

Independent Learning As A Strategic Effort To Build Student Character At The Primary Education Level

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Independent Learning As A Strategic Effort To Build Student Character At The Primary Education Level

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Abstract: Character education is compulsory education in formal schools. For this reason, character education continues to be optimized so that students become individuals who are not only intelligent but also have good character. Through the independent learning policy, teachers and school principals have the freedom to develop educational programs that lead to the development of students' character in accordance with the profile of Pancasila. This study aims to explain character education through an independent learning policy. The method used in this research is literature study, by reviewing various research journal articles, books, and regulations that have relevance to the topic of this research. Based on this literature research, it was found that the character developed in independent learning is internalized in the profile of Pancasila students, including faith, piety, noble character, mutual cooperation, independence, reasoning and creativity. Some of these characters can be realized through three independent learning policy initiatives, and through habituation programs, school culture and the internalization of character values in learning. The implementation of character building refers to the principles of humanistic, empathy, and justice.

Keywords: independent learning, character education, primary education.

INTRODUCTION

The curriculum, according to the modern view is not only interpreted as a collection of subjects but also includes a range of student experiences in school. Experiences can be defined as events, occurrences, or anything that students can perceive through their senses (Buckingham, 2011). Experiences are closely related to various programs in schools, both those related to classroom learning and those related to school culture in building students' cognitive, affective, and psychomotor aspects. Experiences are strongly linked to the external environment.

Curriculum changes from time to time, as a government effort to find the right formula to face the challenges of the times (Rusydiyah, Purwati, and Prabowo, 2020). Currently, education has entered the era of the fourth industrial revolution, and the curriculum needs to be adjusted to the existing developmental conditions (Reddy, 2019). It is undeniable that technological advancements have been able to transform habits from conventional systems to digital systems (Rusydiyah, Purwati, and Prabowo, 2020). This condition certainly has an impact on the field of education. When gadgets first emerged, many schools prohibited students from bringing gadgets to school. So at this time, gadgets are actually a supporting element for the continuity of learning.

Especially since the Covid-19 pandemic, learning that was originally carried out face-to-face must switch to distance education, or what is more familiarly called online learning. To support the performance of these teachers, the Minister of Education made a policy of "independent learning" (Thohir et al., 2021). The independent learning curriculum wants a

more meaningful learning process so that students can become learners who learn. Philosophically, "independent learning" assesses the success of learning not by how much knowledge students gain but by how much effort students make to gain knowledge (Mudhofi, 2013) and how much knowledge can be applied in everyday life (Nuryatno, 2015).

The independent learning policy provides opportunities for students to learn independently according to their talents and interests. Students can learn whatever they want in their own way. Teachers do not have to force students to accept all the material in the textbook, because the most important thing is how students are able to learn independently, freely, happily. No longer learning for fear of being scolded by the teacher or learning because of a certain assignment. This policy certainly provides a breath of fresh air in the midst of the hustle and bustle of learning implementation during the pandemic.

The independent learning policy provides flexibility for schools to determine the best learning programs and according to the situation, conditions of each school (Thohir, 2021). In other terms, the independent learning policy is a form of curriculum decentralization. Theoretically, curriculum decentralization is very good to implement, but practically, curriculum decentralization has not succeeded in improving student learning outcomes (Dewi, 2021). For this reason, there is a need for further theoretical studies regarding character education in the independent learning policy. Considering that one of the focuses of the independent learning policy is an effort to build student character.

Character education is very important in this era of modernization. The term smart is not enough, students also need to have good character as a fortress to face various kinds of crises, such as moral and social crises. For this reason, there needs to be further research on the independent learning policy as one of the strategic efforts in character education.

METHODS

This research is qualitative research with literature study techniques. Literature study research is carried out by looking for various relevant sources, such as research journal articles, books and regulations related to the independent learning policy in building character education. Then the sources collected by researchers are classified based on the research formula. The next step is that the data is processed or quoted, then displayed as findings from previous research. Then the data is abstracted and interpreted, only then can researchers draw a conclusion. In more detail, it can be seen in the following chart:

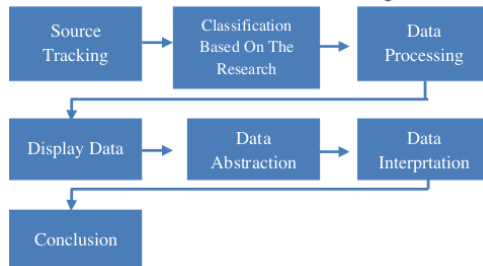


Figure 1. Literature Study Research Stages modified by the author (Darmalaksana, 2020)



The data collected is then analyzed by synthesizing and identifying information (Machmud, Widiyan and Ramadhani, 2021)) which focuses on explaining the independent learning policy and the underlying philosophical studies.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Every change in curriculum policy is inseparable from the philosophical foundation that colors the determination of learning designs and objectives. From a philosophical review, independent learning is close to the philosophical concepts of humanism (Hamruni, 2009) and progressivism (Mustagfiroh, 2020).. The humanism school is a school that views that the success of learning is determined by meeting the needs of students. Where these needs refer to H. Maslow's theory, which includes basic needs, psychological needs and actualization needs. If students are psychologically happy, not constrained, learning will also be maximized. So according to the view of humanism, in the educational process, students need to be given freedom, the opportunity to actualize as a form of fulfilling their needs.

Meanwhile, according to the view of progressivism, education is a process of continuous reconstruction of experience, progressive in nature so that it can bring progress. Progress is measured based on the achievement of goals. Progress is important because it can bring novelty (Anwar, 2017). In an effort to achieve progress, humans must actualize their ideas in a more concrete form. For this reason, education needs to provide freedom to students to actualize ideas as an effort to achieve progress. This freedom is what underlies the independent learning policy.

Independent learning is Indonesia's latest policy in responding to the challenges of the times in the era of the Industrial Revolution 4.0. Independent learning initiated to give schools the authority to develop the best program that suits the situation and conditions of the school (Thohir, 2021). The conditions of one school must be different from those of other schools, so the program implemented in school A is not necessarily suitable for implementation in school B. For this reason, the government, institutions, teachers, parents and students can work together to design and implement educational programs to the fullest (Krissandi and Rusmawan, 2015).

Independent learning is the answer to various kinds of problems faced by teachers, both related to the administrative responsibilities of a teacher, or problems related to the implementation of education. Independent learning views that children's success is not determined by their ability to memorize, but is determined by their character and ability to work and collaborate. Therefore, teachers need to build good and intense communication with students. The teacher is no longer a figure to be feared by students, but the teacher is a partner of students in learning. Communication becomes very open, because students can discuss various things with the teacher.

In the independent learning policy, learning does not have to be done in the classroom, teachers can innovate to develop learning programs outside the classroom such as learning with the outing class system (Mustagfiroh, 2020). Teachers are also no longer confused by the demands of student learning outcomes. So that teachers can innovate in such a way as to make students happy in learning, develop students' interests and talents and build student character.

Achieving that goal, the Minister of Education initiated four initiatives in the independent learning policy, including:

1. Elimination of national exam and replacing with the Minimum Competency Assessment.



2. National standard school exams are handed over to each school. Through this policy, schools have the authority to make questions, determine the form of assessment to determine student graduation
3. Lesson plan format becomes simpler with only 1 page
4. Elimination of the zoning system (Abidah *et al.*, 2020)..

Of these four things, there are three initiatives in the independent learning policy, which are directly related to character education in schools. First, the abolition of the national exam. The national exam is a test that determines graduation at each level which is carried out simultaneously on a national scale. This exam has drawn pros and cons from the community, teachers and other education practitioners. Those who agree with the national exam consider that the national exam can improve the standard of education in Indonesia. However, those who disagree with the national exam argue that the national exam is a test that only measures cognitive aspects and ignores affective and psychomotor aspects. As a result, the learning process always focuses on children's cognitive achievement, even more extreme, the learning process is only to prepare children to pass the national exam, not to support children's growth and development based on their interests and talents. Through this effort to abolish the national exam, it is hoped that learning in schools can return to the spirit of learning itself. Learning to build knowledge, skills and character of students.

Besides that, the minimum competency assessment is a new form of assessment in the competency-based independent learning policy. If the national exam is conducted at the end of each grade, the minimum competency assessment is conducted at grade 5 for primary school, grade 2 for lower secondary school and senior secondary school. This assessment assesses literacy, numeracy and character survey skills. Through competency-based assessment, students are expected to be able to use their literacy and numeracy skills in everyday life. So that numeracy is not always about math, but literacy is also closely related to other subjects. Furthermore, through the character survey, it is hoped that schools will be more motivated to build children's character at school. The character values built in the independent learning policy are summarized in the Pancasila student profile.

Second, the national standard school exam was delegated to each school. This policy gives schools the freedom to make questions, determine the scores and graduation of students. This policy is based on empirical reality, that schools know better the development of their students, schools also know better what kind of exam is suitable for the conditions of their school, so that schools also have the right to decide whether or not students graduate from a certain level. Regulatively, the determination of graduation is based on the achievement of all student competency domains. With the authority of school examinations delegated to schools, at least it provides an opportunity for schools to be able to maximize the achievement of all student competencies, including in the aspect of strengthening character.

Third, the format of the Learning Implementation Plan (RPP) becomes simpler, only one sheet. This provision related to lesson plans aims to reduce the burden on teachers in terms of administration. The one-sheet lesson plan is expected to motivate teachers to make lesson plans that are really in accordance with the situation and conditions of the class so that they can be implemented in real learning. Lesson plans as part of lesson planning determine the success of learning. Through this policy, teachers can organize learning steps that reflect independence in learning. In addition, teachers can also include activities that lead to character education more specifically according to the situation and conditions of each school.



This initiation provides an open opportunity for teachers and schools to strengthen character education in schools. School is a place of habituation, a place to socialize and a civilizing process that is integrated with moral education (Prihatmojo and Badawi, 2020). Character can be formed through a program that is carried out continuously so that it becomes a habit and is embedded in a person (Putri, 2018).

The form of character education in the independent learning curriculum can be carried out with a variety of routine activities, exemplary, or character education that is internalized in learning activities. (Prabandari, 2020). The character values developed in the independent learning policy refer to the Pancasila Student Profile which includes faith, fear of God Almighty, noble character, global diversity, mutual cooperation, creativity, critical reasoning, and independence (Aditomo, 2021). The following are details of the dimensions and elements of the Pancasila learner profile:

Table 1. Dimensions and elements of the Pancasila learner profile

Believing, fearing God, and have noble character	Globally diverse	Mutual cooperation	Independent	Critical reasoning	Creative
Religious morality	Recognizing and appreciating culture	Collaboration	Self understanding and situation	Acquire and process information and ideas	Generate original ideas
Personal morals	Intercultural communication and interaction	Care	Self-regulation: motivation management, goal setting, and evaluation of goal achievement	Analyzing and evaluating reasoning	Produce original works and actions
Morals to human beings		Share			
Morals towards nature	Reflection and responsibility on the experience of diversity			Reflecting and evaluating one's own thinking	Have flexibility in thinking in finding alternative solutions to problems
State morals	Social justice				

These character values can be built through a number of school activities, including:

1. Building the character of faith, piety and noble character through religious routines
 To realize students who have faith and piety, it can be done by habituation activities that can improve students' spirituality abilities. In the principle of independent learning, habituation should not be carried out by force but requires a persuasive approach, providing an explanation of why students need to participate in these activities. So that students can participate in these activities happily and not feel forced. The form of this activity can be in the form of Dhuha / Dhuhur prayers in congregation, habituation of cultums delivered by students before prayer with rotating scheduling.
2. Building global diversity
 Building global diversity includes cultural recognition, building intercultural communication and interaction, reflecting on the experience of diversity and social justice. All these elements refer to the values of Pancasila as the character of the nation. Therefore, the strategy that can be done to build the character of global diversity is to



internalize the values of Pancasila in learning and school culture. Such as building the habit of greeting when meeting friends, greeting guests who visit the school, wearing traditional clothes every commemoration of national holidays.

3. Building the character of gotong royong through cooperative learning
Achieving this character can be done by learning using cooperative methods. Through cooperative methods, students can collaborate in making products or working on projects, practicing care and sharing. Where sharing can not only be interpreted materially but, sharing knowledge, sharing knowledge, is also part of the concept of sharing.
4. Building independence
Building independence includes independence in managing motivation, self-understanding and goal setting. The independent learning policy gives students the opportunity to learn according to their will.
5. Building critical reasoning and creativity
Building critical reasoning and creativity can be done by analyzing and evaluating one's own reasoning, producing ideas, and original works.

Character education to build the character values expected in the independent learning policy can be maximally achieved if several principles are considered. These principles include:

1. The school community promotes ethics and performance
2. Providing opportunities for students to explore and express feelings and experiences
3. Using a comprehensive, intentional and proactive approach. Such as creating a character education plan that can be taught in class, extracurricular and other school programs
4. Instill a sense of caring in every activity such as in cooperative learning, anti-bullying programs, anti-bullying
5. Develop a curriculum that respects all learners, encourages students in academic success through activities such as providing engaging content (Singh, 2019)

Character education today is not only important to implement, but character education is a must. In the era of industrial revolution 4.0 and the era of society 5.0, if education is only to make humans smart then there is no difference between humans and robots. Because even robots through artificial intelligence can answer all questions, can do all kinds of things that humans can do. Therefore, education needs to look back at the purpose of education initiated by Ki Hajar Dewantara, that education aims to empower children's potential based on science and religion, so that children become humans and people who are safe and happy in life (Arifin, 2019). Therefore, in realizing maximum character education in the independent learning policy, it is necessary to have good principal leadership and teacher teaching performance (Mulyani, Meirawan and Rahmadani, 2020). Thus, teachers need to continue to improve their professional competence through training programs (Prasetyono *et al.*, 2021) or independently. Because the success of independent learning is strongly influenced by the teacher element. If freedom of learning already exists in the teacher, then it will exist in students.

CONCLUSIONS

The characters developed in independent learning are internalized in the Pancasila student profile, including faith, piety, noble character, mutual cooperation, independence,



reasoning and creativity. Some of these characters can be realized through three independent learning policy initiatives, and through habituation programs, school culture and internalization of character values in learning. The implementation of character building refers to the principles of humanism, empathy, and justice

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