

Implementation of *Independent Learning Policy* in Public Senior High Schools in Landak Regency

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to describe the implementation of the *independent learning policy* in State Senior High Schools (SMAN) throughout Landak Regency, especially regarding (1) its implementation and (2) the difficulties and obstacles to its implementation. The research approach used is descriptive qualitative with a multiple side studies case study method. Research informants were determined purposively consisting of the principals of SMAN throughout Landak Regency. Data collection was carried out through in-depth interviews and documentary studies. The data collection tools used were interview guidelines and document studies. Data processing and analysis were carried out using an emic and etic approach. The data analysis techniques through data collection, data reduction, data display and data verification or conclusion drawing. The findings of the study show that the implementation of the *independent learning policy* in SMAN throughout Landak Regency has not been fully implemented. Only two out of eighteen SMAN have implemented it. The remaining 16 SMAN will only implement the policy in 2023-2024. There are differences in the abilities of teachers and education personnel to understand the policy material. In addition, there are limitations in their mastery of the use of IT applications in these schools. Guidance is needed for all teachers and education staff in improving their mastery of IT applications so that the implementation of this policy can be carried out well.

Keywords: Implementation, *independent learning policy*, SMAN

INTRODUCTION

The concept of *independent learning* is actually not a new issue in the world of education in Indonesia. However, this seems to be something that has been formally regulated legally in government policy. The *independent learning policy* is regulated in the circular letter of the Minister of Education and Culture of the Republic of Indonesia number 1 of 2020 concerning the *independent learning policy*. The aim of this policy is to accelerate the process of education reform in Indonesia, which has so far been considered to be slowly withering away.

This concept is part of educational institutions' efforts to improve the quality of education and must be flexible towards freedom and openness as educational institutions that can play a real role and contribute to the benefit of the people, especially in the era of industrial revolution 4.0 and society 5.0.

The government itself states that this concept is freedom of thought in accordance with the mandate of the 1945 Law and Pancasila. Therefore, schools must be adaptive and futuristic. Because schools are the face of a nation, the development of the education system is always a reference in building and developing superior human resources and has a competitive edge that is always changing, so in school management a curriculum development strategy is needed in accordance with educational goals and In order to improve the quality of education, one of the policies is the *independent learning programe*.

According to Tohir (2019), Murni (2020) and Sherly et al (2020), Muammar et al (2024) the essence of the *independent learning policy* includes 5 things, namely (1) National standard school exams (USBN) was replaced with a test (assessment) in 2020 in accordance with Minister of Education and Culture Regulation No. 43 of 2019 concerning the Implementation of Examinations held by the National Education and Examination

Unit, indicating that schools and teachers are independent in assessing student learning outcomes; (2) The 2021 National Examination has been changed to a minimum competency assessment and according to character. This assessment also emphasizes mastery of literacy and numeracy aspects by referring to international standards; (3) The lesson plan (RPP) is shortened and made as simple and easy as possible; (4) New students enrollment (PPDB) zoning is more flexible by considering disparities in access and quality according to region and (5) distribution and utilization of school operational assistance funds (BOS).

The Indonesian Ministry of Education and Culture (2020) stated that the *independent learning policy* has been implemented in all schools in Indonesia, from early childhood education programs (PAUD) to college level for approximately 4 years. Public policy concerns issues and problems that occur in society which are constructed and translated into decisions, and placed on the policy agenda and political agenda (Retnoningsih et al, 2017). Policy analysis is needed to find out whether the substance of the policy includes information about the problems to be resolved and the impacts that may arise as a result of the policy being implemented (Dunn, 2003, Muhammad Taali et al, 2023). Policy analysis is a thinking procedure that has long been known and carried out in human history.

According to Dunn (2003) and Muhammad Taali et al (2023) policy analysis is an applied social science discipline that uses rational arguments using facts to explain, assess and produce thoughts in order to solve public problems. Suryadi et al (1994) further emphasized that policy analysis is a way or procedure for using human understanding of and for solving policy problems.

Policy analysis is the application of various research methods carried out by a person or group of policy researchers whose aim is to obtain various data and process it into information that is relevant to a policy (policy information) which is then used in formulating a complex and complex public problem. more structured (well-structured policy problem) making it easier to formulate and select various policy alternatives (policy alternatives) to solve a policy problem and recommend it to policy makers and use it as a basis for information in the decision-making process (Retnoningsih et al, 2017).

Borrowing terms used by Dunn (2003), it can be concluded that an analyst will work in two broad categories: 1) Policy process analysis, namely how to define problems, set agendas, formulate policies, make decisions, as well as implement and evaluate policies; 2) Analysis in and for the policy process, which includes a study of the use of technical analysis, research and advocacy in problem definition, decision making, implementation and evaluation. The information needed in the policy formulation process is: a) what the policy problem is; b) what are the expected results of a policy in the future; c) what is the most ideal policy option to produce the desired policy results; d) what policy results were obtained after implementation; e) how a policy performs; f) whether the policy is able to solve the problem formulated. To be able to produce policy information, the duties of policy analysts are: a) formulating problems; b) make forecasting; c) provide recommendations; d) carry out monitoring, and e) carry out evaluation (Retnoningsih et al, 2017).

As time goes by, education today is seen not only as a sector providing public services (public goods), but also as a productive investment (productive investment) that spurs growth in various fields and development sectors in Indonesia. Education, as a measure of the progress of the nation and state, has a very strategic role and is the initiator of determining a country's progress. Therefore, every education manager is expected to be able to produce output of students who have knowledge and skills in accordance with the expectations of all parties. Departing from this, appropriate, targeted and applicable educational conceptions, policies and programs are needed.

The Indonesian Ministry of Education and Culture (2020) stated that the spirit of innovation and change is the spirit of the *independent learning policy* to be implemented in the Indonesian education sector. Especially in the era of industrial revolution 4.0, the education system is expected to be able to create students who have skills that are able to think critically and solve problems, be creative and innovative as well as communication and collaboration skills (Ammas, 2021). According to the Ministry of Education and Culture (2020), Higher (2020) the *independent learning belajar policy* is to provide freedom and autonomy to educational institutions and be free from bureaucratization, lecturers are freed from complicated bureaucracy and students are given the freedom to choose the fields they like.

Through the Freedom to Learn policy, the Minister of Education and Culture Nadiem Anwar Makarim wants to create a happy and conducive learning atmosphere for students. According to the Minister of Education and Culture, freedom to learn stems from the desire for educational output to produce better quality and no longer produce students who are only good at memorizing but also have sharp analytical skills, reasoning and comprehensive understanding in learning to develop themselves (Saleh, 2020, Dewi Agung Margaretha et al, 2023).

Freedom to learn in the learning process, as stated by Augustine Tanggu Daga in several literatures, is defined as freedom to think, freedom to innovate, freedom to learn independently and creatively, and freedom to be happy (Daga, 2021). The concept of independent learning was initiated so that students have the freedom to think critically and intelligently, this will enable students to explore how the education process is intended by Ki Hadjar Dewantara in implementing Ing Ngarso Sung Tuladha, Ing Madya Mangun Karso, and Tut Wuri Handayani in the current education system in Indonesia by prioritizing openness in thinking.

If freedom to learn is fulfilled then independent learning will be created and it will be called an independent school. This reminds us of the writer Paolo Freire, a Brazilian educator from Recife University. As a law student, he also studied philosophy and psychology in languages. Although he graduated as a lawyer, he never actually practiced in that field. Instead he worked as a teacher at a high school, teaching Portuguese. His famous teaching is that man is his own master and therefore human nature is free. This is Freire's attempt to humanize humans. Humanization can also mean liberation or emancipation of people from oppressive borderline situations they desire. The oppressed must liberate and free themselves from inhuman oppression and at the same time liberate the oppressors from the prison of an oppressively dishonest conscience. (Abdul Razzak et al, 2020).

If there are still exceptions, true freedom and liberty will never be fully and meaningfully achieved. Currently, educational freedom lies in the idea of new humanism (Marope, 2019). According to Nadiem, the essence of freedom of thought must be preceded by teachers before they teach it to students. Nadiem said, in terms of teacher competency at any level, without the process of translating basic competencies and the existing curriculum, no learning will ever occur.

With this *independent learning policy*, the Ministry of Education and Culture hopes that applying the curriculum in the learning process must be fun, coupled with the development of innovative thinking by teachers, this can foster positive attitudes in students' response to learning. Freedom to learn is a natural learning process in achieving freedom of thought and innovation in education. The essence of independent learning is exploring the greatest potential of teachers and students to innovate and improve the quality of learning independently, independently which means not only following the educational bureaucratic process but truly innovation that can advance education in producing globally competitive human resources (Saleh, 2020).

Thohir (2019) and Murni (2020) in the National Seminar "Freedom to Learn: in Achieving an Advanced Indonesia 2045" held at Jakarta State University on March 10 2020 explained four Independent Learning policy programs, namely first, USBN was replaced by being a test (assessment) in 2020, in accordance with Minister of Education and Culture Regulation No. 43 of 2019 concerning the Implementation of Examinations held by the National Education and Examination Unit, this shows that schools and teachers are free to assess student learning outcomes; secondly, the 2021 National Examination will be changed to a minimum competency assessment and according to character. This assessment also emphasizes mastery of literacy and numeracy aspects by referring to international standards; third, the RPP is shortened and made as simple and easy as possible; and fourth, PPDB zoning is more flexible by considering disparities in access and quality according to region (Sherly et al., 2020).

Explain the concept of the *independent learning policy* proposed by the Minister of Education and Culture Nadiem Makarim above. The concept of independent learning carries out breakthrough assessments in minimum abilities including literacy, numeracy and character surveys. Literacy not only measures reading ability, but also the ability to analyze reading content along with understanding the concepts behind it. Numerical ability does not assess mathematical abilities but students' ability to apply numerical concepts in

real life. Meanwhile, the character survey is not a test, but looks for the application of the moral, religious and Pancasila values that students adhere to (Minister of Education and Culture, 2019). Through this *independent learning policy*, it is hoped that the world of education will be able to provide a policy breakthrough that can be felt by various groups so that it can advance the education system evenly and produce the nation's next generation who are superior, competitive and globally competitive (Arifin et al., 2021).

The implementing of *independent learning policy* in education during the Covid-19 pandemic is still something new for all education service providers. The results of the SWOT analysis above also show that threats and weaknesses still dominate existing strengths and opportunities, the availability of human resources, information technology facilities and authorized government support are still clashing with the reality on the ground in society which is still unable to master technology and budget limitations in managing and supporting successful implementation. *independent learning policy* during the Covid-19 pandemic.

On the other hand, this *independent learning policy* is also very helpful in overcoming educational problems in the midst of the Covid-19 pandemic. With this policy, it indirectly provides opportunities for all parties, both students and teachers, to be able to exercise independence in learning. They can freely explore all related materials and subject matter without any limitations of space and time. As well as improving educational services in developing information technology for a quality learning process.

Sherly et al (2020) and Unifah Rosyidi (2020) stated that to implement the *independent learning program* it is necessary to understand several things, namely: transformation of the school curriculum and verified learning, transformation of national education management, and transformation of regional education management and school autonomy. Harmonization of education policies and management between ministries and between the center and regions by strengthening presidential grip through the National Education Council (NEC) which is tasked with preparing presidential policies in the field of education.

Seeing the development of education during the Covid-19 pandemic, the government issued and established a policy of independent learning to become a new era in the world of education. Students at elementary to higher education levels must be able to adapt to new situations in the learning process in the current *era of independent learning*. The Covid-19 pandemic has had an impact on reconstructing education to carry out learning activities indirectly through online media by utilizing sophisticated information technology in the era of industrial revolution 4.0. The learning process through online media provides a paradigm and opportunity for students to develop, explore and think critically and creatively independently with coaching and guidance from educators and education staff from elementary to higher education levels. Students need the right form of education to be able to adapt their personal conditions to the competencies needed in education in the era of independent learning. (Ammas, 2021).

Abidah et al (2020) said that the existence of an *independent learning policy*, especially in the midst of the Covid-19 pandemic, is very helpful for educational institutions to be more responsive and ready to undergo changes and technological advances. So that the learning process will always develop and be dynamic according to needs. This could be one of the government's efforts to improve the quality of learning, because in the midst of the Covid-19 pandemic, learning continues to run well, even learning from home can create closeness with family. Moreover, students' parents can be directly involved in the learning process and can monitor their child's progress in learning.

METHODS

This research uses a descriptive qualitative approach with a multiple side studies case study method (Sugyono, 2022). The location of this research was determined purposively at SMAN 2 Ngabang, SMAN 2 Sengah Temila, SMAN 1 Darit, SMAN Anik, SMAN 1 Mempawah Hulu, SMAN 1 Menjalin, SMAN Kuala Behe and SMAN Mandor. The object of research in this research is the implementation of the *independent learning policy* in SMAN throughout Landak Regency. The subjects of this study were the principals who implemented the independent learning policy in their respective schools. Meanwhile, the informants of this study were Mr. Yakobus, Mr. Yulius, Mr. Paulus Lagum, Mr. Dukin, Mr. Dian, and Mrs. Martina, respectively as the principals of SMAN 1 Mempawah Hulu, SMAN 1 Menyuke Darit, SMAN 1 Anik, SMAN 2 Sengah Temila,

SMAN 2 Ngabang and SMAN 2 Mandor.

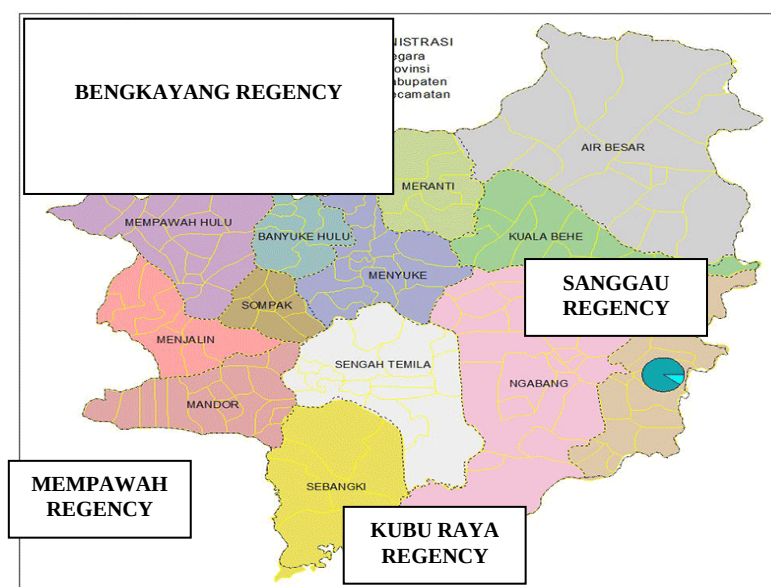
Data collection techniques through in-depth interviews were carried out to find out and trace the implementation of the independent learning policy in SMAN throughout Landak Regency. In-depth interviews were conducted by means of question and answer face to face with the school principals. Researchers used interviews for the reason of having more freedom and ease in gathering information from school principals. In-depth interviews were conducted using an interview guide. To enrich and deepen the results of interviews and theories, researchers conducted document studies or literature studies. Researchers refer to several articles about the implementation of the *independent learning policy* in various references and research journals. The data analysis technique used in this research is qualitative analysis using an inductive approach based on data in the field. Researchers carried out data analysis which was carried out simultaneously with data collection. In this data analysis, the researcher collects information, sorts the information into groups, and then writes the qualitative report manuscript. Thus, the data collection process is also a data analysis process, therefore after the data has been collected the researcher has actually carried out the analysis at the same time. The validity of the data in this research was tested through source triangulation techniques. In this case the researchers compared the views of school principals.

RESEARCH RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Research Overview

This research was conducted in Landak Regency, West Kalimantan. Administratively, Landak Regency has 13 sub-districts, namely Mandor, Sengah Temila, Sebangki, Ngabang, Kuala Behe, Air Besar, Jelimpo, Menyuke, Meranti, Simpang Tiga, Mempawah Hulu, Menjalin, Sompak sub-districts. The area of Landak district is 9,909 square kilometers. The population is 413,588 people, consisting of 216,214 men and 197,374 women. Until 2023 there will be 35 high school level schools, 16 public high schools and 15 private high schools. Demographically, it is multi-ethnic, but the majority are Dayak Kanayatn. The Dayak Kanayatn ethnic group in this district is not only the majority in number but also dominant, especially in the implementation of customary customs and laws. Geographically, Landak Regency is located between Mempawah Regency to the west, Bengkayang Regency to the North, Sanggau Regency to the East and Kubu Raya Regency to the South. Transportation to reach this sub-district can be reached by road using buses, cars and motorbikes. This district has a tropical climate with an average temperature of 33°C - 21°C, the highest average rainfall is 320 mm and the lowest is 54 mm every month.

Table 1 Map of Landak Regency



Source:

Research Findings

Implementation of the *independent learning policy* in SMAN throughout Landak Regency

Legally, the *independent learning policy* in Indonesia is regulated by the circular letter of the Minister of Education and Culture of the Republic of Indonesia number 1 of 2020 concerning the *independent learning policy*. The implementation from early childhood education programs (PAUD) to college level in Indonesia has been running for approximately 4 years. In accordance with this policy, there are 5 things that are the core of the *independent learning policy*, namely (1) the implementation of the National standard school exams (USBN) was replaced with a test (assessment) at the education unit level; (2) The National Examination is changed to a minimum competency assessment and according to character; (3) The lesson plan (RPP) is shortened and made as simple and easy as possible; (4) New students enrollment (PPDB) zoning is more flexible by considering disparities in access and quality according to region and (5) distribution and utilization of school operational assistance (BOS) funds.

According to the explanation of Mr. Yakobus, Mr. Yulius Mr. Paulus Lagum, Mr. Dukin, Mr. Dian and Mrs. Martina, respectively as the principal of SMAN 1 Mempawah Hulu, the principal of SMAN 1 Menyuke Darit, the principal of SMAN 1 Anik, the principal of SMAN 2 Sengah Temila, the principal of SMAN 2 Ngabang and the principal of SMAN 2 Mandor, that after 4 years, it turns out that not all high schools in Landak Regency have implemented this policy. Based on the findings of interviews with them, it was found that only two public senior high schools (SMAN) had implemented this policy. There were still many high schools that have not implemented it. The high schools implementing this policy were SMAN 1 Mempawah Hulu and SMAN 1 Menyuke Darit. Other high schools will only implement this policy in the 2023-2024 academic year.

Regarding the two new high schools implementing the *independent learning policy*, it turns out that this has something to do with the provisions set out in the *independent learning policy* itself. According to the provisions, only schools that have independent change and independent sharing status can implement this policy. Meanwhile, most of the high schools in Landak Regency have not yet reached this status, most of them have just achieved independent status.

Schools that still have independent status were given the opportunity to independently fulfill all the requirements available on the independent learning platform available on the website, participate in socialization and training. At this stage they are not yet obliged to implement the *independent learning policy*. After all the requirements on the platform are filled in, validated and verified properly, their independent learning status changes to independent change, then they can implement the policy in full. Furthermore, if in implementing the policy the school is validated and verified well then their status changes again to independent sharing, so that the school not only implements the independent learning policy but they can share their experiences to help other schools which still have *merdeka mandiri* status to become independent change.

Other findings in this research show that SMAN which has not fully implemented the *independent learning policy* has in fact implemented some of the independent learning policy, especially in the PPDB policy and the use of BOS. All SMANs in Landak Regency have implemented the PPDB policy and utilized BOS funds.

Based on the findings of interviews with school principals above, to implement the independent learning policy, each school is required to participate in socialization via the web independently, through training and direction from instructors from the West Kalimantan Province Education and Culture Service. The school principals admitted that there was a disparity in the ability to understand the independent learning policy material because the awareness and abilities of teachers in each school were not the same, so the speed of filling in and completing the requirements available on the platform was not the same. This is what causes disparities between one school and another in starting to implement this policy.

Difficulty and Ease in Implementing *Independent Learning Policy*

According to the explanation of Mr. Yakobus, Mr. Yulius, Mr. Paulus Lagum, Mr. Dukin, Mr. Dian and Mrs.

Martina, each as the principal of SMAN 1 Mempawah Hulu, SMAN 1 Menyuke Darit, SMAN 1 Anik, SMAN 2 Sengah Temila, SMAN 2 Ngabang and SMAN 2 Mandor, that there are a number of difficulties in implementing the *independent learning policy* in SMAN throughout Landak Regency, such as: (1) Because the policy is new, it takes time to adapt and understand and requires a lot of coordination, (2) There is a lot of administration that must be fulfilled to carry out various activities. This is also an obstacle, (3) The lack of skills in IT and absorbing information is also an obstacle, for example there is a independent teaching platform (Platform Merdeka Mengajar) application which is useful for teachers linked to learn.id, many teachers do not access this, due to lack of understanding, (4) The lack of literacy and references. Meanwhile, the convenience in implementing this *independent learning policy* is that (1) all the information needed arrives more quickly, (2) there are many media that can be used for teacher learning, (3) the distribution of BOS funds is faster and easier for school needs.

The findings of this study are in line with the findings of previous studies which stated that the unpreparedness of schools in implementing the independent learning policy includes teachers' lack of understanding of the new curriculum, limited facilities and infrastructure, and lack of support from schools and the education office. Teachers often have difficulty analyzing CP (Learning Achievements), formulating TP (Learning Objectives), compiling ATP (Integrated Learning Tools), and teaching modules and there are still many teachers who are not fluent in operating IT applications.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

Conclusion

Based on the results of the research and discussion presented above, it can be concluded that until the 2023-2024 academic year, after 4 years of the *independent learning policy* being implemented, only 2 public schools out of 18 public schools in Landak district had implemented it. Meanwhile, 16 other high schools have only implemented this policy in the 2023-2024 academic year. The specific conclusions of this research show that the *independent learning policy* that has been implemented at 2 Public High Schools in Landak Regency includes (1) the 2020 USBN being replaced with exams (assessments); (2) The 2021 National Examination was changed to a minimum competency assessment and according to character; (3) The RPP is shortened and made as simple and easy as possible; (4) PPDB zoning is more flexible by considering disparities in access and quality according to region and (5) distribution and utilization of BOS funds. The *independent learning policy* that has been implemented in 16 other SMANs is limited to the distribution and utilization of BOS funds. There are differences in the abilities of teachers and education personnel to understand the policy material. In addition, there are limitations in their mastery of the use of IT applications in these schools. Guidance is needed for all teachers and education staff in improving their mastery of IT applications so that the implementation of this policy can be carried out well.

Recommendations

Based on the conclusions stated above, the following recommendations can be given:

1. To speed up the implementation of the *independent learning policy* at Landak Regency Public High Schools, the two high schools that have experience implementing the *independent learning policy* can share their knowledge and experience with 16 other high schools by becoming facilitators, mentors and supervisors with the Provincial Education and Culture Office in socialization and technical guidance for implementing the policy.
2. School principals in 16 SMANs who have not implemented this policy should be more serious about motivating and facilitating all stakeholders, especially teachers and education staff, to be able to fill out the requirements form to become a school worthy of implementing the *independent learning policy*.
3. Relevant officials at the Provincial Education and Culture Service need to continue to provide guidance, technical assistance and supervision to ensure that the policy can be implemented according to the specified time.

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