

A central finding of this study is the crucial role of education as a strategic instrument in shaping the direction and effectiveness of the national struggle. The emergence of educated indigenous groups contributed significantly to the formation of political awareness, national identity, and organized resistance against colonial power. This confirms that education functioned not only as a consequence of independence, but as a driving force in achieving it, in line with the emancipatory perspective of education that emphasizes the development of critical awareness and social responsibility.

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