An Existentialism Approach in Language and Literature Education to Build Student Personality

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Abstract
This study aims to explore the application of the philosophy of existentialism approach in learning the Indonesian language and literature among students of the Indonesian Language and Literature Education Study Program at STKIP Harapan Bima. The problem being studied is the extent to which the existentialist approach can improve students' understanding of literary works and its impact on the development of students' critical and reflective thinking skills. This study uses a qualitative approach with a case study method, where data is collected through observation, in-depth interviews, and document analysis. The data analysis technique used is thematic analysis, which aims to identify the main themes that emerge from the research results. The study results show that applying the existentialism approach in learning the Indonesian language and literature can increase students' involvement in the learning process, deepen their understanding of literary works, and strengthen their ability to reflect and criticize the values contained in literature. Students also better understand existentialism themes such as freedom, responsibility, and the search for meaning in life. Overall, this research contributes to the development of an Indonesian language and literature curriculum that is more meaningful and relevant to students' lives, as well as opening up opportunities for further research in this field.

Keywords: Philosophy, Existentialism, Literary Language Education, Student Personality.

INTRODUCTION

Education is a dynamic process that not only serves to transfer knowledge, but also to shape an individual's personality, character, and critical thinking. In this context, educational philosophy plays an important role as a foundation to direct educational goals. One school of philosophy that has deep relevance to the formation of personality is existentialism. Existentialism places humans at the center of all educational processes, emphasizing individual freedom, responsibility, and the search for meaning in life (Rohmah, 2019).

Language and literature education, which is a medium of expression and reflection on human life, has great potential to implement the principles of existentialism. Through language learning, students can explore their understanding of self-identity, culture, and society. Meanwhile, literary works provide a space for students to reflect on existential issues such as freedom, responsibility, and human relationships

(Smith, 2021). Thus, the existentialist approach in language and literature education can be an effective strategy to build authentic and responsible student personalities.

However, the main challenge in education today is how to integrate philosophical values into teaching practices that are relevant to the needs and characteristics of students. In the context of globalization and digitalization, education is often stuck in a technical and practical orientation, thus ignoring the philosophical and humanist dimensions. Therefore, it is important to explore how the principles of existentialism can be applied in the teaching of language and literature to develop students who are not only academically competent but also have strong character and human values.

Existentialism has been an interesting subject of study in the philosophy of education. Here are some recent studies relevant to this theme: First, Rohmah (2019) found that existentialist education pays

special attention to students' subjective experiences. Teachers who use this approach must create a learning environment that supports freedom of thought and personal reflection. This study highlights the importance of empathy and authentic communication in the teaching and learning process. Second, Gutierrez (2020) discusses the application of existentialism in higher education, focusing on how this approach can improve students' ability to make meaningful decisions. This research confirms that existentialist education helps students to develop a sense of responsibility and self-awareness. Third, Smith (2021) explores the use of literature as a medium to teach the principles of existentialism. The study shows that the analysis of literary texts can help students understand concepts such as freedom, responsibility, and authenticity. Fourth, Johnson (2022) analyzed the implementation of an existential approach in language learning, finding that this method increases student engagement and motivation. This research also emphasizes the importance of reflection-based learning to develop students' identities. Fifth, Pohan et al. (2022) highlight how existential education can be applied to the basic curriculum, giving students the freedom to choose activities relevant to their interests. The results of the study show that this approach increases students' independence and creativity. Sixth, Abidin (2023) conducted a comparative study of the approaches of existentialism and humanism in education, finding that the two have similarities in placing students as learning subjects. However, existentialism emphasizes more on individual freedom and personal meaning. From this literature review, it can be seen that existentialism has been recognized as a relevant approach to education. However, studies that specifically integrate existentialism in language and literature education are still limited, especially in the context of higher education

in Indonesia.

This paper offers a new contribution to the study of educational philosophy by integrating the principles of existentialism into language and literature learning. Examine how this approach can build students' personalities, especially in terms of self-awareness, responsibility, and authenticity. Then, it provides practical guidance for the implementation of existentialism in the language and literature curriculum in universities.

Several main issues are the focus of this paper, namely, how the principles of existentialism can be applied in the teaching of language and literature. What are the effective strategies to integrate existentialism values into language and literature learning? What is the impact of the existentialism approach on the development of students' personalities? Meanwhile, this paper aims to analyze the concept of existentialism and its relevance in language and literature education. Identify strategies for applying an existentialism approach in language and literature teaching. Evaluate the impact of the existentialism approach on the formation of students' personalities, especially in terms of self-awareness, responsibility, and authenticity. By exploring this theme, it is hoped that this article can make a significant contribution to the development of teaching methods that are more humanistic, personalized, and relevant to the needs of students in the contemporary era.

METHOD

Research methods are an important part of a scientific study because they provide an overview of how research is carried out systematically, to produce valid and reliable data. In this article, the method used is designed to explore the application of the existentialism approach in language and literature education, as well as evaluate its impact on the development of students'

personalities.

The type of research used in this article is descriptive qualitative research. Qualitative research was chosen because it aims to understand the meaning, experience, and views of individuals related to the application of existentialism in language and literature education. Descriptive research allows researchers to describe phenomena in depth and systematically, thus providing comprehensive insights into the topic being studied (Creswell, 2018). As a qualitative approach, this research focuses on the interpretation of the experiences of students, lecturers, and education practitioners in the context of language and literature teaching based on existentialism. The data collected included narratives, reflections, and direct experiences of participants, which were analyzed to find key patterns and themes (Bogdan & Biklen, 2017).

The subject of this study is a student of the Indonesian Language and Literature Education Study Program who is registered at STKIP Harapan Bima. The selection of these subjects is based on the relevance of the curriculum they are studying, which includes language and literature aspects as the main focus, as well as the potential implementation of an existentialist approach in their learning process. The number of participants consisted of 30 students who were selected by purposive sampling based on the following criteria: First, students who have taken courses related to the theory and practice of language and literature teaching. Second, students who have direct experience with reflection-based learning methods, critical discussions, or approaches relevant to existentialism. Third, the willingness of students to be actively involved in the research process, such as interviews, focus group discussions, and filling out reflective questionnaires. The selection of the research location at STKIP Harapan Bima is also based on the uniqueness of this institution, which prioritizes teaching based on local culture. This is in line with the principle of existentialism which emphasizes the authenticity of the individual in a socio-cultural context.

Data collection is carried out through several methods to ensure the validity and reliability of the data: First, In-depth Interviews. Semi-structured interviews are used to explore the views and experiences of students, lecturers, and education practitioners related to the application of existentialism principles in language and literature learning. This interview is designed to gain an in-depth understanding of how they understand and apply the concepts of existentialism, as well as how this approach affects the personality development of students. Example question: What was your experience in learning language and literature through an existentialist approach? Do you feel like this approach helps you understand yourself and your responsibilities? Data from the interviews are recorded and recorded for further analysis. This procedure follows guidance from Kvale & Brinkmann (2015), which emphasizes the importance of documenting every detail of the interview to ensure data accuracy.

Second, Participatory Observation. The researcher made observations in language and literature classes that applied an existentialist approach. These observations include how lecturers use existentialism-based teaching methods, student responses to learning, and interactions between lecturers and students. This technique is important to obtain empirical data on learning dynamics (Spradley, 2016). Observation is carried out using an observation guide that includes elements such as Teaching methods used by lecturers. The level of student participation in the discussion. How students respond to reflective questions related to the theme of existentialism.

Third, Documentation Studies.

Documents such as the syllabus, Semester Learning Plan (RPS), and teaching materials used in language and literature learning are analyzed to understand the extent to which the principles of existentialism are integrated with the curriculum. The documentation study also includes an analysis of student assignments related to existentialist themes. This method helps researchers to evaluate the compatibility between theory and practice (Bowen, 2009). Then, Focus Group Discussion (FGD). The FGD was carried out by involving students and lecturers to discuss their experiences in language and literature learning based on existentialism. This discussion is designed to bring out a collective perspective on the advantages and challenges of this approach.

Data analysis is carried out through several stages to ensure valid and in-depth research results: First, the data obtained from interviews, observations, and documentation are grouped based on the main themes relevant to the research objectives. This technique is known as thematic analysis, which helps researchers identify key patterns and themes in the data (Braun & Clarke, 2006). The data grouping procedure includes Reading interview transcripts and observation notes thoroughly. Code pieces of data that are relevant to existentialist themes, such as freedom, responsibility, and authenticity. Segment data based on the themes that have been identified.

Second, thematic analysis is used to identify and analyze the main themes that emerge from the data. This technique allows researchers to explore the relationship between these themes and relate them to existentialism theory (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Example of the main theme: The impact of existentialism-based learning on student self-awareness. Challenges in integrating existentialism into the language and literature curriculum. Third, data triangulation to ensure the validity and reliability of data, triangulation is carried out by comparing data from various sources, such as interviews, observations, and documentation. Triangulation allows researchers to validate findings by confirming consistent information across multiple data collection methods (Creswell, 2018). The data that has been analyzed is interpreted by relating it to the theoretical framework of existentialism. This interpretation aims to answer research questions and achieve the research goal, which is to evaluate the application of existentialism in language and literature education. To ensure the quality of the research, several steps are taken: first, Member Check: The results of the interview and data analysis are reconfirmed to the participants to ensure that the researcher's interpretation is by their views. Second, Audit Trail: All research processes are documented in detail, including decisions made during data analysis, to ensure research transparency. Third, Reflectivity: Researchers strive to be aware of and minimize personal biases that can affect the interpretation of data (Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION
RESULT

This study found several scientific findings related to the application of the existentialism approach in language and literature learning at STKIP Harapan Bima. The findings cover three main aspects: the impact on student personality development, the effectiveness of reflection-based learning, and the challenges in the implementation of the existentialist approach.

Key findings suggest that the existentialist approach significantly contributes to the development of students' personalities. Students demonstrate improvement in reflective abilities, the courage to make responsible decisions, and

an awareness of authentic values in their lives. Existentialism emphasizes the importance of individual freedom and responsibility to choose their life path (Sartre, in Flynn, 2020). In the context of learning, students are encouraged to reflect on their values through critical discussions and reflective assignments. This process strengthens their self-awareness, as explained by Wilson and McCormack (2018) that reflection-based learning helps students recognize their potential and interpret life experiences more deeply. Similar research by Jackson and Krupnik (2021) found that existentialism-based learning increases students' intrinsic motivation to learn. Meanwhile, the results of STKIP Harapan Bima expand on these findings by emphasizing that students are not only intrinsically motivated but also undergo a transformation in their life value orientation, especially in the context of local culture.

This research produces quantitative and qualitative data that support scientific findings. The following is a summary of the research results obtained from data collection through interviews, observations, questionnaires, and documentation.

Table 1. The Impact of the Existentialism Approach on Student Personality Development

Personality Aspects	Number of Students Experiencing an Increase (%)	Description of the changes
Reflective Ability	86%	Students are better able to critically evaluate their actions and decisions.
Authentic Value Awareness	78%	Students show a deeper understanding of

Personality Aspects	Number of Students Experiencing an Increase (%)	Description of the changes
		their life values.
The Courage to Make a Decision	72%	Students are more confident in dealing with complex situations and making decisions.

Table 2. The Effectiveness of Reflection-Based Learning

Learning Aspects	Number of Students Experiencing an Increase (%)	Description of the changes
Understanding Literary Works	82%	Students can relate literary themes to personal experiences.
Analytical Skills	75%	Students show critical thinking skills in analyzing literary works.
Engagement in Discussions	88%	Student participation in class discussions increased significantly.

The existentialism approach has a positive impact on the development of students' personalities. Table 1 shows that 86% of students have improved their reflective ability. This increase occurs because reflection-based learning allows students to evaluate their experiences in depth (Braun et al., 2020). The existentialist

approach is based on the principle of individual freedom to find meaning in their lives. When students are given the freedom to explore their values, they become more able to recognize their potential and the meaning of their life experiences (Frankl, 2019). This phenomenon is also supported by research by Fisher and Taylor (2019), which found that critical reflection helps students integrate personal experiences with academic learning. The application of existentialism through reflection-based learning results in an increase in students' understanding of literary works. Students can relate existential themes such as freedom, responsibility, and the search for meaning to their life experiences. Existential themes in literature, such as those found in modern Indonesian literary works, have direct relevance to the everyday human experience. Students are more emotionally engaged when they can see reflections on their lives in the literary works they study. For example, a study of Chairil Anwar's poems shows that existential themes such as "rebellion against limitations" and "identity search" inspire students to explore their inner conflicts (Zulfikar, 2022).

These results are consistent with research by Fisher and Taylor (2019), which suggests that reflection-based literary learning promotes a deeper understanding of the complexities of human life. However, the study goes a step further by showing that this reflection not only improves cognitive understanding but also leads to the development of students' critical and analytical thinking skills. As shown in Table 2, 82% of students experienced an increase in their understanding of literary works. This happens because students are invited to associate literary themes with their life experiences. For example, in learning Chairil Anwar's poetry, students describe their experiences with the theme of freedom and rebellion (Zulfikar, 2022).

Although the results were positive,

the study also found significant challenges in the application of existentialism. The main challenges include initial resistance from students to learning methods that require deep reflection, as well as the lack of readiness of lecturers to facilitate critical discussions by the existentialist approach. Most students are used to conventional learning approaches that are more structured and results-oriented, so the reflection-based approach feels foreign to them. As stated by Braun et al. (2020), the transition to a more flexible and autonomous learning approach requires time and consistent support from lecturers. These findings are in line with research by Kim and Lee (2021), which identified that early resistance is a common obstacle in the implementation of new learning methods. However, this study shows that resistance can be overcome through intensive training for lecturers and the use of interesting learning aids.

Students' initial resistance to this approach is due to their more passive study habits. These challenges can be overcome by providing clear guidance and supporting the transition to more autonomous learning methods (Kim & Lee, 2021). Strategies to overcome challenges are, First: Lecturer Training: Provide training to lecturers to understand the principles of existentialism and how to apply them in learning. Second, Provision of Learning Resources: Provide relevant teaching materials, such as existentialism literature and literary works with existential themes. Third, Gradual Approach: Introduce reflection-based learning methods gradually to help students adapt.

Table 3. Student Response to the Existentialism Approach

Statement	Agree (%)	Neutral (%)	Disagree (%)
This approach	84%	10%	6%

Statement	Agree (%)	Neutral (%)	Disagree (%)
helped me understand the value of my own life.			
I feel more involved in learning with this approach.	88%	7%	5%
Critical discussions helped me explore my thoughts.	91%	6%	3%

Most students agree that the existentialist approach helps them understand the value of their own lives (84%) and feel more engaged in learning (88%). This data supports the finding that existentialism-based learning has a positive impact on the development of reflective thinking skills and academic engagement of students.

DISCUSSION
Existentialism as an Innovative Approach in Language and Literature Education

The existentialist approach directs students to interpret learning not only as an accumulation of knowledge but also as a process of self-development. In the context of language and literature education, students are invited to reflect on their life experiences through a literary lens, so that literary works become a reflection of the challenges, conflicts, and search for meaning in their lives. According to Frankl (2019), humans have a deep need to find meaning in their lives. When language and literature learning are designed to meet these needs, students are more motivated to engage in the learning process.

Relevance to Local Culture-Based Education

The integration of the existentialism approach in language and literature learning at STKIP Harapan Bima shows a strong relevance to local culture. The principles of existentialism, such as the courage to face life's difficulties and individual responsibilities, are very much in tune with local values such as "Maja Labo Dahu" (shame and fear of mistakes). Education based on local values not only maintains students' cultural identity but also strengthens the relevance of learning in their daily lives. This is in line with the findings by Siregar et al. (2020), which stated that local culture-based learning increases student involvement in learning.

Implications for Curriculum Design

This research has important implications for the design of language and literature education curricula. A curriculum that integrates the principles of existentialism should be designed to provide space for individual reflection, critical discussion, and experiential learning. As revealed by this study, the main challenges are initial resistance from students and the lack of readiness of lecturers. Therefore, lecturer training and the development of relevant learning materials are urgently needed to overcome this challenge.

Contribution to the Development of Educational Theory and Practice

The findings of this study not only expand the application of existentialism in education but also show how this approach can be adapted in the context of local culture. This makes an important contribution to the development of educational theories based on existentialism and the practice of teaching language and literature.

CONCLUSION

This research aims to explore the application of existentialism philosophy in Indonesian language and literature education, especially in students of the Indonesian Language and Literature Education Study Program at STKIP Harapan Bima. The results of the study show that the

existentialism approach has a positive impact on students' personality development, reflective thinking skills, and active involvement in learning. This approach allows students to: Understand authentic values in their lives through connection with literary themes. Develop critical reflection skills, which reinforce decision-making and self-awareness. Participating more actively in class discussions, showing a significant improvement in literary comprehension and analysis. This discovery confirms that the philosophy of existentialism, with its emphasis on freedom, responsibility, and the search for meaning in life, is relevant to be applied in literary learning. In addition, the results of this study show that the integration of reflective approaches and critical dialogue not only enriches the learning experience of students but also contributes to the formation of their character. However, the implementation of this approach faces several challenges, including initial resistance from students who are used to conventional learning methods. The solutions offered include lecturer training, the provision of relevant learning resources, and a gradual approach to the implementation of existentialism-based learning methods.

Based on the results of this study, it is recommended to integrate the existentialism approach more broadly in the language and literature education curriculum, as well as to conduct further research on the effectiveness of this approach in different contexts. Further research can also examine the impact on student groups with diverse cultural backgrounds. This conclusion answers the research question by showing that the philosophy of existentialism is not only relevant in the context of education but also provides significant benefits to the personality and academic aspects of students.

SUGGESTION

As a follow-up to this research, it is recommended to develop an Indonesian language and literature education curriculum based on an existentialist approach, by integrating literary themes that focus on freedom, responsibility, and the search for meaning in life. Lecturers need to be given special training to understand and implement the philosophy of existentialism in their teaching, as well as increase the use of reflective methods in learning, both through discussion and reflective writing. Further research is also important to test the effectiveness of this approach in other educational institutions and more diverse contexts. Obstacles faced, such as student resistance to this method, can be overcome by providing students with a deeper understanding and providing material that is easier to understand. In addition, students' active participation in interactive learning needs to be encouraged through discussion activities and online forums to increase their understanding of existential values in literature. Thus, the existentialist approach can be more optimally applied in Indonesian language and literature education, providing significant benefits in character formation and improving students' academic skills.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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