

Critical Evaluation of *Independent Curriculum* (Review of Learning Methods in the Social Sciences Education Perspective)

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Abstract

This article describes an evaluation of social science learning methods in the independent learning education system. Based on the implementation of social studies education subjects as a set of social sciences in the implementation of the independent learning curriculum, there are at least two main problems. First, educational facilities to support learning. Second, teacher resources. These two problems are the problems behind the evaluation of the independent learning system within the framework of learning methods from a social science perspective. This paper uses qualitative methods with the type of library research. Qualitative methods were chosen to obtain data through in-depth and critical analysis of learning methods in social studies subjects in the independent learning education system. The findings from this article are that social studies subjects are a collection of social sciences including history, geography, economics, and sociology and humanities such as aspects of norms, values, language, arts, and culture. Social studies subjects in the independent learning curriculum have undergone changes through adaptation and innovation to contemporary education. Project-based learning methods and models with methods that combine online and face-to-face learning (blended learning). However, because social studies subjects are clustered together with natural sciences in the Pancasila student profile project, the transformation of students' grades tends to favor learning methods outside the classroom with direct practice and the use of a variety of visual media. Therefore, the conclusion of this article is that learning methods in social studies education subjects tend to be directed towards educators or teachers. There are at least two things that need to be evaluated by teachers in implementing the independent learning education system. First, the teacher's capacity to understand the independent learning education system. Second, the social studies learning method guides teachers to learn more outside the classroom with direct practice and the use of various visual media by utilizing technology and the internet. Students tend to get bored with boring lecture learning methods or models.

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Abstrak

Artikel ini menguraikan evaluasi metode pembelajaran ilmu sosial sistem pendidikan merdeka belajar. Berdasarkan penyelenggaraan mata pelajaran pendidikan IPS sebagai himpunan ilmu sosial pada pelaksanaan kurikulum merdeka belajar, maka setidaknya ada dua masalah utamanya. Pertama, fasilitas pendidikan dalam menunjang pembelajaran. Kedua, sumber daya guru. Dua masalah tersebut menjadi masalah yang melatarbelakangi evaluasi system *Merdeka Belajar* dalam kerangka metode pembelajaran perspektif ilmu sosial. Tulisan ini menggunakan metode kualitatif dengan jenis riset pustaka (library research). Metode kualitatif dipilih untuk mendapatkan data melalui analisis mendalam dan kritis terhadap metode pembelajaran dalam mata pelajaran IPS pada sistem pendidikan merdeka belajar. Temuan dari artikel ini bahwa mata pelajaran IPS merupakan himpunan dari ilmu sosial di antaranya sejarah, geografi, ekonomi, dan sosiologi dan humaniora seperti aspek norma, nilai, bahasa, seni, dan budaya. Mata pelajaran IPS dalam kurikulum *Merdeka Belajar* telah mengalami perubahan melalui adaptasi dan inovasi dengan pendidikan kekinian. Metode dan model pembelajaran berbasis proyek dengan metode yang mengkolaborasikan pembelajaran online dan tatap muka (blended learning). Namun karena mata pelajaran IPS diklusterkan Bersama IPA pada proyek profil pelajar Pancasila, transformasi nilai siswa cenderung menyukai metode pelajaran di luar kelas dengan praktik langsung dan penggunaan ragam media visual. Oleh sebab itu, simpulan dari artikel ini metode pembelajaran pada mata pelajaran pendidikan IPS, cenderung pada pendidik atau guru. Setidaknya ada dua hal yang perlu dievaluasi pada guru dalam penerapan sistem pendidikan merdeka belajar. Pertama, kapasitas guru memahami sistem pendidikan merdeka belajar. Kedua, metode pembelajaran IPS menuntun guru agar lebih banyak belajar di luar kelas dengan praktik langsung dan penggunaan ragam media visual dengan memanfaatkan teknologi dan internet. Siswa atau peserta didik cenderung jenuh dengan metode atau model belajar ceramah yang membosankan.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Freedom to learn was institutionalized in the national education system, when Nadiem Anwar Makarim became minister of education in 2019. Freedom to learn is a national education system that is encouraged and made possible by at least two factors. First, there needs to be innovation and adaptation to technology and internet networks in the national education system. Second,

there is a need to catch up with students' lagging behind in literacy and numeracy in order to create superior humans. These two factors urge an independent education system to be initiated carefully. Due to innovation and adaptation to technology and the internet, as part of adapting to the current industrial era. The human resources produced by educational institutions are able to compete and meet the demands and developments of the times. Meanwhile, In terms of human quality, Indonesia is quite lagging behind. In the national mathematics and literacy sector, out of 78 countries, the quality of numeracy and literacy of students in Indonesia is in 8th place from the bottom or 70th.

Changes in the national education system have a fundamental reason as an effort to improve the national education system. According to Elizabeth Simatupang and Indrawati Yuhertiana, there are two forms of educational change or reform. First, programmed. This educational reform refers to the curriculum or program of an educational institution. Second, systemic. This educational reform emphasizes educational innovation. This innovation is introducing new ideas, new methods or new means to improve several aspects of the educational process so that changes occur in contrast to before by showing real differences when compared (Elizabeth Simatupang and Indrawati Yuhertiana, 2021, p. 31). Independent Curriculum has an image of the two characteristics of educational reform described above.

Freedom to learn has been part of the history of national education system reform. Freedom to learn has been recorded as the 10th change in the history of the national education system. These changes are steps to adjust the national education system to adapt and innovate according to current developments and progress so as not to be left behind (Yamin and Syahrir, 2020). For your information, in the independent learning curriculum (independent curriculum) students are guided to be independent in learning or education. Students are expected to have their potential and interests fully explored. So the independent learning curriculum emphasizes providing more active opportunities for students (Yunike Sulistyosari, Hermon Maurits Karwur, and Habibi Sultan, 2022). For this reason, in the free learning system, the learning system is designed so that teachers and educators both have fun in the learning process. So not only teachers are a source of learning, but students are also a source of learning. Even in its design and actualization, teachers remain the spearhead of the success of the independent learning system.

The learning model was innovated in such a way as to create an independent learning education system. The learning model in the independent learning system is designed based on projects. This learning model not only catches up with literacy and numeracy, but the independent learning system develops the character and skills of students. Like studying outside the classroom and in groups, building the character and personality of students or learners is the importance of collaborating and thinking critically in the environment. Meanwhile, the use of technology and the internet has been adapted to learning media. In learning media, students must access it via the internet network, so that learning materials such as infographics, modules and learning materials are accessed and retrieved via e-mail, as well as various social media platforms such as YouTube, WhatsApp, and others. So the skills to innovate and collaborate are very prominent in the project-based learning system.

Meanwhile, the learning method in the independent education system uses the blended learning method. For your information, the Blended Learning learning method basically combines the advantages of face-to-face (offline) and online learning or known as distance education/PJJ (online). Blended learning is a learning facility that combines various delivery methods, teaching models and learning styles, introducing various choices of dialogue media between teachers and students or students (Yamin & Syahrir, 2020). In the independent learning curriculum, it is up to educational institutions to divide the percentage of online or offline learning. This is influenced by the uneven distribution of educational facilities in educational institutions in Indonesia. The most important thing about the blended learning method is that social interaction in learning between teachers and students is increasingly flexible. The effectiveness of learning is prioritized over rigidity in the learning process.

Social Sciences (IPS) education subjects are part of the learning projections in the independent learning system. Social studies education has an orientation towards developing the character and personality of students in order to build social capital that is in direct contact with community life. Because the orientation of social studies education itself is to create students who have good character and are able to solve social problems in society (Yunike Sulistyosari, Hermon Maurits Karwur, and Habibi Sultan, 2022). So social studies education is directed at developing and organizing students or students to think critically and collaborate in solving personal and general problems. Because it has a strategic role, social studies education has challenges in the independent learning system. Learning plans and implementation must be contextually designed and adapted to current social and community life, both in planning and implementing learning. Because learning readiness, student interests, and student learning profiles must reflect the orientation of social studies education.

Considering that the learning method in independent learning is full of innovation and adaptation to current developments. The teacher is the spearhead, because he guides the independent learning process, from planning, implementation, to learning evaluation. Apart from that, because teachers and students have equal positions as learning subjects. So teachers are not the source of truth for students, but teachers and students collaborate to drive and realize learning orientation. This means that the teacher's position in the classroom or learning is not to instill or standardize values according to the teacher, but to explore students' values or potential, reasoning power and critical thinking (Yamin & Syahrir, 2020). So the teacher becomes a bridge for students to see and interact with phenomena and the social world. As a guide and bridge, Teachers must be role models for students. As in the independent learning learning method, teachers must master technological and internet developments. Because in the learning process, the media and facilities utilize sophisticated technology and internet networks to facilitate the process and orientation of learning.

Considering the importance of social studies education and the challenges of the independent learning system, it is necessary to carry out research and/or studies. The reason is, from the description above there are at least two important points of the challenges in providing social studies education in an independent learning system. First, educational facilities to support learning. The main facilities in the independent learning system are the availability of an internet network and other facilities for organizing online and offline learning. Second, teacher resources. Teachers become entities in the transformation and development of values in realizing educational orientation. So based on these challenges and problems, the author in this article will write a Critical Evaluation of Independent Learning, a study of Learning Methods from a Social Sciences Education Perspective.

2. RESEARCH METHOD

The method in this research is a qualitative method with the type of library research. Qualitative methods were chosen to obtain data through in-depth and critical analysis of learning methods in social studies education in the independent learning education system. So the qualitative method produces descriptive data in the form of written or spoken words from the people and actors observed (Lexy J. Moleong in Yamin & Syahrir, 2020). Meanwhile, literature study was chosen because it can collect accountable data to be used as a research focus. So because the research method is qualitative with the type of library research, the data sources come from articles including journals, research reports, scientific magazines, newspapers, relevant books, seminar results, unpublished scientific articles, literature letters,

3. RESEARCH RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

3.1. Social Sciences Education and the Independent Education System

In general, the presence of an independent education system is in order to adapt to changes in industry 4.0. Transformation of human resources (HR) who have contemporary skills, such as the ability to collaborate, adapt, innovate, and be able to use and utilize technology and the

internet. So that the independent education system tries to respond to the new needs and directions of changes in the contemporary industrial world. In part and in whole, the subjects in the independent learning education system are directed at developing students who not only meet current skill needs but also students who have character. To realize this educational orientation, it is necessary to outline policies in an independent education system. There are at least four important policies in an independent education system. First, National Standard School Examination (USBN). Second, National Examination (UN). Third, the Learning Implementation Plan (RPP). Lastly, the Zoning Regulations for Admission of New Students (PPDB).

Policies in the education system as part of adaptation and innovation in the national education system. Because according to the Minister of Education, Nadiem Makarim, the previous national education system was too rigid, so it needed innovation. The actualization of these innovative policies is a logical consequence of curriculum changes in the national education system. In the RPP, it is now designed simply. The lesson plan contains learning objectives, the flow of learning objectives and learning outcomes, based on educational activities that originate from the results of dialogue between teachers and students. But the education system is independent study, demands that teachers complete learning within 2 x 35 minutes for Elementary School (SD), 2 x 40 minutes for Junior High School (SMP) and 2 x 45 minutes for Senior High School (SMA) with solid material (Sevi Lestari, 2022). The possibility of dense subject matter, because subjects are collaborated in the form of projects to fulfill learning orientation. The aim of subject collaboration tends to be to build more complex knowledge and skills in students.

Social Sciences (IPS) education has become an important part of the independent learning education system. Social Sciences itself is not a scientific discipline but a subject. IPS specifically studies social life, the study of which collaborates social sciences including history, geography, economics, and sociology and humanities such as aspects of norms, values, language, art, and culture. The aim of collaborating social sciences into social studies or social studies education is to develop students into good citizens, who have knowledge, skills and social care, which is useful for themselves, society and the country (Ai Nurul Nurohmah, Dewi Kartini, & Tin Rustini, 2022). Based on the learning orientation above, it can be concluded that social studies learning emphasizes three aspects. First, deep social knowledge. Second, the social skills aspect. Third, aspects of character and moral values. These three aspects are important keys to social studies education in an independent education system.

The independent curriculum designs social studies education as a very important set of social sciences. The planning, implementation and evaluation of social studies education learning in the independent curriculum is specifically collaborated with Natural Sciences (IPA) subjects. The collaboration between social studies and science education in elementary schools in the independent curriculum is called Natural and Social Sciences (IPAS). Subject collaboration in learning projects has a systematic orientation. Because the collaboration between IPS and IPA aims to build basic knowledge in order to form capital to prepare for more complex natural sciences and social sciences at the secondary level. So by collaborating with subjects in project-based learning, it will create students who think critically,

The Pancasila student profile is a form or actualization of the collaboration of social studies subjects with project-based learning in the independent learning education system. Pancasila values are a complete entity of the orientation of social studies education which is transformed consistently in students' personalities according to current developments. So that the Pancasila student profile creates students with a Pancasila identity, as a consequence of becoming citizens who uphold Pancasila values in social and Indonesian life. For your information, in the independent curriculum there are at least six dimensions of the Pancasila student profile. First, believe and be devoted to God Almighty and have noble character. Second, be independent. Third, work together. Fourth, global diversity. Fifth, critical reasoning. Lastly,

be creative. Based on these learning dimensions, students are formed to solve Indonesian and world problems within the framework of Pancasila and technology. So social studies education in the independent curriculum provides meaning in the daily lives of students, in order to provide a formula for current challenges and provide ideas that are adaptive, innovative and have character in their lives and environment.

The development direction of the independent learning education system is seriously projected for contemporary industry. Through independence, human resources or the next generation will be a superior generation who can compete and compete in development that is conditional on environmental (ecological) and technological values. This is because social studies learning that is based on projects tends to provide opportunities and opportunities for students to develop through a learning system that is stimulated by various issues or problems without any boundaries between lessons. For more clarity regarding social studies education in the independent learning education system, you can see the table below.

Table 1 Social Sciences Education within the Framework of an Independent Education System

| SUBJECTS | INDEPENDENT LEARNING PROJECT | LEARNING ORIENTATION |
|------------------------|---|--|
| Social Sciences | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Social Sciences is a collaboration of history, geography, economics, and sociology and humanities subjects. • Social studies in the independent curriculum is collaborated with natural sciences and is called science subjects. • Science and Technology in the independent learning curriculum is clustered in the Pancasila student profile project. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Social studies education is to develop students into good citizens, who have knowledge, skills and social awareness, which are useful for themselves, society and the country. • In independent learning there are at least six social studies subject orientations in the Pancasila student profile. First, believe and be devoted to God Almighty and have noble character. Second, be independent. Third, work together. Fourth, global diversity. Fifth, critical reasoning. Lastly, be creative. |

Source: Dioah author in various sources.

3.2. Evaluation of Social Studies Education Learning Methods in the Independent Curriculum

When in the independent curriculum, social studies subjects were collaborated with natural science subjects. This collaboration provides important changes to educational elements. The competence of educators (teachers) is a very vital element in various changes in the independent education system. Since it was implemented in the 2021/2022 academic year, around 2,500 schools spread across 34 provinces and 111 districts and cities have received different responses. There are several school institutions that have obstacles in transforming the value of science and science learning in the independent curriculum. Then, other institutions/schools successfully implemented a teaching system based on this project. In fact, in an independent education system, teachers are no longer burdened by administrative burdens which cause teachers to lose their true role. Even an independent education system,

Therefore, teachers who are unable to respond to an independent education system tend to be unable to adapt and innovate with current learning methods and/or models. Teachers have

problems in mastering these models and methods, tend not to be able to form students who have contemporary skills, even with Pancasila character. So that teachers' seriousness in realizing educational orientation in the independent curriculum, namely teachers, can be reflected in their competence in using various technologies and the internet, as well as being able to prepare a Learning Implementation Plan (RPP). For your information, the RPP contains learning objectives, the flow of learning objectives, and learning achievements. Apart from that, the RPP also contains the learning methods and media used by the teacher.

According to Siti Zulaiha, Tika Meldina, and Meisin in implementing the independent learning curriculum to date, teachers have more or less two main problems. First, understand the concept of an independent learning education system. Teachers have problems in preparing lesson plans in which teachers experience problems in formulating learning objectives, arranging the flow of learning objectives, and analyzing learning outcomes. Second, technical obstacles. Teachers face technical problems due to not understanding the concept of independent learning education. These technical obstacles include not being able to determine learning methods and strategies, lack of ability to use technology and learning media, teaching materials that are too broad, and lack of project-based learning allocation (Siti Zulaiha, Tika Meldina, and Meisin, 2022).

Meanwhile, educational institutions that have successfully implemented an independent education system have been able to innovate and adapt to changes in learning methods, models, strategies and techniques. Despite this success, the teacher was able to translate students' hopes and desires into learning. The ability to translate is because the teacher succeeded in exploring students' interests, so that they can fulfill the learning plan in which a meaningful learning orientation is achieved. So through learning methods, models and strategies, teachers create a learning climate that guides students to be motivated in participating in social studies education in independent education. According to Yunike Sulistyosari, Hermon Maurits Karwur,

Based on collaborative learning methods, so methods, models and strategies are not watching. If the independent curriculum designs a blended learning method or a combination of online and offline/face-to-face learning, then in subjects containing social studies it is necessary to dominate face-to-face with learning strategies outside the classroom. Because not only is the nature of humans social creatures, but also the orientation of social studies education tends to be about social and community life. This learning still needs to use various contemporary learning media. Therefore, dialogue between teachers and students' values based on the values built in the environment needs to be explored. This includes building contemporary skills for problem solving, critical thinking and collaboration.

There are at least several teaching methods and techniques used by teachers in order to achieve the learning objectives of social studies education in the independent curriculum. Educational institutions are successful in providing motorbike-based social studies education by combining several teaching methods and techniques. There are at least three methods and techniques used by teachers. First, auditory. This learning method generally uses lecture and dialogue techniques. Students with the auditory method are able to process information well by listening. Second, visuals. Visual learning method, students learn more easily through a variety of learning media such as pictures, diagrams, videos, posters, animations, colors, symbols and graphs. Third, kinesthetic. This teaching method tends to make students understand learning better through direct practice, using the five senses. In the independent curriculum learning method, when studying online and offline, these methods and techniques are collaborated. Especially when studying outside the classroom or surrounding environment.

According to Yunike Sulistyosari, Hermon Maurits Karwur, & Habibi Sultan, these learning methods and techniques are the teacher's style of learning. Learners or students respond with different teaching methods and techniques that are inherent in the independent education system. According to them, in social studies education learning students are more

interested and like the transformation of values using the teacher's method which uses a kinesthetic style. Based on the results of the research, approximately 39 percent of students like the kinesthetic method, namely direct practice or through the five senses in receiving information. Then followed by the visual method at around 36 percent. Meanwhile, relatively few students are interested in the auditory method in learning transformation, or around 25 percent.

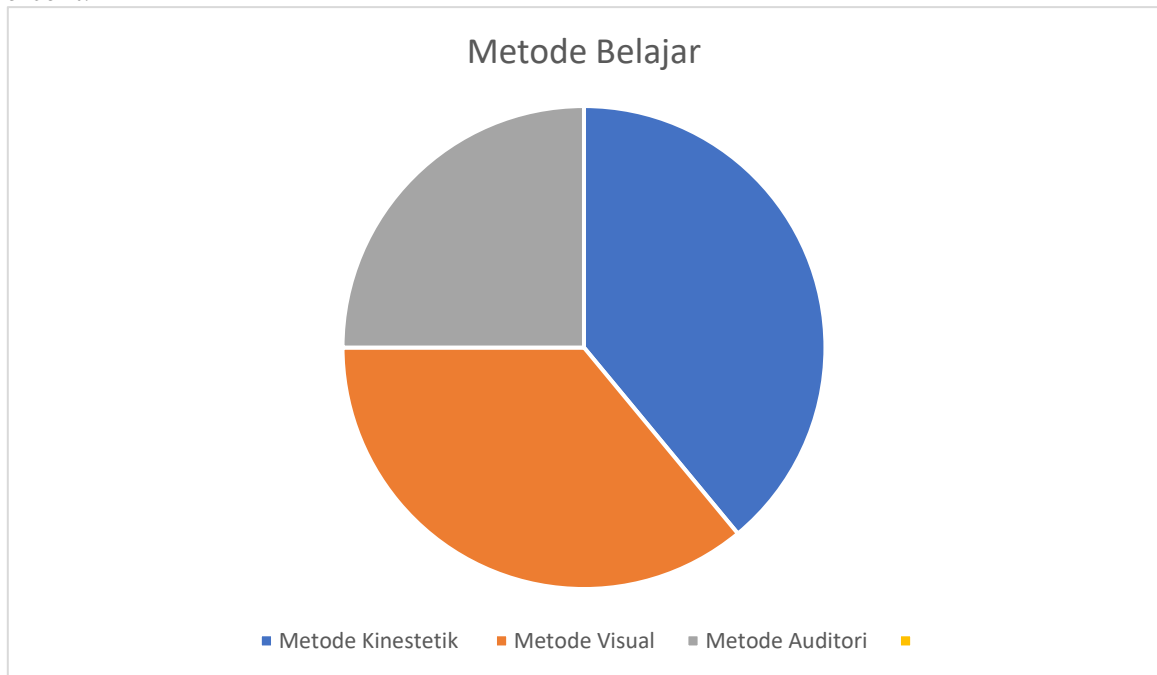


Figure 1. Social Studies Teacher Methods that are interested in Students in Transforming Values in Freedom of Learning

Source: Yunike Sulistyosari, Hermon Maurits Karwur, & Habibi Sultan, 2022.

Based on the picture above, we can conclude several important points in teacher success in an independent education system. Apart from the teacher's capacity to understand the concept of learning education, the teacher's efforts to dialogue by exploring teaching methods and models that are of interest or desired by students is an important element in the success of independent learning. Apart from that, face-to-face learning methods outside the classroom must be a concern. Because the methods and styles proven by students in subjects containing social studies are kinesthetic and visual, and tend to be liked by students. Moreover, various teaching methods are collaborated, with the use of media that requires technology and the internet. So these two teaching methods and styles are concrete forms of learning traditions in contemporary industry.

4. CONCLUSION

Critical evaluation of learning methods in social studies education subjects tends to be from educators or teachers. There are at least two things that need to be evaluated by teachers in implementing the independent learning education system. First, the teacher's capacity to understand the independent learning education system. Second, the social studies learning method guides teachers to learn more outside the classroom with direct practice and the use of various visual media by utilizing technology and the internet. Student or students tend to get bored with boring lecture learning methods or models. Moreover, social studies education is composed of collaboration between various social sciences, including history. So it is important to attract students' interest to ask about the teaching methods they want. Meanwhile, teachers can collaborate with several existing teaching models or methods to realize an independent learning education orientation.

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