

## Implementation of Independent Learning Curriculum in Elementary Schools

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### ABSTRACT

Independent learning is an offer to reconstruct the education system in order to welcome changes and progress of the nation by humanizing humans or liberating education. This study aims to analyze the implementation of the independent learning curriculum at SD Alam Lukulo Kebumen. The type of research used is qualitative descriptive research. Data collection techniques are carried out by interviews, observations and documentation. Data validity uses triangulation. Data analysis techniques use data reduction, data presentation and drawing conclusions. The results of the study show that the implementation of the Independent Learning curriculum at SD Alam is carried out by combining three curricula, namely the service curriculum, the JSAN curriculum, and the JSIT Curriculum. SD Alam Lukulo has characteristics consisting of 4 pillars, namely Morals, Leadership, Logical Thinking and Business. The implementation of the independent curriculum combined with the four pillars at SD Alam Lukulo uses the independent learning and independent sharing curriculum model

## **INTRODUCTION**

Education is a medium to achieve prosperity for all mankind. Quality education also reflects an advanced and modern society. Education becomes the engine of culture. The habits of each era become changes in line with the changes obtained from the education process itself. Education can produce creative, innovative things in treading every development of the era (Tri, Hoang, & Dung, 2021).

Merdeka Belajar is an offer to reconstruct the education system to welcome changes and progress of the nation that can adapt to the changing times (Walukow, Naharia, Wullur, Sumual, & Monoarfa, 2023). Merdeka Belajar focuses on the principle of freedom in applying essential and flexible materials according to the interests, needs, and characteristics of students. Merdeka Belajar provides freedom for teachers and students to apply an effective and enjoyable learning system so that it will later help improve the quality of the national education system.

Independent learning can be perceived as an effort to create a learning environment that is free to express and free from various obstacles, especially psychological pressure (Jupriyanto, Nuridin, & Ariani, 2023). For teachers, independent learning means that teachers have the freedom to focus more on maximizing learning to achieve national education goals (goal-oriented), but still within the framework of curriculum rules. For students, independent learning means that students are free to express themselves during the learning process at school, but still follow the rules and regulations at school. This has been implemented in nature schools.

Nature-based schools are now trending in several cities. The establishment of nature schools is a reaction to the school system in Indonesia which is increasingly alienated from the environment. This means that the nature of students is adjusted to their capacity (without being forced to chew on compulsory subjects), and they become familiar with the natural environment. With this "nature" concept, students are expected to be able to appreciate what they are learning more and make learning more varied and not boring. This is an effort to prove that getting an education does not have to be expensive or in a luxurious building but is still substantive. In nature schools, students unite, get to know, interact in mutual symbiosis, and preserve the natural environment in their daily lives.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

Lukulo Nature School, Kebumen was built with a concept based on the universe. The facilities and infrastructure for learning at Lukulo Nature School, Kebumen are relatively simple, the classes are open, and some classes do not have tables and chairs so students' study in class on the floor. Students also often carry out learning activities by practicing outdoors. Lukulo Nature School, Kebumen implements independent learning. Students have the opportunity to develop their talents and interests by opening the door as wide as possible for students to be creative, providing free space for students to learn through the natural school environment to provide students with comfort in learning (Murwaningsih & Fauziah, 2023). The concept of learning by playing while learning tends to make school understanding not a burden, but something fun. In natural schools, the orientation is more focused on the advantages that students have with non-standard search methods and is relatively fun for students to accept through certain forms of games.

Similar studies have been conducted by several previous researchers. Sutrisno & Nasucha (2022) highlighted the pattern of implementing independent learning in Islamic religious education learning in increasing student creativity. The study focused on children's creativity in learning. In addition, Mas & Zulystiawati (2022) targeted the implementation of independent learning management in public schools. The study focused more on planning, organizing, implementing, and supervising only. On the same side, Efendi & Suastra (2023) investigated the implementation of independent learning through pioneering teaching campuses in elementary schools.

The research has differences from the research conducted by the author, namely in terms of time, place, theory used, and research object. This research emphasizes more on the implementation of the independent learning curriculum at Lukulo Nature School as the only elementary school that has the predicate of a nature school in Kebumen district and has implemented an independent and independent sharing curriculum. Thus, this study aims to analyze the implementation of the independent learning curriculum at Lukulo Kebumen Nature Elementary School.

## **METHODOLOGY**

Methodologically, this research is included in the scope of field research with a qualitative approach. Field research is research conducted by researchers going directly to the research scene or where the phenomenon occurs. Research with a qualitative approach is a research procedure that produces descriptive data in the form of written or spoken words from people and observed behavior (Creswell & Creswell, 2022). The use of qualitative is due to the social processes that occur in the object being studied.

The research location is at Lukulo Nature School Kebumen, Central Java. The reason the researcher chose this location as a research location was based on several considerations. Lukulo Nature School is the only nature school in Kebumen. This nature school is also one of the schools that have implemented independent learning before the independent curriculum policy from the Ministry of Education and Culture.

In determining good research subjects, there are requirements that need to be considered. Those who have participated in the activities that are the subject of the research for a long time are fully involved in the activities that are the subject of the research and have enough time to be asked for information. Determination of subjects is done using purposive sampling and snowball techniques. Purposive sampling is a technique for determining samples with certain considerations, while snowball sampling is a technique for collecting samples that are initially small in number, then enlarged. Referring to the information in this study, the research subjects include: the principal of Lukulo Elementary School, vice principal, educators, administration, and students.

The data collection techniques used in this study are interviews, observation and documentation (Pandey & Pandey, 2021). Observation is an effort made by qualitative research implementers to record all events and activities that occur using or without tools. In this case, the researcher uses non-participant observation, namely the author is not involved and is only an independent observer. An interview is a conversation with a specific purpose by two parties, namely the interviewer as the submitter/giver of questions and the interviewee as the provider of answers to the interview. In this study, the researcher used structured and unstructured interviews. Data collection was carried out using an interview guide instrument containing several questions. Documentation is a supporter of observation and interviews. The documentation referred to in this compilation is documentation in the form of photos and other documentation related to the research.

This study utilizes data checking/validity techniques through the use of sources, methods, and theories. The application of triangulation techniques is carried out in order to re-check the accuracy of the data that has been collected, including by cross-checking or cross-checking data. Data analysis in this study uses descriptive analysis techniques. In the Miles and Huberman data analysis model, there are four steps, namely data collection, data condensation, data presentation, and drawing conclusions (Miles, Huberman, & Saldaña, 2014).

In this study, data collection was carried out using observation, interview and documentation methods or techniques. Data condensation was carried out by reprocessing the raw data obtained from the field. The raw data was then sorted and classified between important and unimportant. Unnecessary data was then discarded. Data presentation in this study was carried out after the condensation process. This data is presented in the form of a description of the research object. Drawing conclusions and verification in this study have been carried out from the beginning to the end of the research.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The implementation of the independent curriculum is carried out in three stages, namely planning, implementation, and evaluation. The results of this study will describe the three stages. First, planning is explained. Planning is an activity carried out by management to achieve the desired results effectively and efficiently. The following is an explanation of the independent learning plan at Sekolah Alam by the principal of Lukulo Nature School.

“In planning the new policy, we held a working meeting to prepare the curriculum, and discussions with all teachers, and there was assistance from the foundation and also the committee when conducting socialization. We hold working meetings every year. We have also used the independent curriculum policy from the Ministry of Education and Culture. In preparing the school curriculum, we are not only tied to one, although the office has an independent curriculum, but our school has been implementing independent learning before the independent curriculum was formed. Because our school has its characteristics, we are under three umbrellas, namely the office, JSAN and JSIT. So, we do use a nature-based curriculum, we use the universe as a learning tool. Learning is not only in the classroom but also in the nature around us.”

Based on the statement above, policy planning is held with a work meeting and program plan every year. In the annual work meeting, this nature school compiles a curriculum by combining three rules, namely the curriculum from the office, JSAN (Nusantara Nature School Network), and JSIT (Integrated Islamic School Network). It was emphasized again by the vice principal of Lukulo Nature Elementary School as follows:

“In the work meeting, we plan programs for celebrations, projects, and presentations. So, we help each other to complete. Our program planning is daily, weekly, monthly, and yearly. We create our teaching materials. We adjust the three curricula that are mixed into one. The RPP that is made is called SETARKU. We have a core team to attend JSIT and JSAN training for the independence curriculum.”

According to the statement, Lukulo Nature School always makes careful planning before implementing the school program. School program planning includes daily, weekly, monthly, and yearly. The daily program contains several subjects that must be delivered on that day. The weekly program or weekly program planning for the next week as well as the evaluation of the monthly and yearly programs that discuss the program for the next year. They create their own teaching devices by combining three curriculums into one. The teaching devices

in Lukulo Nature School are named SETARKU (Sapa, Eksplorasi, Tahu, Aksi, Refleksi, Kehidupan, and Ukhrowi). The following is an example of SETARKU documented by the author. The activities carried out in this study are agreed with research in other schools (Ok, 2022). Nature school activities have similarities, both in terms of religion and learning planning prepared by teachers.

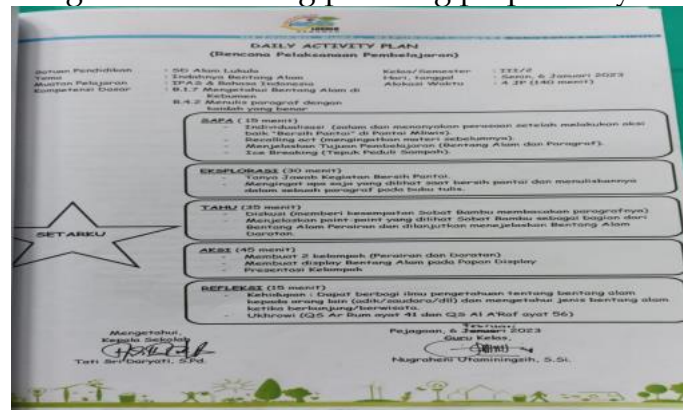


Figure 1. Setarku

Based on the results obtained by researchers in the field, Lukulo Nature School Kebumen in implementing the independent learning program carried out good and mature planning.

Second, implementation is also seen in the implementation of the curriculum. Implementation is attempted in various ways. Initial efforts include formulating objectives. In formulating objectives, educators can choose appropriate teaching strategies, determine appropriate learning materials, determine learning methods, learning resources, and media, and evaluate. Thus, learning objectives become the core of an effective learning process. Learning objectives are to encourage teacher commitment to create a more enjoyable, interesting, efficient, and effective learning experience in achieving learning objectives.

The results of the interview found that in formulating objectives by referring to the 4 pillars at Lukulo Nature School, namely Akhlaq, leadership, logical thinking, and business. In line with that, the results of observations in learning, there are four corridors, one of which is logical thinking by developing certain works. Grade 3 students cook from their harvested ingredients. Then, it is shared with their juniors. The harvest can also be processed for market day activities with the aim of training student entrepreneurship. Students are expected to have entrepreneurship skills. The following is the documentation that the author captured in cooking and sharing activities. The ingredients for cooking are the harvest of students at Lukulo Nature School. The research conducted by A obtained similar results because they studied in the same school. The 4 pillars of nature schools and student learning activities are indeed unique compared to other public schools. This concept strongly supports the principles of nature schools (Fauziah & Chasanah, 2021).



Figure 2. Activity of Sharing Input Results

Then, the main tasks of educators are divided. The division of the main tasks of educators is the main thing that is done in implementing learning which contains details of activities and tasks that must be done. As conveyed by the homeroom teacher 4 of Lukulo Alam Elementary School that in organizing learning activities, teachers make details of the implementation of learning.

"The learning details at Lukulo Nature School begin with Dhuha prayer, Morning Talk, Tahfidz, Tahsin then enter the material of sessions 1, 2, and 3. Then, finally closing by summarizing the material on that day. Initially, the teacher delivered the material first, then recited the Koran at the back. However, Islamic activities at the beginning of learning are considered more effective."

Next, another resource person explained about the learning at Lukulo Nature School:

"Actually, our school is not much different because we have done it before so we are not surprised. The filling format still uses SETARKU. The activities we present are reciting the Koran, learning manners, and praying. Leadership consists of nights of Bina and piety, live in, camp, and others. Then, there are thinking skills about logical thinking, project learning, P5 according to the independence curriculum."

From the interview, the author saw that the main task of organizing had been carried out quite well. The school has made a breakdown of learning activities from opening activities, core activities, and closing activities. The school has developed and evaluated the K13 curriculum model and the Merdeka Belajar curriculum. The school has been able to strengthen the uniqueness contained in the report card covering 3 pillars because 1 pillar has been included in the report card which is integrated with P5.

The implementation of the independent curriculum combined with the 4 pillars of Lukulo Nature School can be seen through various real programs and projects at Lukulo Nature School Kebumen. From the interview results, it is known that leadership is carried out in certain stages. The activities are adjusted to age or class. Leadership activities refer to the academic calendar at the nature school. Market day activities are carried out according to school materials and according to student needs. Other information was conveyed by the facilitator. The teacher added that learning at Lukulo Nature School is diverse.

The goal is for students to be more optimal in strengthening their competition. The facilitator can choose teaching tools to suit the learning needs of students. In differentiated learning, the Lukulo nature school empowers the surrounding environment, namely by children learning outside the classroom at one with nature. The most important predictor of nature schools is more orientation to nature than in their classrooms. The frequency of students' nature experiences will be more positive with the intensity of frequent educational implementation (Yamanoi et al., 2021). Nature schools need to strengthen the ecological knowledge of teachers and students, and provide more green spaces in schools.

Differentiated learning at Lukulo Nature School is by using the school environment as a place and source of learning by using 3 aspects of differentiated learning. These aspects are: 1) differentiation of content/materials, namely by determining the steps, 2) differentiation of the process, namely by processing natural resources, namely tomatoes into various food preparations, and 3) differentiation of products produced by students with assessments from facilitators and several parents. Further efforts are in the form of delegating authority to teachers. Delegation of authority at Lukulo Nature School, the principal forms a team consisting of the principal, vice principal, and administration. The principal also forms a curriculum choir and a public relations choir.

Learning facilities at Lukulo Nature School have used LCD with PowerPoint, smart TV, online application platforms, and the surrounding nature. The facilities at Lukulo Nature School are facilities with the concept of developing education naturally. This natural school is a school that interacts directly with the surrounding nature. The nature in question is a natural environment depicted as open land surrounded by plants and a children's playground (Bustari & Putri, 2024). The classrooms are relatively simple with buildings in the school designed with an open feel.

The facilities used in learning some classes use small tables and lesehan. In addition to the classroom, there are also huts and nature in the surrounding environment. The learning media used comes from nature, except for some lessons that require electronic devices such as computers in the computer lab room, and LCD if in the classroom. The teaching tools at Lukulo Nature School are made together between facilitators and students, as well as collaboration between parents and students with the theme of family projects.

The concept of Lukulo Nature School is integrated with four pillars, namely the pillar of morality, the pillar of logical thinking, the pillar of leadership, and the pillar of business. These four pillars are what inspire the education process at Lukulo Nature School. Students are given full freedom to explore various learning resources and improve their abilities so that students can grow into people with good character and broad insight. This is in accordance with the concept of Lukulo Nature School is that Nature is used as a place of learning, a source and media of learning, and even an object of learning (Mbewe, 2021).

## CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

In implementing planning at Lukulo Nature School, namely designing programs by holding work meetings and also compiling a curriculum that is combined with three curricula from the Office, JSAN, and JSIT while still using the four pillars at Lukulo Nature School, namely Morals, Leadership, Logical Thinking and Business. Organizing at Lukulo Nature School includes determining resources, namely the principal of Lukulo Nature School creating a management team, curriculum coordinator, and public relations coordinator. The implementation of Merdeka Belajar at Lukulo Nature School uses Merdeka Mandiri Belajar because the school, apart from using the Merdeka curriculum, also maintains the existing curriculum at Lukulo Nature School.

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