



## The journey towards Indonesian democracy: The concept of education in the view of Mohammad Hatta

Nur Rizkia<sup>1</sup>, Noni Nadra<sup>2</sup>, Farha<sup>3</sup>, Wilda Salina<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Universitas Negeri Yogyakarta, Indonesia

<sup>2</sup> Universitas Islam Negeri Ar-Raniry, Indonesia

<sup>3</sup> Universitas Negeri Medan, Indonesia

<sup>4</sup> Universitas Syiah Kuala, Indonesia

Correspondence: [nurrizkia.kia@gmail.com](mailto:nurrizkia.kia@gmail.com)

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### ABSTRACT

This study aims to analyze the concept of education in Mohammad Hatta's thinking as the foundation of democracy and explore its relevance to the contemporary Indonesian education system. The research method employs a qualitative literature review approach, analyzing journal articles as primary sources and books and historical documents as secondary sources using Miles et al.'s (2014) analysis technique, which includes data reduction, data presentation, and data verification. The research findings indicate that Mohammad Hatta's concept of education has holistic, transformative, and democratic characteristics with five main dimensions: education as a tool for liberation, character and morality building, a means of economic empowerment, a medium for leadership regeneration, and an instrument of social transformation. This concept emphasizes not only cognitive-intellectual aspects but also spiritual, social, and moral dimensions as the foundation of a democratic and socially just society. The findings demonstrate strong relevance to Indonesia's contemporary education system, particularly the philosophy of the Merdeka Curriculum and the Pancasila Student Profile Strengthening Program (P5). Limitations of the study include reliance on secondary sources, a narrow focus on the Indonesian context, and the failure to explore critical aspects of implementation in the digital age.



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## INTRODUCTION

As a newly independent country, Indonesia faces complex challenges in building a democratic system that is in harmony with the character of its people. The legacy of the Dutch colonial system has left deep structural inequalities, particularly in terms of access to education and political participation, with the majority of the population still trapped in ignorance and a lack of political awareness. The main challenge is how to create a democratic system that not only adopts Western values wholesale but also accommodates local values and the characteristics of Indonesian society. Liberal democracy, as it has developed in the West, tends to give space to the domination of groups with capital and economic power, while the majority

of the people remain marginalized (Ashri, 2024). This raises concerns that the implementation of democracy without adequate societal readiness will instead create new inequalities and perpetuate an unfair social structure.

The fundamental problem in the context of democratization in Indonesia lies in the low quality of human resources due to limited access to quality education. Without a proper understanding of their rights and obligations as citizens, the people cannot fulfill their role as sovereigns in a democratic system. This situation is exacerbated by the lack of leaders who have a vision and commitment to democratic values and the welfare of the people. Furthermore, there is a conflict between idealism and reality in the implementation of democracy in Indonesia, where idealism aims to create a just government by implementing democracy as best as possible, but reality shows that the government is actually moving further away from democratic principles, especially when democracy that prioritizes individualism benefits capital-rich groups without any balancing power.

Various studies have examined Mohammad Hatta's thoughts in the context of politics and economics, particularly the concept of economic democracy that characterizes his thinking. Deliar Noer compares the approaches of Soekarno and Mohammad Hatta, noting that "Soekarno preferred to interact with the masses, while Hatta preferred to educate them." Sukri, (2021) analyzed Hatta's attitude toward Western democracy, concluding that Hatta was a supporter of Western democracy with socialist or social democratic tendencies, while Asriana et al., (2018) examined the core philosophy of economic democracy in Hatta's thought. However, previous studies have focused more on the political and economic aspects of Mohammad Hatta's thinking, while the dimension of education as the foundation of democracy has not received adequate attention, even though for Hatta, education was an integral part of politics and a tool for struggle to raise public awareness.

There is a research gap in comprehensively understanding the concept of education from Mohammad Hatta's perspective, especially in the context of building a sustainable democracy that is in line with the character of the Indonesian nation. This gap is important to study, given the relevance of Hatta's thoughts on education as the foundation of democracy to the challenges of democratization that Indonesia still faces today. The lack of in-depth studies on the concept of education in Mohammad Hatta's thinking has led to a lack of understanding of how education can be an effective instrument in building a substantial and sustainable democracy. For Hatta, education is not merely a process of transferring knowledge and skills, but also a powerful tool in shaping individual character, strengthening national spirit, and encouraging active participation in democratic life.

Based on the identified issues and research gaps, this study aims to analyze the concept of education in the thoughts of Mohammad Hatta, one of Indonesia's founding fathers, who had a unique perspective on democracy that aligns with the conditions and character of the Indonesian nation. This study also aims to examine the role of education as the foundation of democracy according to Mohammad Hatta, understand the relevance of his thoughts to the challenges of democratization in Indonesia, and explore the contribution of Mohammad Hatta's educational thoughts to efforts to build a sustainable, fair, and inclusive democracy in Indonesia. Through this research, it is hoped that a more comprehensive understanding of the concept of education in Mohammad Hatta's thinking and its contribution to the development of sustainable democracy in Indonesia can be obtained.

## RESEARCH METHODS

This research uses library research with a qualitative approach to gain a deep understanding of the concept of education in Mohammad Hatta's thought. Research data sources consist of two types: first, primary data sources in the form of scientific journal articles that have a high level of validity and have gone through a peer review process; second, secondary data sources in the form of books, historical documents, works by Mohammad Hatta, and other supporting literature that are used to avoid errors related to concepts, procedures, and practices. Data livelihood using Google Scholar and Scopus. The data found and analyzed as many as 10 relevant articles. The data collection technique is carried out using the documentation method, which involves the stages of identifying sources, selecting and evaluating them based on relevance and quality, and systematically collecting and recording information related to Mohammad Hatta's educational concept. To analyze the data, this study adopted the technique introduced by Miles et al., (2014), which consists of three stages: data reduction, data presentation, and data verification.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Based on document analysis, Indonesia's declaration of independence on August 17, 1945 had a very important impact on Indonesia's political struggle and became the foundation for the development of the concept of national education. This proclamation was “the result of a significant struggle and demonstrated that the Indonesian people had a legitimate right to determine their own future” (Kalistus Stefen et al., 2022). Through this proclamation, Indonesia set the goal of building a just, prosperous, and welfare-oriented nation, free from colonial rule. The education that Mohammad Hatta fought for had a broader purpose than simply developing individuals' intellectual abilities. According to Hatta, education should also focus on shaping culture and national spirit, as well as forming individuals who are aware of their roles and responsibilities as members of society (Makarim A., 2021). This view is in line with Fuady's perspective, who stated that “education is not only about fostering intellectual development but also about fostering a sense of social responsibility” (Fuady, 2023).

In this study, the researcher will discuss five main concepts of education in Mohammad Hatta's thinking: (1) Education as a tool of liberation that plays an important role in freeing society from oppression and colonialism; (2) Education as a shaper of character and morality that is not only about knowledge, but also shapes attitudes, values, ethics, and personality; (3) Education for the economic empowerment of society as a means of improving the quality of human resources; (4) Education for leadership regeneration that prioritizes a responsible and qualified younger generation; (5) Education as social transformation that can change unfair social structures and support equality (Drachewych, 2024; Muslimin et al., 2024; Zulkifli, 2022). On Indonesia's journey toward democracy, Mohammad Hatta saw education as a strong foundation for creating a democratic, just, and progressive society. Hatta believed that “political education and democratic awareness must begin early so that every individual understands their rights and obligations as responsible citizens” (Neila Kholilatus Tsania et al., 2024). Research findings show that Mohammad Hatta's vision of education as a builder of democratic character is in line with the philosophy of the Merdeka Curriculum, which focuses on developing students' character and competencies. This curriculum is “pro-teacher, pro-

student, and pro-creativity, reflecting the spirit of democracy in education” and adopts an approach that gives freedom to educators and learners.

The analysis shows that Mohammad Hatta's concept of education cannot be separated from the historical context of Indonesia's proclamation of independence. As stated in the document, the proclamation of independence “marked the beginning of the Indonesian people's efforts to build an independent and sovereign nation, with the aim of achieving justice, prosperity, and welfare for all its people.” In this context, education became a strategic instrument for realizing the ideals of independence. The concept of education as a tool for liberation demonstrates Hatta's deep understanding of the role of education in socio-political transformation. Education does not only function as a transfer of knowledge, but also as “a means of building national consciousness and preparing the people to play an active role in determining the fate of the nation” (Fuady, 2023;Junaenah, 2016). This aligns with the spirit of the proclamation, which affirms the Indonesian people's right to determine their own destiny.

Mohammad Hatta's concept of education has a holistic dimension that emphasizes not only cognitive aspects but also affective and psychomotor aspects. As stated by Woodward (2015), “schools are an important means in the social and political system that creates and shapes future generations of leaders.” This concept shows that Hatta understood the strategic role of education in shaping the character of the nation. The emphasis on character and morality reflects Hatta's vision of education that not only produces intelligent individuals but also moral and ethical ones. This concept is highly relevant to the challenges faced by post-independence Indonesia, which requires leaders who are not only competent but also have integrity . As stated in the research, “education is expected to strengthen national pride and produce individuals who are ready to take on leadership roles and work with full responsibility” (Fuady, 2023).

The concept of Islamic education in Mohammad Hatta's thinking shows a unique synthesis between spiritual values and a commitment to social justice. Hatta saw “Islamic education as a tool to fight injustice and social inequality” (Jamil et al., 2023). This approach shows a progressive understanding of the role of religion in social transformation. The connection between Islamic education and inclusive education in Hatta's thinking shows a comprehensive vision of equality and justice. As explained by Terzi (2014), inclusive education is seen as “an educational practice that ensures social justice, equality, and equal participation.” This concept aligns with Hatta's view that education should foster empathy, social awareness, and charitable activities aimed at reducing social inequality.

Mohammad Hatta's concept of democratic education has strong relevance to the development of contemporary Indonesian education. Hatta's vision of education as “a vehicle for shaping democratic character that values pluralism, tolerance, and active participation in state affairs” (Neila Kholilatus Tsania et al., 2024) is reflected in various national curriculum innovations. The implementation of the Merdeka Curriculum and the Pancasila Student Profile Strengthening Program (P5) demonstrates that Hatta's idealism about democratic education has been integrated into the framework of Indonesia's contemporary national curriculum. The P5 program, themed “Voice of Democracy,” aims to shape students' democratic character, aligning with Hatta's view that “political education and democratic awareness must begin at an early age” (Yudha Setiawan et al., 2024;Ulandari & Rapita, 2023).

The concept of education for community economic empowerment in Hatta's thinking reflects a holistic understanding of the relationship between education, economy, and social

welfare. Education is not only viewed as an investment in human capital but also as an instrument to “enhance the economic capabilities and welfare of the nation” (Fuady, 2023;Junaenah, 2016). The concept of social transformation through education reflects Hatta's long-term vision of structural change in Indonesian society. Education is seen as having the “ability to free individuals from social injustice and promote inclusivity, equality, and justice in society.” This vision is highly relevant to Indonesia's challenges in addressing social and economic disparities.

The findings of this study have important implications for the development of Indonesia's national education system. First, Hatta's concept of holistic education shows the need for a balance between cognitive, affective, and psychomotor development in the learning process. Second, the emphasis on character and morality provides a foundation for the development of substantial and operational character education. Third, the concept of inclusive education and social justice provides direction for efforts to equalize access to and quality of education. As shown in the research by Djone & Suryani, (2019), “the government's policy in supporting increased access to education through the PPA-PKH program and the elimination of child labor in Indonesia in 2022 is a strategic investment to improve the competence of working children.” Fourth, the concept of democratic education provides inspiration for the development of participatory and student-centered learning. The implementation of the P5 methodology, which uses a project-based learning approach, demonstrates the relevance of Hatta's concept to contemporary educational practices that “encourage students to actively engage in solving real-world problems in society”(Kurniawan et al., 2022).

## CONCLUSION

Based on the results of the research and discussions that have been conducted, it can be concluded that the concept of education in Mohammad Hatta's thinking has holistic, transformative, and democratic characteristics that are highly relevant to the context of Indonesia's national development. This study identified five main concepts of Hatta's education: education as a tool for liberation, character and moral development, economic empowerment, leadership regeneration, and social transformation. The findings indicate that Hatta's educational concepts not only emphasize cognitive-intellectual aspects but also encompass spiritual, social, and moral dimensions, which form the foundation for the realization of a democratic and socially just society. The relevance of Hatta's ideas is evident through their integration into the contemporary national education system, particularly in the philosophy of the Merdeka Curriculum and the Pancasila Student Profile Strengthening Program (P5), which emphasize democratic, inclusive, and character-based education.

This study suggests strengthening the implementation of Mohammad Hatta's holistic educational concept through operational character education, systematic integration of national values, development of inclusive education that ensures equal access, and strengthening participatory democratic education. For further research, it is recommended to conduct comparative studies with other educational figures, empirical research on the implementation of Hatta's concepts in teaching practices, and longitudinal studies on the long-term impact of democratic education on student character development. The limitations of this study include reliance on secondary data sources, a narrow focus on the Indonesian context, and a lack of in-

depth exploration of critical aspects and challenges in implementing Mohammad Hatta's educational concepts in the current digital and globalized era.

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