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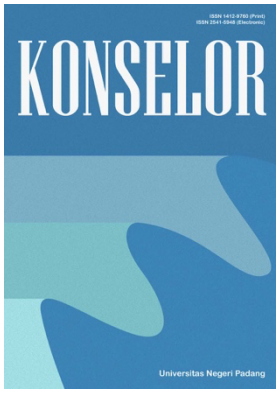


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# Identifications of Counselor Ideal Characters based on Hermeneutics Analysis of Ki Hadjar Dewantara's Criticism Concept

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# Identifications of Counselor Ideal Characters based on Hermeneutics Analysis of Ki Hadjar Dewantara's Criticism Concept

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**Abstract:** Ki Hajar Dewantara is recognised as the Father of National Education and a National Hero of Indonesia. He established the Taman Siswa educational movement rooted in the principles of the Indonesian nation, aiming to enhance the dignity of the state and its people for the benefit of humanity globally. This qualitative research utilised a hermeneutic methodology to interpret Javanese literary traditions, particularly collections of *Serat* (manuscripts) and the aphoristic teachings of Ki Hajar Dewantara, and to express their meanings through systematic analysis. The researchers identified and developed the ideal traits of counsellors within the framework of Ki Hajar Dewantara's philosophical framework. The findings demonstrate a clear, mutually supportive connection among the ideal qualities of counsellors, counselling communication techniques, and Ki Hajar Dewantara's educational philosophy.

**Key Words:** Ki Hajar Dewantara; Counsellor Ideal Traits; Hermeneutic Methodology; Taman Siswa Educational Philosophy; Counselling Communication Techniques

## INTRODUCTION

Counsellors are trained professionals who provide guidance and counselling services. They are responsible for supporting students with diverse personalities in schools, particularly in capacity development and problem-solving (Zahm et al., 2016; Griffen & Hallet, 2017; Landon et al., 2021). Carl Rogers developed the phenomenological perspective in person-centred counselling and identified three core ideal characteristics of a counsellor: congruence, unconditional positive regard, and empathy (Rogers, 1957; Zarzyck et al., 2022; Cooper et al., 2020; Ivers et al., 2021). Although Rogers' framework demonstrates conceptual relevance, it cannot fully serve as a foundation for counselling practice in Indonesia, which encompasses extensive cultural diversity (Genç & Yüksel-Şahin, 2020; Johnsen et al., 2021; Williams et al., 2021). Individual values shape behaviour; therefore, individuals need counselling services that recognise and respect their unique characteristics.

The ideal counsellor profile is based on four principles: (1) understanding sociopolitical forces that influence minority clients; (2) recognising that culture, social class, and related factors impact the quality of the counselling process; (3) explaining how abilities, beliefs, and communication misunderstandings affect clients' readiness for acceptance and change; and (4) highlighting the importance of effective communication. These elements suggest that ideal counsellor qualities require an integrated set of skills to address diverse counselling processes and objectives. To navigate cultural

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differences, counsellors must choose approaches rooted in clients' cultural references (Glenn et al., 2015; Baştemur & Uçar, 2022; Gaume et al., 2014). Ideal counsellor characteristics reflect general compatibility but remain insufficient as a universal framework for Indonesia's culturally diverse population (Farozin, 2019). Cultural differences and individual value systems shape counsellor characteristics and professional conduct (Allan et al., 2019; Miller et al., 2020). Culture constitutes a human-created environment in which individuals actively participate, and nearly all dimensions of human behaviour form part of cultural expression (Rocha, 2025; Huggins et al., 2025). Cultural differences encompass values, norms, ideologies, and life structures that individuals consciously adopt and internalise from childhood through adulthood. This internalisation strongly influences interpersonal communication within intercultural relationships (Bondarenko & Fedko, 2017; Silveus et al., 2023). Although scholars often associate culture with race, ethnicity, or biological heritage, culture fundamentally represents a sociopsychological construct defined by shared values, attitudes, beliefs, and behaviours within groups (Lee & Kim, 2024; Edwin et al., 2025; Chu et al., 2016).

Ki Hajar Dewantara stands as an Indonesian National Hero whose educational philosophy offers a relevant foundation for defining the ideal characteristics of a counsellor in Indonesia. As a humanitarian figure recognised nationally and internationally, he continues to guide Indonesian education (Mangunwibawa et al., 2025; Wiryopranoto et al., 2017). According to Indrayani et al. (2023), Ki Hajar Dewantara's most influential educational principle is his trilogy: *Ing Ngarsa Sung Tuladha, Ing Madya Mangun Karsa,* and *Tut Wuri Handayani*. This philosophy emphasises modelling exemplary behaviour, active engagement to achieve shared goals, and providing moral support and guidance while fostering learner autonomy. Ki Hajar Dewantara pioneered Indonesian education by founding the Taman Siswa school system, which earned him recognition as the Father of Indonesian Education. He not only initiated educational reform but also formulated an educational philosophy aligned with Indonesian culture and national identity. His experiences with Western education and indigenous cultural development informed this culturally grounded framework, which continues to shape Indonesian education today (Purbonuswanto et al., 2024; Putri, 2024; Asnawan, 2020).

Ki Hajar Dewantara's educational philosophy offers substantial potential for identifying ideal counsellor characteristics and counselling communication techniques rooted in Indonesian values. Indonesia's cultural diversity necessitates a counselling framework that aligns with local life contexts and cultural realities. Relying solely on Western counselling models is less relevant in Indonesia due to fundamental cultural differences. Ki Hajar Dewantara conceptualised national education as a system aligned with the nation's life principles and aimed at supporting human development while elevating the dignity of society and the state (Purbonuswanto et al., 2024). Counsellors who adopt a multicultural stance demonstrate tolerance and understanding toward clients' differences and cultural practices within school counselling programs (Griffen & Hallett, 2017).

This study (1) identified and described the components of ideal counsellor characteristics based on Ki Hajar Dewantara's philosophy and teachings; and (2) identified and described counselling communication techniques that reflect counsellors' foundational attitudes derived from Ki Hajar Dewantara's educational principles.

## METHOD

This study examined a collection of texts containing Ki Hajar Dewantara's philosophical ideas. Accordingly, the research employed a qualitative hermeneutic approach to uncover the meanings and conceptual structures expressed in these texts. Using hermeneutic methods, the researcher analysed, interpreted, and explained the texts by revealing, clarifying, and translating their underlying meanings (Habsy, 2020). The study applied hermeneutics to the identification of texts, data collection, and analysis to unite the interpreter's horizon with the author's horizon. This process enabled meaningful interpretation, connected past and present paradigms, and reconstructed the meanings of Ki Hajar Dewantara's philosophical concepts into an ideal counsellor profile by employing Gadamer's hermeneutic analytical strategy (Ramadhan, 2024; Alsaigh & Coyne, 2021). The research used two types of data sources: primary and secondary. Primary data consist of information obtained directly by the

researcher, while secondary data are derived from existing sources. Qualitative research data sources may include informants, events or activities, locations, and documents or archives.

In this study, the sources of data include: (1) Primary sources: (a) Ki Hajar Dewantara (2004), Bagian Pertama: Pendidikan. Yogyakarta: Majelis Taman Luhur Persatuan Taman Siswa. This book explains Ki Hajar Dewantara's educational philosophy, covering national education, educational politics, early childhood education, and other educational aspects; (b) Taman Siswa (1952), Buku Peringatan 30 Tahun Taman Siswa, 1922–1952. Special Region of Yogyakarta. This book summarises the establishment and development of Taman Siswa and its acceptance among Indonesian society, especially indigenous communities; (c) Ki Hajar Dewantara (2019), Menuju Manusia Merdeka. Yogyakarta: Leutika. This book presents Ki Hajar Dewantara's views on education and culture, including detailed discussions of family and child education; (d) Ki Mochammad Tauchid (2011), Perjuangan dan Ajaran Hidup Ki Hajar Dewantara. Yogyakarta: Majelis Taman Luhur Persatuan Taman Siswa. This book depicts Ki Hajar Dewantara's struggles, moral teachings, exemplary conduct, and contributions to Indonesian education. (2) Secondary sources: (a) observational findings from the Surabaya Education Museum; (b) observational findings from the Indonesian Education Museum in Yogyakarta; (c) observational findings from the Dewantara Kirti Griya Taman Siswa Museum in Yogyakarta; and (d) interviews with museum caretakers at the Dewantara Kirti Griya Taman Siswa Museum in Surabaya. This information is likely to combine actual procedures with the materials and apparatus, as it is difficult to determine what the participants were doing without specifying what they were using. The procedure generally includes, (a) variables that are manipulated and measured, including independent and dependent variables; (b) any conditions or groups subject to comparison; (c) methods of group assignment or placement; (d) the researcher's role during the session; (e) the instructions given to participants; (f) activities undertaken by participants. Lastly, a statement should be included indicating that participants provided informed consent. When drafting your own procedure section, you may decide whether to include details on how informed consent was obtained, as it is not strictly part of the data collection process and can be considered separately.

To explore alternative spaces for meaning-making within Ki Hajar Dewantara's life philosophy as applied to ideal counsellor traits, the study adopts the stages of Gadamerian hermeneutic research as follows: (1) The researcher identifies and examines the texts or data sources, including both primary and secondary sources; (2) the researcher reads the texts whilst applying an initial understanding of ideal counsellor traits; (3) the researcher collects and analyses data following hermeneutic procedures, negotiating and renegotiating interpretations with Ki Hajar Dewantara's texts until a comprehensive understanding is reached; and (4) the researcher formulates a concept of the ideal counsellor derived from Ki Hajar Dewantara's philosophical ideas as the study's final outcome.

## RESULTS

Based on a comprehensive presentation and analysis of the data, this study explored Ki Hajar Dewantara's philosophical concepts as elements of the ideal counsellor profile. The data analysis reveals coherent, mutually reinforcing relationships among key components, core ideas, philosophical notions, and Ki Hajar Dewantara's life teachings within a systematic counselling theory framework. By tracing and identifying both primary and supporting data sources, the study identified three main research themes: (1) Character, classified into (1.a) *Ing Ngarsa Sung Tuladha*, (1.b) *Ing Madya Mangun Karsa*, (1.c) *Tut Wuri Handayani*, (1.d) *Asah*, (1.e) *Asih*, (1.f) *Asuh*, and (1.g) *Nglakoni*; and (2) Communication Techniques, classified into (2.a) *Pembauran* (*Semrawung*), (2.b) Openness and Simplicity, (2.c) Use of Standard Language, (2.d) Adaptation to Development, and (2.e) Inspiration and Motivation.

We examined all textual sources and organised them into two research sub-focuses. Repeated readings aimed to identify Ki Hajar Dewantara's philosophical ideas and life teachings that correspond with the research sub-focuses, namely the character of the ideal counsellor and counselling communication techniques. The study obtained Ki Hajar Dewantara's textual data through thorough and iterative readings of the primary sources. Table 1 displays the primary data sources utilised in this study.


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**Table 1.** The Data of Ki Hajar Dewantara Text

| No. | Text titles | Text codes | Remarks |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1. | *Perjuangan Dan Ajaran Hidup Ki Hajar Dewantara*<br>Struggles and Life Teaching of Ki Hajar Dewantara | DT 1/PDAHKHD/Hal/2011 | DT 1: First text data |
| 2. | *Bagian Pertama: Pendidikan*<br>First Part: Education | DT 2/BP:P/Hal/2004 | DT 2: Second text data |
| 3. | *Buku Peringatan 30 Tahun Taman Siswa, 1922-1952*<br>The Book of 30 Year Taman Siswa Commemoration, 1922-1952 | DT 3/BP30TTM/Hal/1529 | DT 3: Third text data |
| 4. | *Menuju Manusia Merdeka*<br>Reaching Human of Liberty | DT 5/MMM/Hal/2019 | DT 5: Fifth text data |

Qualitative coding is central to qualitative data analysis, used to interpret data and address research questions. The process includes preparing data, pre-coding, and creating a coding scheme, all carried out iteratively and gradually by the researcher. This study utilises the coding framework shown in Table 2.

**Table 2.** Condensed Data

| Codes | Explanations | Remarks |
|---|---|---|
| DT | The DT code labels data extracted from textual sources cited in the study. | The coding format is DT/book title/author/page/year of publication. Example: DT/KHD.P/KHD/12/2004 |
| DW | The DW code labels data obtained from interviews cited in the study. | The coding format is DW/informant/interview location/interview date.<br>Example : DW/BK1/18 Jan 2024 |
| DO | The DO code labels data obtained from observations cited in the study. | The coding format is DO/location name/observation date.<br>Example : DO/MPI/18 Jan 2024 |
| DDK | The DK code labels data obtained from documentation cited in the study. | The coding format is DK/type of documentation/documentation date.<br>Exxample : DK/D(Dokumen)/18 Jan 2024 |

## Elements and Descriptions of Ideal Counsellor Characters based on Ki Hajar Dewantara‘s Criticism Concept

### *Ing Ngarsa Sung Tulodho*

The first concept in the trilogy, Ing Ngarsa Sung Tuladha, originates from Java. *"Ing ngarsa"* refers to a figure at the front, such as a leader or educator, while "sung tuladha" means to set an example. Holistically, this concept asserts that leaders must serve as role models for those they lead. In education, counsellors, as key figures, must demonstrate appropriate attitudes, behaviours, and speech to prevent negative influences on students. The Taman Siswa philosophy emphasises teachers as leaders and living role models in shaping students' character and moral values. Ki Tjokrodirdjo, one of the senior educators of Taman Siswa, reinforced this principle in a written guideline in Dutch, stating:

> *"Tusschen guru en siswa bestaat geen ruimte,"* which means that no separation exists between teachers and students. Teachers do not merely teach; they embody living examples for their students through their attitudes, actions, steps, and words (DT 1/PDAHKHD/21/2011).

### *Ing Madya Mangun Karsa*

The second concept in the trilogy, "*Ing Madya Mangun Karsa*", means "to stand in the middle to build motivation or will." *"Ing madya"* denotes a central position, while "mangun karsa" refers to fostering initiative and determination to realise ideas. This concept implies that individuals in positions

of power can motivate others to develop aspirations and thoughts. Ki Hajar Dewantara applied this principle at Taman Siswa by creating an enjoyable learning environment through a diverse range of educational activities. An informant, the Dewantara Museum curator, confirmed this application during an interview:

> "Yes, that is correct… Taman Siswa provided many opportunities for students to develop freely according to their nature. Ki Hajar Dewantara created various liberating forms of instruction, including arts education across multiple artistic disciplines, physical education, learning through children's games, and more. Ki Hajar implemented this approach long ago." (DW/KMDKG/Narsum 1/13 Feb 2024).

### *Tut Wuri Handayani*

Tut Wuri Handayani constitutes the third concept in Ki Hajar Dewantara's trilogy and continues to serve as a philosophical foundation for education, even appearing in the official logo of the Ministry of Education and Culture. Literally, it means "to provide support and guidance from behind." This concept complements the previous principles by emphasising the educator's role when positioned behind learners, offering motivation, direction, and supervision without undermining students' independence. Ki Hajar Dewantara explained that educators in this position function as facilitators and supervisors of individual development. He articulated this view in the following statement:

> *"Tut wuri handayani"* means that a leader follows from behind, granting freedom of movement to those being led. However, Handayani implies exerting influence through authority and, when necessary, through coercion or firmness if the granted freedom is misused and endangers oneself or others. In extraordinary circumstances, the leader must stand firmly, and members or children must submit to the leader. In such conditions, the leader's position stands above regulations." (DT 1/PDAHKHD/26/2011).

### *Asah*

According to Ki Hajar Dewantara, the pamong system rests on several fundamental principles. The first is asah, which encompasses not only academic knowledge but also the formation of an ideal character. Taman Siswa schools, in their practical implementation, emphasise moral values and culture as the core of learning. Ki Hajar Dewantara explained this principle in his theory of the child's psyche and the authority of education. The Convergent Theory (Convergentie-theory) teaches that children are not born as blank slates. Instead, it likens them to sheets of paper already filled with writing, although the writing appears faint. This theory asserts that education holds both the obligation and the authority to reinforce all positive inscriptions so that they become visible as virtuous character (DT 2/BP: P/23/2004).

### *Asih*

Ki Hajar Dewantara also introduced the concept of asih (affection or compassion) as an integral element of education, particularly for teachers. He argued that the relationship between pamong (educators) and students must rest on compassion and shared aspirations, resembling familial bonds. He portrayed all members of Taman Siswa as one extended family—not by blood, but through empathy and common purpose. Ki Hajar Dewantara articulated this view as follows:

> People's education must cultivate a sense of kinship, namely living together in hardship and joy, sharing responsibility, and developing familial bonds from small environments to broader ones, such as the kinship among nations (DT 2/BP: P/139/2004). Social feeling is reflected in non-arrogant actions, such as helping others pursue excellent deeds. The matter to be the foundation is the empathy (DT 3/BP30TTM/73/1529).


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### *Asuh*

Asuh, which means "guiding and nurturing“, emphasises children’s freedom while providing direction so they can develop harmoniously. As educators, pamong do not merely teach academic content but also shape character and moral integrity. They guide learners holistically and help them adapt to both natural dispositions and the demands of their time. Ki Hajar Dewantara explained this concept in Foundations of Education as a cornerstone of educational guidance, stating:

> Based on common understanding and what we observe across all forms of education, education clearly constitutes guidance in children’s growth. The purpose of education is to direct all innate potentials within children so that, as individuals and as members of society, they may attain the highest possible safety and happiness (DT 2/BP: P/20/2004).

## Elements and Descriptions of Counsellor Communication Techniques based on Ki Hajar Dewantara’s Criticism Concept

### *Blended Communication (Semrawung)*

Ki Hajar Dewantara carried out his struggle without restricting himself to a particular social environment. He interacted easily with people from all backgrounds and rejected social barriers, a practice known in Javanese as *semrawung*. Although he was a nobleman who lived comfortably and received social respect, he rejected the privileges attached to his status. He chose to interact on equal terms with all social groups and even relinquished his aristocratic title. The Struggle and Life Teachings of Ki Hajar Dewantara explains this stance as follows:

> Ki Hajar Dewantara, as the son of a noble family, relinquished his aristocratic title because he regarded it as an obstacle to building relationships with the people. His strong sense of populism led him to believe that the title would separate him from the wider community. During his imprisonment in Pekalongan and Semarang, the colonial authorities treated him as an ordinary prisoner and placed him among common inmates. According to Dutch East Indies regulations, he was entitled to special treatment similar to that given to Dutch citizens; however, he did not protest and accepted this treatment as part of his struggle. Through this experience, he was able to establish closer relations with the people (DT 1/PADHKHD/59/2011).

This attitude demonstrates his effort to unite with the people, as reflected in the early stages of his journalistic career. Ki Hajar Dewantara began his struggle from the grassroots rather than occupying elite positions. His journalistic experience, including direct field observation, led him toward education. Awareness of the low quality of education in Indonesia motivated him to collaborate with colleagues to reform the educational system. The Struggle and Life Teachings of Ki Hajar Dewantara describes this decision as follows:

> Thus, it was decided that Ki Hajar Dewantara (then known as Suwardi Suryaningrat), Sutatmo Suryokusumo, Pronowidigdo, and Suryoputro would work in the field of children’s education. Ki Ageng Suryomataram and his colleagues focused on adult education through the spiritual movement *“Ngelmu Begjo.”* This approach followed the example of Douwes Dekker, who in 1920 founded the “Ksatrian Instituut” (School of Economics) in Bandung, based on the consideration that economic education constituted a crucial aspect of the national struggle yet had received insufficient attention and therefore required development (DT 1/PDAHKHD/19/2011).

### *Openness and Simplicity*

Communicating through social Blended Communication became both a foundation and an entry point in Ki Hajar Dewantara’s struggle. He demonstrated simple and open communication, for example,

in *Tirulah Hidup Cecak* (Imitate the Life of the Gecko). This approach aligns with the among system at Taman Siswa, which aims to help learners understand the realities of life. In Kalender Taman Siswa (1933), he emphasised that education must provide life knowledge and practical skills through methods that align with local customs and traditions.

> Observe how a hen teaches her chicks to scratch *(Tjeker-tjeker)* and peck *(nutjuk)*; observe how ducks teach their young to swim and dive *(njosor)*—skills essential to their lives. If a chicken were forced to swim and dive and live like a duck, its life would become difficult and fail to develop, as it would always be outperformed by ducks naturally suited to that environment. Likewise, if ducks imitated the life of chickens, they would fail to perfect and develop their own lives (DT 1/PDAHKHD/45/2011).

### *Building Confidence*

Ki Hajar Dewantara initiated his struggle by reaching out to people from diverse backgrounds through communication and a simple way of life. This approach enabled him to genuinely understand society and become part of it. As a result, public trust grew, reinforcing the belief that his struggle was sincere rather than rhetorical. He articulated this principle during the founding of Taman Siswa, stating:

> Within Taman Siswa, no intention holds greater importance than the determination to become truly integrated with the people—to become part of their collective effort to seek and define dignity. Therefore, Taman Siswa maintains close relations with popular movements, such as Budi Utomo, which initially focused on nurturing the nation's spiritual life. Later, other movements emerged (S.P., P.N.I.) that sought to improve living conditions by demanding people's rights. The life and livelihood of the people constitute the core objectives of Taman Siswa's efforts. Thus, Taman Siswa never intended to neglect either of these essential concerns (DT 2/BP: P/11/2004).

### *The Importance of Standardised Language*

Using and establishing a standard language plays an essential role in impersonal, interpersonal, and professional communication. Ki Hajar Dewantara emphasised the importance of language use in the Taman Siswa system, particularly the use of proper and correct Indonesian as the national unifying language. He stated:

> In formulating the curriculum, attention to national identity within Taman Siswa led educators to prioritise instruction in the national language from the first through the third grade. Language, as a medium of instruction, exerts a significant influence on education. Children who become accustomed to foreign languages from an early age, while separated from their own language, will lose emotional ties to their parents and, later in life, will also become emotionally alienated from their own nation (DT 2/BP: P/11/2004).

### *Adapting to Development*

As time continues to change and develop, it inevitably shapes individual character and influences communication styles, including speech patterns. Language, as an educational tool, must adapt to the dynamics of each era. Ki Hajar Dewantara clarified this principle in Adat-Adat ke Taman Siswa, stating:

> In the past, our nation often merely copied or replicated the patterns and methods used by the Dutch for our people. We discarded terms that carried colonial or outdated connotations, conflicted with our national principles, or contradicted natural realities, and replaced them with new terms. Remember that names carry distinct influences and can redirect our desire to renew, improve, and replace the old era with a new one and colonial traditions with national traditions. For this reason, we adopted terms such as *Taman-*


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> *Indrya, Taman Anak, Taman Muda, Taman Dewasa,* and *Taman Madya*, as well as terms like *majelis, nafkah, pondok-asrama, pamong,* and *perguruan*, specifically to correct inaccurate or misleading concepts (DT/BP30TTS/52/1952).

### *Inspiration and Motivation*

Ki Hajar Dewantara applied inspirational and motivational communication techniques from the early stages of his career as a journalist. He actively articulated the people's aspirations through writings rich in inspirational values. One clear example of this courage appears in his actions as a novice journalist, when he published a critical piece opposing the Dutch plan to celebrate the centennial of their independence from France. The title of his article, *"Als Ik Eens Nederlander Was"* (If I Were a Dutchman), provides concrete evidence, as reflected in the following excerpt:

> I would ask all compatriots and colonial subjects of the Kingdom of the Netherlands to participate in the celebration, even though the event serves purely Dutch interests. Nevertheless, it offers us an opportunity to express our loyalty and devotion to the Netherlands. In doing so, we would stage a "demonstration of loyalty." How proud and joyful I would feel. Praise be to God, I am not a Dutchman…" (DT 1/PDAHKHD/10/2011).

The study traced and identified data sources on the elements and descriptions of the ideal counsellor's character, based on Ki Hajar Dewantara's conceptual framework. The analysis classified the findings as follows:

1. *Ing Ngarsa Sung Tuladha,* which yielded seven data entries: (a) DT/PDAHKHD: 3, (b) DW/KMDK: 3, and (c) DO/MDKG: 1.
2. *Ing Madya Mangun Karsa,* which yielded six data entries: (a) DT/PDAHKHD: 1, (b) DT/DBP30TTM: 1, (c) DW/KMDG: 2, and (d) DO/KMDG: 2.
3. *Tut Wuri Handayani,* which yielded five data entries: (a) DT/PDAHKHD: 3, (b) DT/DBP30TTM: 1, and (c) DW/KMDG: 1.
4. *Asah,* which yielded four data entries: (a) DT/BPP: 2, (b) DT/MMM: 1, and (c) DW/KMDG: 1.
5. *Asih,* which yielded three data entries: (a) DT/BPP: 1, (b) DT/DBP30TTM: 1, and (c) DT/PDAHKHD: 1.
6. *Asuh,* which yielded three data entries: (a) DT/BPP: 3.(7) Nglakoni, which yielded three data entries: (a) DT/PDAHKHD: 1, (b) DT/BPP: 1, and (c) DW/KMDG: 1.

The study also classified the elements and descriptions of counseling techniques grounded in Ki Hajar Dewantara's conceptual framework as follows:

1. Blended Communication (Semrawung), which yielded eight data entries: (a) DT/PDAHKHD: 3, (b) DT/BPP: 3, and (c) DT/MMM: 2.
2. Openness and Simplicity, which yielded three data entries: (a) DT/PDAHKHD: 3.
3. Use of Standard Language, which yielded four data entries: (a) DT/PDAHKHD: 2, (b) DT/BPP: 1, and (c) DT/MMM: 1.
4. Adaptation to Development, which yielded two data entries: (a) DT/BPP: 1 and (b) DT/DBP30TTM: 1.
5. Inspiration and Motivation, which yielded six data entries: (a) DT/PDAHKHD: 5 and (b) DT/MMM: 1.

**Table 2.** Result Recapitulation of the Data Display

| No. | Characteristics Elements | Primary Data | | | | Secondary Data | | Total |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | T/PDAHKHD | T/BP:P | T/BP30TTM | T/MMM | W/KMDKG | DO/KMDG | |
| 1. | Ideal characters | | | | | | | |

| No. | Characteristics Elements | Primary Data | | | | Secondary Data | | Total |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | T/PDAH KHD | T/BP: P | T/BP30 TTM | T/MMM | W/KMD KG | DO/KMDG | |
| 1.a | Ing Ngarsa Sung Tuladha (Leaders-Examples) | 3 | | | | 3 | 1 | 7 |
| 1.b | Ing Madya Mangun Karsa (Democratic) | 1 | | 1 | | 2 | 2 | 6 |
| 1.c | Tut Wuri Handayani (Assertive and Disciplined) | 3 | | 1 | | 1 | | 5 |
| 1.d | Asah (Having excellent characters) | | 2 | | 1 | 1 | | 4 |
| 1.e | Asih (having compassion) | 1 | 1 | 1 | | | | 3 |
| 1.f | Asuh (Guiding and Nurturing) | | 3 | | | | | 3 |
| 1. g | Nglakoni (Knowledgeable) | 1 | 1 | | | 1 | | 3 |
| 2. | Communication Technique | | | | | | | |
| 2.a | Blended Communication (Semrawung) | 3 | 3 | | 2 | | | 8 |
| 2.b | Openness and Simplicity | 3 | | | | | | 3 |
| 2.c | The standardized language | 2 | 1 | | 1 | | | 4 |
| 2.d | Adaptation to Development | | 1 | 1 | | | | 2 |
| 2.e | Inspiration and Motivation | 5 | | | 1 | | | 6 |
| Total | | | | | | 55 | | |

## DISCUSSION

### Elements and Descriptions of Ideal Characters based on Ki Hajar Dewantara's Criticism for Counselor Ideal Characters

#### *Leadership*

This leadership concept originates from Ki Hajar Dewantara's thought, especially the principle of *Ing Ngarsa Sung Tuladha*. In this concept, a pamong (educator) simultaneously takes on the role of a leader for the counselee. This principle also applies to counsellors, who act as educators; therefore, they must exhibit leadership qualities in their professional duties. The role of school counsellors has become increasingly vital in helping students identify career paths that match their interests and talents. Additionally, the mental health movement has broadened counsellors' responsibilities to include addressing personal and social issues through guidance services. This view aligns with the idea that competency-based guidance and counselling require counsellors to serve as leaders who meet students' academic, career, and personal–social needs while working collaboratively with school stakeholders. Pavelea (2022) stresses that 21st-century school counsellors must act as leaders, strengthening collaboration with teachers, administrators, families, and communities to promote student well-being. Consequently, counsellors function as leaders, as reflected in the Taman Siswa concept. The counselling process demands leadership qualities, especially through collaboration and accountability in effectively fulfilling professional responsibilities.

#### Having Excellent Role Model

This role-model character concept also draws on Ki Hajar Dewantara's thought, especially the principle of *Ing Ngarsa Sung Tuladha*, which stresses that the relationship between teachers and students


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remains close and inseparable. Teachers not only teach but also serve as models for attitudes, behaviours, and speech. As a result, students often look up to teachers as role models, which requires teachers to have strong moral character to reflect positive values. Students need role models during their self-development because they can internalise positive values by emulating exemplary figures. For example, many adolescents idolise public figures, highlighting the importance of role models. Therefore, counsellors must guide students to emulate positive behaviours while also embodying those behaviours themselves. The role modelling of counsellors influences not only students but also those in their surrounding environment.

As members of the school community, counsellors must possess personal qualities that others can emulate because these qualities directly influence the success of the counselling process. When counsellors fail to establish positive interactions, counselling becomes ineffective. Counsellors' personal qualities are vital in achieving counselling objectives (Burnham et al., 2024). Students tend to imitate counsellors, who serve not only as instructors but also as living models within the school environment (Shirley, 2024).

### *Being Democratic*

This democratic character stems from Ki Hajar Dewantara's thought, particularly the essence of *Ing Madya Mangun Karsa*, which emphasises the right to self-regulation. *Taman Siswa* established this principle as its core foundation for achieving life's goals. Therefore, a pamong must display a democratic character to realise these ideals by promoting students' independence, openness in thinking, attitudes, and actions, and respect for others' rights and obligations. When applied to counsellors, whose responsibilities include providing guidance and counselling services to students from diverse backgrounds and characteristics, democratic character becomes an essential trait. These findings align with Knight's (2024) view that tolerance of counselees' issues and a democratic attitude are crucial, especially unconditional positive regard. This concept involves accepting counselees as they are, respecting them as individuals, refraining from judging their behaviour, and avoiding the imposition of the counsellor's personal value standards on them.

Democracy implies that counsellors prioritise the common good over personal interests, accept feedback and criticism from others, and refrain from imposing personal opinions (Ridwan et al., 2024). This approach remains vital because counsellors serve all students without exception, maintain openness in various situations without judgment, and accept counselees' openness. Ultimately, this approach aims to encourage individual development based on students' talents, interests, and potential, enabling them to attain autonomy in their self-development.

### *Guiding and Nurturing*

The concept of guiding and leading is reflected in the values of *Asah, Asih,* and *Asuh*, particularly in the meaning of *Asuh*. As counsellors, professionals mainly offer guidance and direction to students. They provide structured support tailored to students' needs, such as academic or career advice, while adapting their guidance to individual circumstances without coercion. Guidance and counselling form a supportive process through face-to-face interaction that helps counselees identify and resolve their own problems. Counselling helps individuals adjust to themselves and their environment. In fulfilling this role, counsellors engage not only with students but also with parents and the wider community (Sanberk, 2016).

### *Knowledgeable*

The scholarly character of a counsellor draws on Ki Hajar Dewantara's thought, particularly the principles of *ngerti, ngrasa,* and *nglakoni*, in which *nglakoni* emphasises the application of knowledge in real practice. As professionals, counsellors must possess a strong scientific foundation, as guidance and counselling services require systematic, measurable approaches. Professional counsellors must hold clear academic qualifications, certification, accreditation, licensure, and communication skills to manage self-perception and interact effectively with counselees. Nurismawan et al. (2023) also affirm that counsellors must complete formal education, obtain certification, and hold a practice license. This

view aligns with Permendikbud, the Ministerial Regulation of the Education and Culture Ministry, No. 111 of 2014, Article 1(3), which defines counsellors as professional educators with a minimum qualification of a bachelor's degree in guidance and counselling and completion of professional education.

### *Having Excellent Characters*

This moral character originates from Ki Hajar Dewantara's thought, particularly the core principles of human autonomy embodied in *Asah, Asih,* and *Asuh*. To cultivate moral character, individuals must first understand and embody it; without this foundation, effective moral education cannot take place. According to Casmini and Hasanah (2024), moral character reflects judgments of right and wrong in thoughts and actions, assessed against prevailing values and norms. This foundation explains why counsellors must possess strong moral character. The personality traits of counsellors directly influence the counselling process. Therefore, counsellors need moral character as a positive personal quality, demonstrated through polite behaviour, respect for others, and the ability to adhere to social norms, customs, and formal regulations.

### *Firmness and Disciplined*

In the philosophy of *Tut Wuri Handayani*, Ki Hajar Dewantara explains that leaders must grant freedom to those they lead while remaining capable of acting decisively when that freedom endangers oneself or others. In certain situations, leaders may exercise authority beyond ordinary rules, and those they lead must comply. However, students often misinterpret counsellors' firmness. For example, they may assume that meeting a counsellor indicates serious wrongdoing, which is not the case. Counsellors need firmness to establish clear boundaries in both the counselling process and emotional regulation. Kurnaz et al. (2024) state that effective counsellors must possess self-awareness, including awareness of their need for respect, relevance, and situational control. Firmness also relates to assertive behaviour, defined as the ability to express thoughts, feelings, and beliefs honestly and appropriately without anxiety (Rahman et al., 2023). Assertive individuals demonstrate openness, calmness, principled conduct, and resistance to undue influence. Therefore, firmness and discipline remain essential qualities for counsellors to adapt to diverse situations, support personal development, and guide counselees effectively.

### *Welas asih (Having Compassion)*

This moral character originates from Ki Hajar Dewantara's thought and is based on the core principles of *manusia merdeka*, particularly *Asih* within the *Asah, Asih, Asuh* framework. The *Taman Siswa* system teaches that education must cultivate a sense of family life, which involves living together, sharing joy and hardship, and assuming shared responsibility, from small communities to larger contexts such as solidarity among nations. Accordingly, a pamong should demonstrate *welas asih*, similar to parental affection towards children. In Javanese philosophy, *welas asih* signifies a disposition of compassion towards oneself and others. Within Javanese society, *welas asih* refers to behaviour where individuals empathise with others' experiences. This empathetic capacity motivates the desire to help or support others (Hidayat & Supriatna, 2025). Furthermore, six skills are linked to counsellors' compassionate character: attention, reasoning, behaviour, imagery, feeling, and sensation. These skills closely correspond with components of mind skills. Compassionate counsellors exhibit explanatory skills, which align with the mind skills component of generating helpful explanations. Additionally, the ability to develop imagery reflects compassion and corresponds with the mind skills component of creating supportive visual representations.


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## Elements and Descriptions of Communication Techniques Based on Ki Hajar Dewantara's Critique for Counsellor Ideal Characters

### *Blended Communication (Semrawung)*

The blending communication technique originates from Ki Hajar Dewantara's approach to engaging with society. He renounced his aristocratic status, worked as a journalist to voice the people's aspirations, and even accepted imprisonment alongside ordinary citizens. Through these actions, he built close communicative relationships as part of his struggle. In guidance and counselling, this technique plays a crucial role in ensuring inclusive and equitable services for all students, in accordance with the 2016 Kemendikbud Guidance and Counselling Guidelines. Counsellors provide services to all counselees, regardless of gender or age, without discrimination. Counsellors may implement these services through face-to-face interactions or media-based platforms, using individual, group, classical, or cross-class formats. By applying blended communication, counsellors can establish positive relationships with students and improve service effectiveness. For example, in group counselling, counsellors interact with several counselees simultaneously to address developmental issues, values, and interpersonal relationships. Through these interactions, students exchange support and feedback, which helps them develop deeper self-understanding.

### *Openness and Simplicity*

The open and honest communication approach draws inspiration from Ki Hajar Dewantara's method of conveying understanding to his students. His analogy compares educated humans to a gecko's life, providing indirect yet clear examples that are easy to understand. This technique, also known as transparent communication, emphasises core values such as honesty, good governance, access to information, and reciprocal interaction between counsellors and students. Indreswari et al. (2023) demonstrate that trust from the counselee develops through positive relationships that involve counsellor professionalism, openness, and honesty. Pearson and Nicholson (2000) highlight that counsellors must remain genuine and transparent because openness fosters communication within a psychologically close environment. Honesty allows counsellors to give direct feedback while encouraging counselees to respond similarly. In conclusion, open and simple communication embodies honesty-based, transparent interaction that effectively builds trust between counsellors and students. This trust directly supports the success of counselling services; therefore, counsellors should adopt this approach to help counselees feel comfortable and open.

### *Standardized Language*

The use of standard language in communication reflects the concept of Social Obligation in One's Own Language, which emphasises abandoning colonial terminology and replacing it with terms aligned with national values. This approach aims to correct misconceptions and support cultural renewal. In guidance and counselling, effective communication between counsellors and students requires deep mutual understanding, with language serving as its primary foundation. As Indonesian citizens, using proper and correct Indonesian language facilitates and enhances counselling interactions. Wendel (2024) argues that language in counselling must remain cohesive, accurate, and meaningful because it reflects individuals' lived experiences. Counsellors must respond skillfully to help clients gain clarification and solutions. Effective communication that uses context-appropriate language within educational settings remains essential to the smooth delivery of counselling services. Proper Indonesian usage in counselling fosters positive counselor–counselee relationships, supports problem-solving, and promotes counselee self-development. Therefore, the use of standard Indonesian in guidance and counselling constitutes a necessity, given the diverse backgrounds of students, and positions proper Indonesian as a key element in the counselling process.

### *Adaptation to Development*

Based on the *Taman Siswa* principles (Articles 1–3), education must align with natural laws and social realities, including evolving customs. As an integral part of education, communication must also adapt to social change because it influences how people think and interact. Technological developments, as noted by Sanberk (2016), significantly impact students, especially in interpersonal communication. Therefore, guidance and counselling services must adapt to these advances in both methods and technological use (Kiuchi et al., 2024). Information technology has ushered in a new era for guidance and counselling, requiring counsellors to master up-to-date skills (Chuanbao et al., 2023). In summary, communication in education must evolve to meet contemporary demands, particularly in guidance and counselling services. As students become increasingly exposed to technological progress, counsellors must adapt to remain effective.

### *Innovation and Motivation*

Motivational communication techniques inspire others, as exemplified by Ki Hajar Dewantara in his essay *"Als Ik Eens Nederlander Was"* (If I Were a Dutchman), which helped fuel popular resistance. In education, teachers must not only master subject matter but also motivate students. As motivators, teachers play a crucial role in increasing students' enthusiasm for learning and developing their potential through encouragement and reinforcement. Likewise, counsellors, who also function as educators, must master motivational communication techniques to provide effective guidance and counselling support. Such support can reduce counselees' anxiety and strengthen their confidence, particularly when they face new situations. Thus, motivational and inspirational communication provides encouragement and reinforcement for students, especially within counselling processes, and helps build positive perceptions and enthusiasm among counselees.

## CONCLUSION

The body of Ki Hajar Dewantara's critique cultivates a profound philosophy and presents core components of the ideal counsellor's character. His ideas draw from an Indonesian worldview, philosophy, and culture that aim to liberate national education while maintaining universal relevance. Scientifically articulating Ki Hajar Dewantara's concepts marks a breakthrough in developing the ideal counsellor's character based on Indonesian cultural foundations. This qualitative hermeneutic approach research gathered data from the complete corpus of Ki Hajar Dewantara's texts. The study compiled all data by examining the relevance between textual findings and the counselling framework. The analysis highlights the core elements of the ideal counsellor's character as follows: (1) Ideal Character, which includes (1a) leadership, (1b) role modelling, (1c) democratic character, (1d) guiding and nurturing, (1e) scholarly competence, (1f) moral integrity, (1g) firmness and orderliness, and (1h) compassion; and (2) Communication Techniques, which include (2a) blended communication (semrawung), (2b) openness and simplicity, (2c) use of standardised language, (2d) adaptation to development, and (2e) inspiration and motivation.

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