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THE RELEVANCE OF MRS. RUSWO'S STRUGGLE VALUES IN CONTEXTUAL HISTORY LEARNING

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ABSTRACT

History learning is not only focused on mastering facts and event chronologies; it also serves as a medium for internalizing the values of struggle to shape students' character and historical awareness. One learning resource with the potential to support this objective is the history of the struggles of local figures-such as Mrs. Ruswo, a female freedom fighter from Yogyakarta who played a pivotal role in defending Indonesia's independence. This study aims to analyze Ibu Ruswo's values of struggle based on Joyomartono's framework and to contextualize them within history learning. The study uses a qualitative method with a historical approach. Data were gathered from prior research on Ibu Ruswo's struggle, supplemented by primary and secondary sources as well as relevant literature. Data analysis was conducted qualitatively through data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion drawing, classifying the data according to Joyomartono's five values of struggle: willingness to sacrifice, unity, cooperation, patience and perseverance, and mutual respect. The findings indicate that these five values are reflected in Mrs. Ruswo's actions during the Dutch East Indies era, the Japanese occupation, and the War of Independence-manifested. These values are highly relevant to history learning, as they can be integrated as local history-based learning resources. This study affirms that contextualizing Ibu Ruswo's values of struggle offers an alternative approach to developing history education that is more contextual, meaningful, and character-oriented.

Keywords: Mrs. Ruswo, values of the struggle, history learning, local history, contextual

INTRODUCTION

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History education has a vital role in shaping the character of students. Its essence lies not merely in "learning history," but in "learning from history" that is, internalizing the values and wisdom found within it. History education involves not only the transfer of knowledge but also the transmission of values, often achieved through the examples set by historical figures. Such figures can serve as sources of inspiration, particularly for the younger generation, regarding life within the nation and state.

In reality, the historical figures featured in textbooks have long been dominated by prominent men. The roles of women have tended to be portrayed as merely supplementary. Research findings by Zahra and Amin (2026) indicate that the writing of women's history remains dominated by a masculine perspective and has yet to adequately incorporate feminist viewpoints, resulting in women's roles lacking significant visibility. This is further supported by Sari and Andi (2024), whose research reveals that the majority of Indonesian history textbooks emphasize the role of men in historical events, while the contributions and experiences of women receive less attention.

Therefore, it is crucial to highlight women who contributed to Indonesia's national struggle, thereby making history education more inclusive. As Ir. Soekarno once stated: *"Men and women are like the two wings of a bird. If both wings are equally strong, the bird can soar to the highest peak; if one of the wings is broken, the bird cannot fly at all"* (Soekarno, 1984).

One woman who played a pivotal role in Indonesia's struggle for independence was Ibu Ruswo, a local figure from Yogyakarta. While her name may not be as widely recognized as other female figures such as R.A. Kartini, Dewi Sartika, or Cut Nyak Dien, her contributions were significant and spanned three distinct eras: the Dutch East Indies administration, the Japanese occupation, and the War of Independence. During the Dutch East Indies era, Ibu Ruswo was active in scouting and women's organizations that fostered a spirit of nationalism and community empowerment. When Japan occupied Indonesia, she continued her service through social and humanitarian organizations. During the War of Independence, her role became even more prominent through logistical support, the operation of public kitchens, secret courier duties, and assistance provided to freedom fighters and their families. Her consistent dedication across these three periods has established Ibu Ruswo as a female freedom fighter who made tangible contributions to upholding Indonesia's independence (Ningsih, 2024).

Ibu Ruswo's struggle holds not only historical significance but also embodies various values of the struggle that are relevant to pass on to the younger generation. Based on the classification of struggle-related values proposed by Joyomartono, Ibu Ruswo's efforts reflect values such as self-sacrifice, unity, cooperation, patience, an unyielding spirit, and mutual respect (Joyomartono, 1990). These values are evident in her involvement with various organizations, her service to the community, her courage in carrying out duties amidst wartime conditions, and her ability to foster solidarity in support of the independence struggle. These values are not merely part of historical memory; they also possess an educational dimension suitable for integration into history education.

Previous studies have more focused on her biography and the narrative of her struggle, with few linking these to history education. This study has novelty that not only recounting the history of Ibu Ruswo's struggle but also exploring the values inherent in that struggle and relating them to contextual history learning. Ibu Ruswo's struggle embodies values that serve as a worthy example for today's youth to emulate. One way to achieve this is through history education that encourages students to learn from historical figures by internalizing the values reflected in their lives and struggles. Therefore, this study is urgently needed, it aims to explore the values of struggle embodied by Ibu Ruswo and to make them relevant to contextual history education.

RESEARCH METHODS

This study employs a qualitative research method with a historical approach. This is because, before exploring the values of the struggle, it is essential to first understand the history of Ibu Ruswo and her role. The historical approach is utilized to understand,

reconstruct, and interpret the struggle of Ibu Ruswo a female independence fighter, based on historical facts gathered from various sources. Through this approach, the research does not merely describe historical events chronologically but also reveals their significance, the values inherent in the struggle, and their relevance to history education.

The historical research approach is implemented through four stages: heuristics, source criticism, interpretation, and historiography (Arifin, 2023). These stages are used to reconstruct past events supported by credible evidence. The research data comprises both primary and secondary sources. Primary sources include archives, documents, photographs, certificates of appreciation, and interviews with family members, historical witnesses, and informants knowledgeable about Ibu Ruswo's struggle. Meanwhile, secondary sources are derived from books, scholarly articles, undergraduate theses, master's theses, doctoral dissertations, journals, and various publications discussing the history of women's struggles, the local history of Yogyakarta, the values of the struggle, and history education.

This article is an expansion of the author's previous undergraduate research titled "Ibu Ruswo: Pejuang Perempuan dalam Tiga Zaman" (Ibu Ruswo: A Female Fighter Across Three Eras). In that study, the author highlighted Ibu Ruswo's struggle during the Dutch colonial period, the Japanese occupation, and the Physical Revolution (Kurniawanti, 2016). Data collection was conducted through observation, interviews, and documentation. A key primary source used in this study is Mekarsari Magazine (Edition: February 1, 1959; No. 23, Year II; pp. 3-4 and 21). This is further supported by interviews with several informants: Ibu Zaulah (Ibu Ruswo's neighbor), Ibu Juwariyah (a female fighter from the Physical Revolution era), and Bapak Gunadi (a historical guide at the Monjali Museum). Informants were selected based on criteria established by the author using purposive sampling, taking into account their ability to provide accurate, in-depth information relevant to the research focus.

The criteria for informants included: 1) Possessing firsthand knowledge of Mrs. Ruswo's struggle whether as a participant, a witness, or someone who had interacted with her; 2) Having a relationship or close connection with Mrs. Ruswo, such as being a family member, relative, or fellow freedom fighter; 3) Possessing mastery of local history related to Mrs. Ruswo's struggle-such as historians, researchers, cultural experts, or community figures; 4) Possessing credibility and being recognized by the community as a trustworthy source of information; 5) Being willing to serve as an informant and capable of conveying information clearly, coherently, and responsibly; 6) Being able to provide supporting data, such as personal documents, photographs, archives, or information regarding other relevant historical sources.

The research data is derived from historical findings of previous studies on Ibu Ruswo's struggle, supported by a range of primary and secondary sources. The data was enriched through a literature review of books, scholarly articles, journals, and references addressing values of struggle, the history of Indonesian women, local history, and theories of history education. Utilizing these diverse sources aimed to strengthen the interpretation

of the values of struggle while providing a conceptual foundation for contextualizing them ⁵ within history instruction.

Data analysis was conducted qualitatively through the stages of data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion drawing. During the data reduction stage, the researcher identified various forms of Mrs. Ruswo's struggle that embodied the values of struggle as defined by Joyomartono: willingness to sacrifice, unity, cooperation, patience and resilience, and mutual respect. Subsequently, the data was presented thematically according to the identified value categories. The final stage involved contextualizing these values within history instruction by linking them to learning objectives, character building, the development of historical thinking skills, and the use of local history as a learning resource.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

1. A Brief Biography of Ibu Ruswo

Ibu Ruswo was born in Yogyakarta in 1905-specifically on the 29th of Bakda Mulud in the year 1835, according to family records kept using the Javanese calendar. She came from an ordinary Javanese background, much like the average person. Like most Javanese people, she had a birth name; hers was Kusnah, a name given to her by her parents at birth. In 1921, she married a young man named Ruswo Prawiroseno, a post office employee. Consequently, she adopted the name Nyi Kusnah Ruswo Prawiroseno and became known as "Ibu Ruswo." The title "Ibu" (Mother) preceding "Ruswo" signified a maternal figure-a woman who nurtured and cared for others. Although she had no children of her own, she was a mother to all the soldiers. She shared a close bond with the troops fighting on the front lines, earning her the nickname "Mother of the Soldiers" (Lestari et al. ¹⁰ 2025). Physically, Ibu Ruswo was a large-built woman. A description of Ibu Ruswo can be seen in Figure 1.



Figure 1. Mrs. Ruswo

Source: Documentation Archive of MekarsariMagazine, Issue No. 23, Year II (February 1, 1959), page 3.

Mrs. Ruswo and Mr. Ruswo owned a Simplex bicycle, a vehicle that held great significance during the struggle for independence. A Simplex bicycle is compiled in Figure 2. During the Second Dutch Military Aggression, this bicycle was used by Lieutenant Marsoedi-Commander of Sub-Wehrkreis 101-to serve as a courier, facilitating communication between sectors within the city among Sri Sultan Hamengku Buwono IX, Commander-in-Chief General Soedirman, and Lieutenant Colonel Soeharto, the Commander of Wehrkreis II.



Figure 2. Mrs. Ruswo's Simplex bicycle

Source: Collection of the Monumen Yogya Kembali Museum, Yogyakarta

Mrs. Ruswo's involvement in the struggle for independence spanned the era of the national movement-covering both the Dutch and Japanese colonial periods-through to the armed Revolution. Her active participation began with the scouting movement; she was involved with the KBI (Kepanduan Bangsa Indonesia/ Indonesian National Scouting) in 1928. She later served as secretary for the Mataram branch of the women's organization "Istri Indonesia" and was active in the P4A (*Association for Combating the Trafficking of Women and Children*) and the BPP (*Soldiers' Aid Agency*), where she coordinated public kitchens.

In the effort to defend independence, Ibu Ruswo contributed through logistics, specifically by managing public kitchens. These kitchens provided essential food support to fighters on the front lines. From 1945 to 1949, the public kitchen operations were part of the Badan Oeroesan Makanan (BOM / Food Affairs Agency), led by Ibu Ruswo with the assistance of Ibu Joyodiguna. Beyond managing food supplies for guerrillas, the BOM also cared for war victims and secured funds and medical supplies. While city-based public kitchens served fighters stationed within the city, the needs of fighters outside the city such as those in the Sleman, Kulon Progo, Bantul, and Gunung Kidul regions-were met by villagers under the coordination of local village heads. In these outlying areas, too, the operation of the public kitchens was carried out by women (Dianasari, 2021).

City residents sincerely and willingly provided food to the guerrillas. Women fighters also diligently performed duties related to intelligence, communications, the Red Cross, and public kitchens. Under Ibu Ruswo's leadership, they established public kitchens in

every corner of the city; Ibu Ruswo had served as the coordinator of these kitchens since the very beginning of the armed revolution. Following independence, the Badan Pembantu Prajurit (BPP / Soldiers' Aid Agency) was renamed the Badan Penolong Keluarga Korban Perang (BPKKP / Agency for Assisting Families of War Victims). The duties of the BPKKP became increasingly arduous, as the Heiho-PETA forces were fighting to seize and defend independence during this revolutionary period. With a rising number of Indonesian soldiers falling in battle, the BPKKP's task of handling the aftermath became correspondingly more complex. Ibu Ruswo played a pivotal role as a driving force within the BPKKP; her efforts were so active and dedicated that she earned the soldiers' recognition and was even regarded by them as a mother figure. Close ties existed between the central BPKKP and its regional branches, mirroring the strong bond between the soldiers and the regional BPKKP administrators. In Yogyakarta, the BPKKP was headquartered on Jalan Senopati; this office also served as the venue for meetings to establish the People's Security Agency (BKR), which later evolved into the Indonesian National Armed Forces (TNI).

In recognition of her tireless and selfless dedication, Ibu Ruswo was awarded the Bintang Gerilya (Guerrilla Star) by the Government of the Republic of Indonesia in 1958. The award was presented personally by President Sukarno at the Sitinggil of the Yogyakarta Palace. On the same occasion, Sri Sultan Hamengku Buwono IX and Ibu Sudirman-representing General Sudirman-also received awards from the Indonesian government. Ibu Ruswo was deeply honored that, as an ordinary citizen, she could sit alongside Sri Sultan Hamengku Buwono IX, a reigning monarch. Ibu Ruswo passed away on August 28, 1960, at Panti Rapih Hospital in Yogyakarta following a prolonged illness. Although TNI members requested that her remains lie in state at the Battalion 438 Army Barracks at Beteng Yogyakarta (now the Beteng Vredeburg Museum), her husband, Bapak Ruswo, decided that she should lie in state at their home at Jalan Yudonegaran 99A (old numbering). Ultimately, her remains were laid in state at the Battalion 438 Army Barracks for a few hours on the morning of the funeral. By government decision, the remains of Ibu Ruswo were interred at the Kusuma Negara Heroes' Cemetery in Yogyakarta. Ibu Ruswo's Hero's Grave can be seen in Figure 3.



Figure 3. Ibu Ruswo's Hero's Grave. Source: Personal documentation

Ibu Ruswo is recognized as a tenacious female freedom fighter and a "Mother to Soldiers" who was awarded the Bintang Gerilya (Guerrilla Star) with the rank of field-grade officer. Although she had no biological children of her own, she regarded every soldier as her son. She also advised women against the habit of purik-leaving the marital home to return to their parents' house as doing so could ultimately work to their own disadvantage; she believed that, come what may, a woman should remain in the home and resolve issues in the best possible manner (Pringgodigdo, 1991). To honor her contributions, the local government immortalized her name by renaming Yudonaran Street where she had lived as Mrs. Ruswo Street. An image of Mrs. Ruswo Street can be seen in Figure 4.



Figure 4. Ibu Ruswo Street Sign
Source: Personal Documentation

2. The Relevance of Ibu Ruswo's Struggle Values to Contextual History Learning

According to Joyomartono (cited in Arifin et al., 2020), values of struggle are those that motivate individuals to transform a situation into something better than it was before. In this study, the researcher employs the indicators of struggle values defined by Joyomartono (1990): willingness to sacrifice, unity, patience and perseverance, cooperation, and mutual respect. Throughout her life, Ibu Ruswo was consistently involved in the struggle-starting with small actions that nonetheless yielded far-reaching impacts. Her contributions spanned not only the social sphere-addressing issues concerning women and children-but also the military realm, covering the Dutch colonial period, the Japanese occupation, and the struggle for independence. The Values of Struggle and Their Indicators are compiled in Table 1.

Table 1. Values of Struggle and Their Indicators

Struggle Values	Indicator	Description
	Willing to sacrifice	A willingness and sincerity to dedicate time, effort, and thought-without expecting a reward-and a readiness to contribute what one possesses for the collective good.
	Unity	Maintaining togetherness and integrity for the common good
	Patience and Perseverance	An individual's steadfastness, persistence, and fighting spirit in facing challenges.
	Teamwork	Emphasizing the importance of collaboration among individuals and groups to achieve shared goals.
	Mutual respect	Mutual respect among one another in the life of the nation and state.

Source: Joyomartono (1990)

a. Willingness to Sacrifice

Willingness to sacrifice refers to the readiness to devote time, energy, and thought-without expecting a reward-and to give of what one possesses for the collective good (Januar & Mulyadi, 2021). Such willingness is essential when undertaking a struggle; without sincere sacrifice, one can never achieve great success in such an endeavor. This value is evident in Ibu Ruswo's consistent dedication of her energy, time, and intellect to support the struggle for independence without seeking any return. During the Physical Revolution, she willingly offered her private home in Kampung Yudonegaran to serve as the main headquarters for a public kitchen.

During the Second Military Aggression (Clash II), Mrs. Ruswo remained active in the struggle; beyond managing food supplies (the public kitchen), she also played an active role in gathering reports and information. She served as a liaison for the TNI (Indonesian National Armed Forces) command, carrying and delivering orders and other correspondence from General Sudirman to Mr. Suharto-who was then serving as the Commander of WK.III (Military Region III)-and vice versa. Her willingness to carry out these duties demonstrates that the struggle was not manifested solely through armed combat, but also through humanitarian service that made a strategic contribution to the continuity of the cause.

Based on this value, teachers can foster the spirit of sacrifice in students through lessons centered on historical figures' biographies, the analysis of historical sources, and reflective discussions regarding the meaning of sacrifice in contemporary life. In doing so, students not only grasp historical facts but also cultivate a sense of responsibility, social concern, and a desire to contribute to the common good.

b. Unity

The value of unity aims to preserve togetherness and integrity for the sake of the common good. Joyomartono (1990) states that the value of unity was forged throughout

the history of the Indonesian nation's struggle; it gained momentum during its early development, underwent a maturation process in 1928, and reached its peak with the Proclamation of Independence on August 17, 1945. The value of unity is reflected in Ibu Ruswo's ability to build solidarity through the various organizations she joined. During the Dutch East Indies era, she was active in the Indonesiasche Nationale Padvindere Organisatie (INPO), Kepanduan Bangsa Indonesia (KBI), the Association for Combating the Trafficking of Women and Children (P4A), and the Istri Indonesia organization. Her participation in these organizations demonstrates that the struggle for independence was built through collective strength rather than solely by individuals (Kurniawanti, 2016).

Mrs. Ruswo united women from diverse social backgrounds in Yogyakarta to contribute to the struggle through logistics, specifically by organizing public kitchens. Additionally, she played an active role in merging local scouting movements into the Kepanduan Bangsa Indonesia (KBI), where she served as treasurer. Mrs. Ruswo's efforts illustrate that successfully defending independence was the result of unity among all segments of society, transcending differences in social background, ethnicity, or gender.

The value of unity can be integrated into education by emphasizing the importance of collaboration in the struggle to defend independence. Ibu Ruswo's story demonstrates that success in the struggle was determined not only by individuals but also by the cooperation of various societal elements. Teachers can encourage students to analyze how unity served as social capital in confronting colonialism and then reflect on this in their school lives by practicing mutual respect, tolerance, and cooperation during learning activities. Group discussions serve as a concrete example of this approach.

c. Patience and Never Give Up

An unyielding spirit represents an individual's steadfastness, persistence, and fighting spirit when facing challenges (Wiratama, et.al, 2021). Mrs. Ruswo's struggle, which spanned three historical periods, exemplifies this patience and refusal to give up. Despite navigating political regime changes—from the Dutch East Indies era and the Japanese occupation to the War of Independence—her spirit of service never wavered. Shifting political landscapes actually drove her to adapt the nature of her struggle to meet the specific needs of each era. During the Dutch colonial period, she tenaciously promoted the spirit of nationalism through the scouting movement, even though organizational activities were closely monitored by Dutch intelligence (the Politieke Inlichtingen Dienst or PID). Furthermore, she remained active in humanitarian efforts throughout the Japanese occupation (Kurniawanti, 2016).

In March 1942, the Mataram Youth group invited Ibu Ruswo to represent the organization Istri Indonesia at a meeting aimed at discussing the commemoration of Kartini Day. At this meeting, she was appointed secretary and designated as a delegate to approach the Japanese administration, which was then occupying the Gedung Negara (State Building). The outcome of the meeting with the Japanese authorities was that the Kartini Day commemoration was permitted, subject to several conditions: a. the national anthem "Indonesia Raya" could not be sung; b. the Red and White flag could not be flown;

c. attendance was limited to a maximum of 500 people; d. the event had to conclude by 10:00 PM; and e. Japanese soldiers would provide security. These conditions were accepted with a heavy heart, as there was simply no other option at the time. Ultimately, the Kartini Day commemoration took place on April 21 at the CHTH Building (now the KONI building), located immediately to the left of the current Janabadra University office. Japanese soldiers maintained strict security throughout the event (Hardi, 1985).

Through the study of history, students are encouraged to reflect on the fact that any struggle inevitably involves facing various challenges and limitations. The patience Ibu Ruswo demonstrated in the face of pressure, combined with her persistence in the struggle, serves as an example that success requires diligence, resilience, and consistency. These values are relevant to students' lives—for instance, when they encounter learning difficulties, complete project assignments, prepare for exams, or face failure. Consequently, students are encouraged not to give up easily but rather to evaluate their shortcomings and strive for self-improvement.

In practice, teachers can integrate the values of patience and perseverance through inquiry-based learning, Project-Based Learning (PjBL), or reflective discussions. For example, students might be asked to analyze the various challenges Ibu Ruswo faced during her struggle and then relate them to the challenges they encounter in their own school lives. Subsequently, students can reflect on strategies to maintain diligence and avoid discouragement while pursuing their goals.

d. Cooperation

The value of cooperation emphasizes the importance of collaboration among individuals and groups to achieve shared goals. Ibu Ruswo was active in several social organizations and collaborated with their members, including P4A (Association for Combating the Trafficking of Women and Children). This value of cooperation was evident in Mrs. Ruswo's ability to collaborate with various segments of society during the struggle for independence. Activities such as operating public kitchens, distributing supplies, serving freedom fighters, and managing organizational tasks could not be accomplished by individuals alone; they required effective coordination, communication, and the division of responsibilities (Kurniawanti, 2016).

This capacity for cooperation demonstrates that the success of the struggle to defend independence resulted from the synergy between fighters on the battlefield and civilians who provided logistical support, information, and social services. Thus, Ibu Ruswo's efforts underscore that *gotong royong* (mutual cooperation) was a vital component of the Indonesian nation's struggle.

P4A was an initiative aimed at addressing the issue of the trafficking of women, which was rampant at the time. Within the organization, Ibu Ruswo served as the central Treasurer and as the chair of the Mataram branch. She was an active member who strongly opposed the trafficking of women and children. This stance was reflected in a speech she delivered at the 1932 PPII Congress in Surakarta, where she described the trafficking of women as:

"global scourge... that has existed since ancient times up to the present day, spanning from East to West... a disease rampant in every facet of human relations, across all social strata-from the lowest to the highest-and among both white and colored populations" (Kurniawanti, 2016).

The value of cooperation can be fostered through collaborative learning models, such as Project-Based Learning, group discussions, and local history projects. Through these activities, students not only learn about historical events but also experience firsthand the importance of coordination, communication, and shared responsibility in completing a task.

e. Mutual Respect

The value of mutual respect entails a reciprocal attitude of honoring one another within the life of the nation and state (Widiastuti, et.al, 2023). This value is reflected in the relationships Ibu Ruswo maintained with the community and her fellow freedom fighters. Her involvement in women's organizations and social activities demonstrated an appreciation for the participation of diverse groups in the struggle for independence. She fostered cooperation regardless of social background, thereby creating harmonious relationships while carrying out various activities related to the struggle. This attitude of mutual respect illustrates that the struggle for independence relied not only on courage but also on the ability to communicate effectively, respect differences, and prioritize the common good.

The contextualization of Mrs. Ruswo's Values of Struggle in History Learning are compiled in Table 2. In history education, the value of mutual respect can be implemented through multi-perspective historical discussions. Teachers provide various sources presenting differing views on a historical event, and students are then asked to present arguments based on historical evidence while respecting their peers' opinions. Furthermore, examining the struggle of Ibu Ruswo-a local female figure-serves as a means to foster appreciation for the contributions of groups that have historically received little attention in national historiography. In this way, history education becomes more inclusive while simultaneously cultivating tolerance and an appreciation for the diversity of historical experiences.

Table 2. Contextualization of Mrs. Ruswo's Values of Struggle in History Learning

Struggle Values (Joyomartono)	proof of Mrs. Ruswo's struggle	Contextualization in History Learning
Willingness To Sacrifice	Managing a general kitchen, serving as a secret courier	Character analysis and reflection on the value of service
Unity	Active in INPO, KBI, Indonesian's Wife	A discussion on the importance of unity in the struggle.
Cooperation	Collaboration in organization and logistics	Project-Based Learning local history

Patience and never give up	Struggling under three era	A reflection on the process of social change in history
Mutual Respect	Collaboration across organizations and the community	Multi-perspective history learning

2 The relevance of the values embodied in Ibu Ruswo's struggle to history education demonstrates that local history holds significant potential as a source of meaningful learning. Previous research by Febriati and Rusdini (2026) demonstrates that the history of the Wonorejo struggle monument can serve as a historical learning resource, thereby extending learning materials beyond the confines of the classroom. This is further supported by Nurdiansyah (2021), whose research indicates that the local history of the Siak Kingdom holds significant potential for enhancing students' historical awareness when utilized as a historical learning resource.

Integrating these values into history lessons not only enriches the curriculum but also renders the learning process more contextual, as students engage with history that is closely linked to their own social and cultural environments (Ahmad & Kurniawan, 2025). This is supported by research from Makhzumi et al. (2026), which integrates history instruction with the values of the struggle embodied by the figure of Muhammad Hatta (a study conducted at high schools in West Jakarta).

Beyond deepening the understanding of local history, instruction centered on Ibu Ruswo's struggle contributes to character education. Values such as self-sacrifice, unity, cooperation, patience, resilience, and mutual respect align with national education goals, which emphasize the development of students who are faithful, possess strong character, and are creative, independent, and responsible. Consequently, history education is no longer viewed merely as the rote memorization of past facts, but rather as a means to foster historical awareness and internalize life values relevant to the challenges of contemporary society (Wiyanarti, et.al, 2020)

The findings of this study confirm that Mrs. Ruswo's struggle possesses not only historical significance as part of local history but also educational value that can be effectively contextualized within history instruction. Previous studies have more focused on her biography and the narrative of her struggle, with few linking these to history education. This study have novelty that not only recounting the history of Ibu Ruswo's struggle but also exploring the values. Therefore, utilizing local historical figures like Mrs. Ruswo as learning resources offers a viable approach to strengthening history education-making it contextual, meaningful, and focused on character development (Fikri, et.al., 2024)

The research findings regarding the relevance of Mrs. Ruswo's struggle and values hold broader significance for the development of history education across schools and regions in Indonesia. History instruction need not always center on the national figures who have long dominated textbooks; teachers can enrich the curriculum by highlighting local figures who made tangible contributions to the nation's struggle. This approach

enables students to understand that national history is shaped by diverse experiences of struggle across various regions, thereby fostering a more inclusive historical perspective that values the diverse contributions of the Indonesian people. In schools and regions across the country, the implementation of contextual history education can be tailored to local historical contexts. Teachers can connect the values embodied in Ibu Ruswo's struggle with those of local figures from the students' own communities. This strategy helps students forge a stronger connection to the subject matter by engaging with real-life examples drawn from their familiar social and cultural environments. Consequently, history education becomes more meaningful and relevant, encouraging students to reflect on these values in their daily lives.

CONCLUSION

This study demonstrates that Ibu Ruswo's struggle holds not only historical significance regarding the defense of Indonesia's independence but also embodies values relevant for integration into history education. An analysis based on Joyomartono's perspective reveals that her struggle represents five key values: willingness to sacrifice, unity, cooperation, patience and resilience, and mutual respect. These values are reflected in her active involvement in movement organizations during the Dutch East Indies era, her service during the Japanese occupation, and her contributions to the independence struggle—such as organizing communal kitchens, distributing logistics, acting as a secret courier, and engaging in various humanitarian activities during the Physical Revolution. The findings also indicate a strong relevance between the values embodied in Ibu Ruswo's struggle and the objectives of history education. These values can be contextualized by utilizing local history as a learning resource, encouraging students not only to understand historical facts and events but also to internalize these values in their daily lives. Integrating the values of self-sacrifice, unity, cooperation, patience and resilience, and mutual respect into the learning process has the potential to strengthen historical thinking skills, historical consciousness, and nationalism, while fostering character development in line with national education goals. Thus, Ibu Ruswo's struggle serves as a learning resource possessing both historical and educational value. Incorporating the stories of local figures like Ibu Ruswo into history lessons offers an alternative way to create learning experiences that are more contextual, meaningful, and focused on character building. Beyond enriching local history content, this approach fosters student appreciation for the role of women in Indonesia's independence struggle and broadens historical perspectives to be more inclusive.

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