



The Concept of *Merdeka Belajar* in Early Childhood: Comparative Study of Reggio Emilia and Ki Hajar Dewantara's Thoughts

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Received: 10 October 2022

Reviewed: 26 October 2022

Accepted: 9 November 2022

Abstract

This study aims to examine the concept of independent learning for early childhood according to Reggio Emilia and Ki Hajar Dewantara, to find out the implications of independent thinking of learning for early childhood on current education, to find similarities and differences in the concept of independent learning to learn in early childhood education according to Reggio Emilia and Ki Hajar Dewantara. This is important considering that Ki Hajar Dewantara is a figure known as the Father of National Education and Reggio Emilia, who was once named one of the best early childhood education schools in the world. The two elements of the educational approach can be collaborated and investigated with comparative qualitative research methods to compare or find similarities from concepts or data drawn to new conclusions using historical, pedagogical, and comparative approaches. In this study, the stages of data analysis are data reduction, data display, focus group discussion, verification, and conclusion drawing. The results show that the concept of independent learning for early childhood is intended to reduce the impact of the decline in student learning performance after COVID-19, with the contextual nature of the independent learning curriculum that can be applied according to different environmental conditions in each school. The implications of the concept of independent learning Reggio Emilia and Ki Hajar Dewantara use the philosophy of constructivism, which assumes that an individual builds learning knowledge based on objects, phenomena, experiences, and their environment. The opportunity to learn both approaches is made through games and art. Both approaches have similarities and strengths with the arts and the philosophical agreement that children learn through play by providing an engaging environment. While Reggio Emilia's approach uses the term image of the child, which believes that children are individuals who are capable of doing things independently and with minimal interruptions from adults, Ki Hajar Dewantara uses the Among system through this, the teacher has a significant role to be a role model for children. Both figures have their respective points of view, but it does not become an inequality in the education system. Both views can be alternative considerations for the development of education.

Keywords: *Merdeka Belajar*; Early Childhood Education; Ki Hajar Dewantara; Reggio Emilia.

Introduction

The International Commission on the Futures of Education UNESCO in the report *Reimagining Our Futures Together A New Social Contract For Education*, that the current state of the education system is considered wrong and unsuitable for further application in the future because it places too much emphasis on competition (UNESCO, 2021). The world needs a new

education system to face today's challenges. Therefore, the education system needs to be reformulated and recommend four principles; 1) Interconnectedness and interdependencies should frame pedagogy 2) Cooperation and collaboration, 3) Solidarity, compassion, ethics, and empathy, 4) Assessment should be aligned to these aims and be meaningful for student growth and learning. Twenty-eight years from now, in 2050, UNESCO expects a new education scenario to build a peaceful, just, and sustainable future together and for all.

The COVID-19 pandemic conditions have caused changes in the learning process depending on distance learning, resulting in a learning gap and loss. Therefore, the government issued Ministerial Decree No. 56/M/2022 concerning Guidelines for Curriculum Implementation in the Context of Learning Recovery by providing three options for academic units to implement a curriculum based on the National Education Standards as follows: (1) The use of the 2013 Curriculum in its entirety, (2) Simplified 2013 Curriculum, or (3) Independent Curriculum carried out at Sekolah Penggerak (SP) and SMK Pusat Keunggulan (PK) as an option for learning recovery (Kementerian Pendidikan, Kebudayaan, Riset, 2022). Google Trends data in the last five years shows the peak of the search for the keyword '*Merdeka belajar*' (independent learning) in 2022. This indicates that people are interested in learning and digging up information related to independent learning. Walter Mosley, an American novelist, said, "*Freedom is a state of mind, our bodies cannot know absolute freedom, but our minds can.*" independence is related to the way of thinking and the level of reasoning. The term independent learning materialized from the idea of humanistic theory in the book *Freedom to Learn*, which was introduced by Carl Ransom Roger (Joseph et al., 2020).

The essence of freedom of thought is the forerunner to the emergence of independent learning. Skills in thinking are ranked from low to high or a famous taxonomy in the world of education compiled by Benjamin Bloom in 1956 and revised by Lorin Anderson and David Krathwohl in 2001 with the name Higher Order Thinking Skills (HOTS). There are six levels of human reasoning ability: remembering, understanding, applying, analyzing, evaluating, and the highest level is creating. In educational practice, that is often used as the lowest stage. Namely, remembering, there is still a lot of knowledge of other stages or levels of HOTS that need to be achieved so that the learning process runs optimally by producing competent students. Reflecting on the results of the 2018 Program for International Student Assessment (PISA) test, one of the problems of education in Indonesia is the habit of memorizing without understanding why material is learned (Southeast Asian Ministers Of Education Organization (SEAMEO) Regional Centre For Quality Improvement For Teachers And Education Personnel (QITEP) In Language (SEAQIL), n.d.). The replacement of the national exam with a competency assessment in one of the independent learning policies is expected to make the Indonesian education system much better and more focused.

Learning is one of the vital needs of human life in its efforts to maintain life and develop itself in life. Learning can also be interpreted as a need to adapt and interact between the environment and humans. Thus, learning is a need that is felt as a necessity to be fulfilled throughout human life, from birth to the end of life (Hendri, 2020). Learning theories are generally grouped into four streams: (1) Behavioristic, (2) Cognitive, (3) Constructivist (4)

Humanistic. Freedom to learn philosophically holds the foundation of humanism, constructivism, progressivism, and Ki Hajar Dewantara's educational philosophy. Humanism emphasizes freedom and personal choice in self-actualization to develop.

Humanistic learning theory is learning that puts forward how to humanize humans. People learn because they want to know the world. Individuals choose something to learn, seek the learning process, and assess their learning process to achieve self-actualization. In humanistic learning theory, learning is successful if the individual understands his environment and himself. Constructivism provides independence in exploration and students' knowledge and skills. Progressivism prioritizes the freedom of teachers to explore and optimize students' potential (Mustagfiroh, 2020). The idea of *Merdeka belajar* is seen in the teaching of the conception of teacher behavior in educating students, namely "*Ing Ngarso Sung Tuladha* (in front of giving an example), *Ing Madya Mangun Karsa* (in the middle of building ideals), *Tut Wuri Handayani*" (in the back, follow and support it). The motto is applied in the 'among' approach, which means the teacher is a student role model (Daga, 2021).

Carl Roger's thoughts align with Ki Hajar Dewantara's philosophy, which holds that the learning process is student-centered to develop the potential to overcome problems. Roger stated that there are five important principles in the learning process for independent learning. These principles also inspired the Indonesian Minister of Education Nadiem Makarim to make a policy for independent learning, namely: a) Desire to learn: the learning process is carried out because of the encouragement of human curiosity to solve answers to questions to the world around him; b) Meaningful learning: humans tend to consider priorities that are more meaningful to themselves. If the activities carried out have no meaning, they would not be carried out; c) Learning without punishment: will make children free to choose what exercises to do and free to experiment to find new experiences; d) Learning with their initiative: Students who have motivation and initiative able to make choices, guide themselves and consider decisions and things that are good for themselves; e) Learning from change: conditions and situations around students will not always be the same, because it takes the ability to adapt to changes that occur (Sabaruddin, 2020).

Merdeka belajar is an effort to combat misconceptions about early childhood learning that are often related to reading, writing, and arithmetic. In contrast, preschool education requires further strengthening the integrative aspects achieved through play. They are returning to the philosophy of Ki Hajar Dewantara as the father of National Education. Kindergarten education should be planned according to the child's personality and gradually directed towards character or etiquette. One form of this nature is that playing is essential in early childhood education because, in essence, children love to play. Children learn more from what they see (*verb movent exempla trahunt*) (Suyadi, 2014). He enjoys playing, moving, working in groups, and feeling or doing things firsthand. Therefore, teachers should develop a learning process that links games with lessons. Then the teacher can make the child move or move, the child is taught how to work or study in groups, and the teacher provides opportunities to be directly involved in learning (Istiqomah & Suyadi, 2019).

Freedom to learn focuses on the freedom to learn independently and creatively. Teachers are also expected to be the movers to take action, giving the best for students and prioritizing students above their career interests. So far, the teaching system still relies on teachers lecturing in front of the class, which often causes boredom. The concept of the independent learning movement will encourage the education system in Indonesia to be more enjoyable, and students are not burdened with a value or ranking system. It is hoped that the implementation of independent learning can form students who are virtuous, competent, and ready to enter the community according to their fields (Ainia, 2020). Early childhood research in recent years has focused on children's learning and development, with less attention paid to teaching (Ryan & Goffin, 2008). Sharon Ryan and Stacie Goffin identify the teacher as essential in quality early childhood education. The study's results suggest that without effective teaching, children do not have access to the educational experiences needed to succeed (Barnett, 2003).

Every child does not necessarily obtain innovative learning processes for children. This is through a learning process directly transferred by the teacher (Paudi et al., 2020). Two approaches related to independent learning are fascinating to study, namely, the Reggio Emilia approach, which was awarded the best school in the world for the category of early childhood education, and the approach from the father of Indonesian education, Ki Hajar Dewantara. This study aims to understand and improve children's learning by examining two approaches, Reggio Emilia and Ki Hajar Dewantara, in the concept of independent learning and then knowing the comparison between the two.

Literature Review

Merdeka Belajar/Freedom to Learn

The word *Merdeka* often appears before August, along with commemorating the independence day of the State of Indonesia. According to the *Kamus Besar Bahasa Indonesia*, *Merdeka* means free (from slavery, colonialism, etc.), independent, not affected or free from demands, not bound, not dependent on certain people or parties; free (can do as he pleases). 77 last year, Indonesia's independence was obtained from a long process of pouring energy, tears, and drops of blood to fight against the invaders. But now, the meaning of independence is to realize what is desired. In this context, independence is related to the way of thinking and the level of reasoning. The essence of freedom of thought is the forerunner to the emergence of independent learning. The learning culture must also follow the principles of the place's culture so that learning outcomes can be accepted in the living environment. This principle guides students to respect and develop their own culture. In addition, there are also quite exciting expressions from Makarim. His expression was 'Giving freedom and autonomy to educational institutions, and independence from the bureaucratization of lecturers, lecturers freed from complicated bureaucracy, and students being given the freedom to choose their preferred field.' This phrase later emerged with the title '*Merdeka Belajar-Kampus Merdeka*'.

The Minister of Education and Culture is very serious about building character in education. This can be seen from the character assessment element that will determine a student's graduation. This shows that character education exists to balance the intellectual

elements in the academic field and students' emotional, moral, and spiritual development. Of course, the growth of education must be more intact so that character education is expected to respond to today's education problems. According to Ki Hadjar Dewantara, education is based on the principle of independence, which means that humans are given freedom from God Almighty to regulate their lives by staying in line with the rules that exist in society. Students must have an independent spirit in the sense of being physically, mentally, and with energy.

Ki Hadjar Dewantara's thoughts on independent learning can be seen in his thoughts on education, which encourages student development. Namely, education teaches us to achieve change and can benefit the community. Education is also a means to increase self-confidence and develop the potential within oneself because education has only developed aspects of intelligence without being balanced with character behaviors and skills needed in life. Students have a basic soul where the original state is according to its nature and has not been influenced by the circumstances of the environment. It can be illustrated that a child who has just been born into the world is like a white paper that has not been crossed out by ink, from where it can be understood that educators may fill in the white paper according to their will (Istiq'faroh, 2020).

The concept of independent learning formulated by the Minister of Education and Culture is in line with the concept described by Ki Hadjar Dewantara, which emphasizes the importance of the principle of independence for students so that education is not just pouring water into bottles. However, it also provides opportunities for students to develop their potential to be independent but still under the supervision of teachers and parents so that their potential value is not harmful. The role of the educator is not to be a human being who seems to know everything. Still, the educator plays the role of students' facilitator by accepting and giving knowledge to each other. Thus, the concept of independent learning, which has become a discourse lately, will more or less bring about changes, especially for the advancement of the quality of Indonesian education. Regardless of how to realize a developed student-oriented education system (democratic and humanistic), policymakers must be able to create the education personnel themselves (Dewantara et al., 2009).

Freedom to learn in the context of early childhood education (PAUD) restores the concept of the natural world of children, namely playing. Play is a moment for children to explore as much as possible with all their potential. When playing, children can freely move, communicate and interact with peers, generate ideas, and learn new things through direct experience (Marlina et al., 2020). Play is a form of children learning about all things observed. How happy it will be if this is realized because that is the real world of children. They don't need to have the concept of working on children's activity sheets with the CALISUNG concept, which will curb the world of children's play. For the learning process in PAUD to be meaningful, the teaching materials that will be given to children are adapted to the child's immediate environment, using concrete/real media, and the activities carried out can create an atmosphere of learning while playing. In addition, teachers must apply scientific learning (5M), that is, learning that provides opportunities for children to gain learning experiences through; observing, asking, gathering information, associating, and communicating (Maulina et al., 2018).

PAUD units, play-based learning activities are given to each activity to encourage aspects of the development of religious and moral values, cognitive, language, socio-emotional, physical-motor, and artistic. All aspects of this development are carried out with fun games following the principles of early childhood learning. Using references, Donaldson explained that when children play optimally, their developmental aspects are also stimulated (Marlina et al., 2020). Piaget also supports his statement, demonstrating that playing activities can stimulate children's thinking (cognitive) abilities. The main characteristics of the independent learning curriculum in PAUD units include the following: a) Strengthening meaningful play activities as a learning process; b) Strengthening the PAUD-SD (Primary School) transition; c) Strengthen the love for the world of literacy and STEAM from an early age; d) The learning and assessment process is more flexible and provides a foothold for children to understand their identity and world; f) The results of the assessment are used as a guide for teachers to design play activities and parents' footing in inviting children to play at home; g) Strengthening the role of parents as unit partners.

Kurikulum Merdeka is a policy that begins in 2021 with a curriculum applied to driving schools. In the 2022/2023 academic year, education units can determine the choice of implementing an independent curriculum (IKM) utilizing independent learning, independent change, and independent sharing. In independent learning, several sections of IKM still use the 2013 curriculum or the simplified 2013 curriculum (emergency curriculum). The independent choice changed to implementing an independent curriculum using the teaching tools provided in the PAUD unit. Lastly, independent sharing is implementing an independent curriculum by developing various teaching tools. The IKM option provided by the Ministry of Education and Culture gives education units the flexibility to make decisions based on the IKM readiness questionnaire, which measures the readiness of teachers and education personnel in preparing for IKM. In the questionnaire, there is no correct choice. All will adjust to the readiness of the education unit. The readiness questionnaire provides the most appropriate option regarding the readiness of the education unit, where the more reasonable, the more effective IKM will be implemented in the education unit (National Curriculum Information System, n.d.).



Fig. 1. Six Dimensions of *Pancasila* Student Profile

The IKM structure in the PAUD unit contains two learning activities, namely extracurricular learning and a project to strengthen the profile of *Pancasila* students. Extracurriculars are carried out in various ways so that children can achieve Learning Outcomes (CP) with optimal content and have time to explore concepts and strengthen competencies. The freedom and flexibility of teachers to choose teaching tools can be adjusted to the needs and interests of students. The project carried out strengthens the profile of *Pancasila* students, which is described in 6 dimensions: (1) having faith and piety to God Almighty and having noble character; (2) being independent; (3) working together; (4) global diversity; (5) critical reasoning; and (6) creative.

The *Pancasila* Student Profile can be used as a guide for all stakeholders, especially teachers and students, in the learning process. As illustrated in Figure 1, these dimensions must also be seen as inseparable. The six dimensions mentioned above affect the behavior of children and teachers and are significantly integrated into all aspects of learning. Efforts to instill these noble values in early childhood are a challenge. Therefore, teacher creativity is needed to package learning activities that are interesting, fun, and integrated with life. Learning and memorizing alone is not enough, but it also needs to be applied in everyday life as children are accustomed to saying greetings, praying before and after doing activities, being responsible for tidying up the toys used, like challenges, and not giving up easily.



Fig. 2. The big theme of the *Pancasila* student profile project

For the project to be in line with the *Pancasila* Student profile, the Ministry of Education and Culture decides on project themes that need to be applied to all Indonesian PAUD units with general themes: (1) I love the earth; (2) I love Indonesia; (3) Play and cooperate; (4) My imagination. The theme can be developed as several project activity design topics. The academic unit can create real and contextual learning objectives at this stage. The initial step of introducing project activities can be carried out on holiday celebrations, ceremonies of local traditions and culture, as well as specific moments such as Children's Day, Indonesian Independence Day, the implementation of Sekaten, the celebration of the month of Shawwal, and so on. Thus the slogan

of *Bhinneka Tunggal Ika* (the motto of the Indonesian nation; Even though they are diverse, in essence, the Indonesian people are still one unit) can be realized by exploring the variety and unique characteristics of each region that appears when the project activities are carried out.

Reggio Emilia Approach

REA's philosophy is unique because it places children at the center of education and has the same human rights as adult citizens. This new approach proved quite successful and inspired educators worldwide as Diana's preschool running REA was recognized as the best preschool in the world. Every school from every country that adopts and implements REA must pay attention to their region's needs and social and cultural context by giving the designation the inspired Reggio Emilia Approach. Implementation of REA will vary from school to school but retains its basic principles. Loris Malaguzzi, the pioneer of REA, believes that children learn, communicate, and think about the world around them in many ways, which have been termed the 100 children's languages. Loris Malaguzzi uses the word to represent the wealth of children in expressing themselves to the world through art, music, dance, science, language, technology, and other things.

There are hundreds of different child self-images. Image of the child theory directs when talking to children, encourages them to behave in specific ways, listens to children, and observes how children learn. Different actions will be given when an individual has a different view of the child's self-image. For example, the ways of looking at girls and boys are different from each other. The learning environment built in the classroom and at home reflects how an educator views children. When an educator views a child as dependent on adults, the educator will always help the child—feeding, dressing, and so on.

Conversely, when educators see children as individuals who can work independently, educators will provide opportunities for children to try to do things independently. It certainly won't go perfectly. Children will experience failures, but these failures are opportunities for children to learn. The image of the child process is a long continuous process. The way educators view children's self-image can be done through the points in Figure 3.

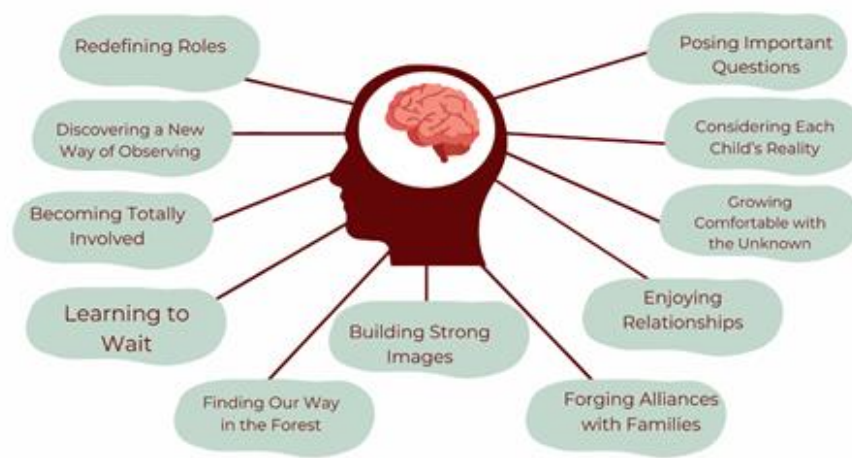


Fig. 3. Philosophy image of the child

a. Posing Important Questions

The socialization that occurs between adults and children is done through dialogue. Children will ask adults questions: "What are you doing?" "Why do you wear makeup, even though you are already beautiful?" "Why is that person different from me?" Children ask questions and hope to get answers from adults. These expectations are essential to maintain even though sometimes we can't answer all children's questions. Educators can involve children's conversations and dialogues with families such as mothers, fathers, aunts and uncles, grandparents, and cousins. When they don't know the answer to a child's question, educators can involve the child in finding the solution through books, asking experts, or searching the internet together.

b. Considering Each Child's Reality

Children have a bond of connection from their experiences and feelings, just like adults who have memory fragments and experiences of feeling happy, sad, disappointed, angry, and so on. So that humans do not live from emptiness, what adults think can also be handled by children. It's just that children can not understand all the emotions and feelings that are being experienced. Being aware of your child's feelings and helping them understand the mood they are in can help them build new experiences and memories.

c. Growing Comfortable with the Unknown

Activities that the school has designed for one month, one year, and even one day are sometimes not always predictable and run according to the plans made according to the curriculum. So it takes openness to what happened and changes the previous plan following the events. Both teachers and children need to be curious and try something based on the ideas that have been gathered from the children.

d. Enjoying Relationships

The ability to enjoy relationships and cooperation is essential. Children need to enjoy the school atmosphere and the interactions that occur in it. The same is true between teachers and other teachers. Togetherness and good collaborative relationships build a comfortable atmosphere at school.

e. Finding Our Way in the Forest

The relationship between adults and children is like living in a big, beautiful, and enchanting forest. Sometimes we get lost in each other, we greet from afar, and sometimes we have to make another way. Life in the woods is not easy. Adults, educators, teachers, and children must find each other and discuss what children's education means. Not only focusing on development and learning but also children's health and happiness.

f. Learning to Wait

"What we want to do is activate within children the desire and will and great pleasure that comes from being the authors of their learning. We need to know how to recognize a new presence and wait for the child. This is something that is learned. It's not automatic."

The task of educators is to build educational and learning situations in children. Educators must move beyond just observing and intervening and understanding each child's resources and potential. Joint projects carried out over days, weeks, or even months result in

situations in which children learn independently and harness their potential independently with as little adult intervention as possible. The goal is to activate children's desire, will, and great pleasure from their own learning process. The process cannot run automatically. Educators need to learn to wait and see how children learn.

g. Becoming Involved

This process is of constant value for the child to know that an adult is nearby, paying attention, helping, and providing guidance. Providing clarification of the meaning of the presence of adults, educators, and teachers to children is something important for children. When the child is observed, the child will feel happy. Children want to be monitored and noticed in their actions. Children with adults, educators, or teachers to see the work process, not the product of what is being done. The teacher asks the children to take a bucket of water from one place to another. It is unimportant to the child that the teacher only sees him coming with a bucket of water at the end. What is essential for the child is that the teacher sees the child when the child is working while the child tries hard to complete the task. The process is vital regarding how much effort the child puts in, how heroically the child does this work, and what children want to observe while engaged. They don't want the focus of observation to be on the final product when we, as adults, see children as if we are opening a window and getting a new view of things.

h. Discovering a New Way of Observing

Observation provides many extraordinary benefits. There is a shift in the role of teachers who are used to teaching to learning. A process in which teachers learn about themselves as teachers and teachers learn about children. Many events were previously invisible to the teacher. Letting children together with their peers can be a learning platform. Children enjoy learning with their peers, and what is not learned from the process is obtained from the interactions of adults around them. Teachers need to learn to see children, listen to them, and know when they feel some distance from us as adults and from other children, when they are distracted, when shadows of happiness and pleasure surround them, and when clouds surround them. Sorrow and suffering. We must understand that they move and work with many ideas, but their most important task is to build relationships with friends. They try to understand what friendship is.

i. Redefining Roles

The role of both adults and educators must be changed. No longer as a transmitter or giver of education but as a creator of relationships.

j. Forging Alliances with Families

Establishing strong alliance relationships with children's families is a must. Like the metaphor of a giant hot air balloon. Some parents think the balloons will rise and fly during the day. Others prefer the balloons to stay on the ground to ensure their children are safe and protected. But children want to go up and fly and travel everywhere in hot air balloons, to see in this different way, to see things from above. Our problem is that to make a hot air balloon, we have to make sure that the parents understand the importance of what the teacher and the kids are doing in the hot air balloon. Flying in the air, and seeing the world differently, adds to the wealth of all of us, especially children. We need to make a big impression on parents, amaze

them, and convince them that what we do is very important to their children and that we produce and work with children to understand their intelligence and intelligence.

k. Building Strong Images

Children have the right to good schools. Good building, good teachers, great time, and suitable activities. This is the right of all children. Children need to know that we are their friends, that they can depend on us for the things they want, and that we can support them in the things they have but also in the things they have. Things they dream of, what they want. Children have the right to the imagination. It is important to believe that the child is brilliant, that the child is strong, and beautiful and has very ambitious desires and requests. This is the image of a child that needs to be held. Those who imagine the child as fragile, incomplete, weak, and made of glass only get something of this belief for themselves. We don't need it as a picture of children. Instead of always protecting children, we need to give them recognition of their rights and powers. In his poetry, Malaguzzi also mentions the wealth of children has been taken away by school and culture.

'Children have a hundred languages; they rob them of ninety-nine: School and culture. Work to separate. Body-mind. Making them think without their body and act without their head. They are creating a conflict between play and work. Reality and fantasy. Science and imagination. Inside and outside.'

Education is no longer considered just a matter of teaching art and literacy but also aiding children's psychological growth and enabling them to have a rich and original personality. Malaguzzi also paid particular attention to the conditions of the school workforce. He insisted that all those working in schools, teachers or auxiliary staff, should have good salaries and time for professional development and other activities to evaluate and reassess their contribution to education. Because of this, Malaguzzi supports the development of good pedagogical in each school with the following design:

- A pedagogical support team (working with psychology or pedagogy degrees) to support the school.
- Provision of ateliers (art workshops) and atelieristas (educators with art qualifications) in schools to realize the idea of 100 children's languages and provide educational experiences that are fun and imaginative, and give children another perspective on art.
- Provide complete school environment services (indoor and outdoor), including kitchen, bathroom, and garden.
- Ensure priority access for children with special rights (a term adopted by Reggio Emilia for children with disabilities)
- They are providing participation in educating children not only to parents but all members of the community who are in the school environment. The teacher will select their participation regularly and accompany them (Moss, 2016).

Predominantly, learning at REA includes education based on the relationship between children and the three teachers (third teachers) in their lives, namely parents, teachers, and the environment. His teaching builds on all aspects of development based on the needs of children's interests and differences. Therefore, in REA, the children bring up the topic of learning. This curriculum is known as the emergent curriculum, which is a curriculum that is made based on the interests of children. Themes are taken from the stories and delivery of children, communities, or families, as well as events and conditions that children recognize. Children are egocentric; they cannot share, cannot understand other people's points of view, and have a short attention span (Wexler, 2004). The learning model was created to help children acquire skills, values, ways of thinking, and how to express themselves and teach how they learn. The teacher not only gives experience to the child but also asks questions that involve the child in an in-depth discussion to discover why children are so engrossed in exploring a material, or the teacher tries to find out what children think when they touch, feel, observe, or explore the texture of an object that is of interest to children. In planning, the teacher can create a Mind Map method by considering the following components: what the child already knows, what the child wants to know, and what ideas the teacher has.

Ki Hajar Dewantara

Ki Hajar Dewantara's educational focus was volatile after his return to Indonesia. According to him, the Indonesian state will never progress as long as the education system follows colonialism which adheres to the value of discrimination and neglect of local culture. Ki Hajar Dewantara believes that the struggle for national independence must be based on the nation's free spirit and national spirit, so it is necessary to cultivate an independent spirit starting from childhood. His ideas and ideas about education were fully expressed through the establishment of Tamansiswa in Yogyakarta, opening the Taman Lare or Children's Park, an academic unit at the level of Kindergarten (Taman Indria). The birth of Tamansiswa received a tremendous response from all walks of life.

Tamansiswa, as one of the educational institutions founded by Ki Hajar Dewantara, succeeded in laying the foundation of an education that liberated and laid the foundations for the national education system. Developments that occur in the world make social life in a nation unavoidable. Cultural influences from outside must be chosen so as not to leave the spirit of nationalism. Dewantara made Trikon (Concentric: united with human and world values, Convergent: met openly with the development of nature and time, Continuous: continuous with the past), which aims to preserve and develop Indonesia's national culture. Ki Hajar Dewantara never hesitated to establish his education system and model based on local-national culture. He wanted to advance the indigenous education model to face the colonial education system and, at the same time, turn it into national independence (Wiryopranoto et al., 2017).

Education does not change a child's innate nature, except to guide so that the child's innate nature grows and develops in a better direction. Thus, early childhood education serves to teach children who are not of good quality to become even more qualified, in addition to preventing all kinds of negative influences. On this basis, early childhood education aims to

guide all the natures that exist in children so that they can achieve the highest safety and happiness in life as members of society. Education should not be interpreted as coercion because the stability of the mind and heart will determine a person's quality. In general, Ki Hajar Dewantara's educational strategy is carried out as follows: a) education is a cultural process to encourage students to have an independent and independent spirit; b) shaping the character of students so that they have a national spirit but remain open to international developments; c) develop students' personalities so that they have a pioneering spirit that has enthusiasm, courage, volunteerism, and responsibility; and d) educating means developing the potential or talent that is the nature of every student.

Ki Hajar Dewantara's teachings regarding the conception of teacher behavior in educating students have so far been used as a guide for the implementation of national education by the Ministry of Education and Culture, namely: *Ing Ngarsa Sung Tuladha* (in front of giving an example), *Ing Madya Mangun Karsa* (in the middle of building ideals), *Tut Wuri Handayani* (following and supporting). The motto is an excellent example of a teacher being a paragon and role model to students to develop thinking and learning. After entering the world of education, Ki Hadjar Dewantara realized that in character building and the development of children's education, it is not only the responsibility of the school but also the responsibility of the parents and the surrounding community or environment. This later became an idea called "*Tri Pusat Pendidikan*", an implementation of education involving families, universities, and the community to form superior, virtuous, and intelligent human beings both physically and mentally.

As a cultural struggle institution, Tamansiswa always strives to produce valuable and free-spirited people who are independent, unorderly, and orderly. The cultural values raised by Tamansiswa consist of eight separate derivatives: responsibility, kinship, tolerance, democratic deliberation, togetherness, discipline, and harmony. The art education teaching pattern proposed by Ki Hadjar Dewantara uses the sariswara method, a combined method of teaching three lessons; language, songs, and stories per each region's local wisdom.

Unlike other schools, art education in Tamansiswa is not included in extracurricular activities because when it is included in extracurricular activities, art education is not mandatory for students to join, and the focus will be more on appreciation activities. Art education in Tamansiswa is included in the curriculum so that students have intelligence and awareness of aesthetic sense and character morality. Through art, children are stimulated to imagine the values of life. In this way, they will understand life's importance, requiring them to be broad-minded and appreciate life. Art that has regularity (*wirama*), gentleness (*wirasa*), and aesthetics (*wiraga*) will significantly affect the formation of children's character. Art involves emotions and feelings, interpersonal skills, concentration and cognition, feelings and moods of engagement, communication, and motor skills. Sariswara teaches children through art to familiarize them with each aesthetic and incorporate all existing sensory experiences, i.e., hearing, sight, physical movement, and feeling. The combination of senses makes the sariswara method more complete and profound.

The sariswara method is a combination of the song or sound art, with the choice of creating meaningful lyrics, gamelan or gending rhythms, and body movements. One of the products is a children's play song. In addition, the lyrics are not arbitrary, beautiful, and full of educational meaning according to the child's soul. Children's play songs become a game that children run with great fun. A combination of creativity, taste, and intention appears in a communal game or group. When playing, children will build togetherness, socialization, adaptation, self-confidence, competitive spirit, train body reflexes and memory, and bring up tepa-selira and manners or manners (Taman Indria Ibu Pawiyatan Tamansiswa., n.d.). A pattern of a song in class when starting the lesson is as follows (Yudha Karyawanto & Ms., 2018):

*“Siji loro telu tangane sendeku (One two three arms crossed)
Meringake bu guru, menawa didangu (Listen to the teacher, who knows what will be asked later)
Papat nuli limo, lenggahae sing tata (Four to five, sitting neatly)
Aja pada sembrana, mundak ora bisa (Don't be careless, you'll regret it later).”*

Looking at the song's contents, there are suggestions related to the rules for children to behave well before the lesson begins by putting their hands on the table (in Javanese, it is called sendeku). The following meaning of the song is for children to pay attention to the teacher's explanation of the subject matter by sitting down but avoiding behaviors that make it difficult for children to pay attention to the material presented by the teacher. The sariswara method can be applied in art lessons and combined with other themes from lessons such as literature, arithmetic, and thematic learning. It all depends on the teacher as a person who can make exciting songs according to the theme being taught.

Methods

The type of research used is library research. The study was obtained from the results of collecting various literature data: books, documentation materials, journals, magazines, and newspapers related to the research material. The approach used is a historical approach (historical approach) which discusses events, places, objects, times, backgrounds, and subjects of events. The data obtained are then analyzed to conclude the phenomena that occur. The implementation of the research uses observations or notes of observations made by others that cannot be repeated, considering that the data source used is the work of philosophers in the past. Research boundaries are used to make it easier for researchers to get the data and information needed so that the writing does not deviate from the planned goals. The researcher will only discuss the brief history and main ideas of Reggio Emilia and Ki Hajar Dewantara and their relation to independent learning.

Result/Findings

Philosophical Analysis of Education Reggio Emilia and Ki Hajar Dewantara

The school for early childhood in Reggio Emilia is managed by the local government and uses the same approach in every school. The specialty of REA is how adults see the child's

self-image (image of the child). This thinking affects the way educators behave when with children. For example, if the educator believes that the child is an individual who needs to be helped, the behavior given by the educator is always to help the child do every activity and work and remind the child to always be careful in doing something. Many prohibit or limit the child's exploration. However, when educators view children as capable and independent individuals, educators will provide opportunities for children to try. Even if the child fails or gets hurt while exploring, the failure is a learning opportunity.

REA believes that children are capable individuals, full of potential, capable of making choices, unique, full of curiosity, and have rights as citizens. This right does not mean that children are the same as adults. When adults see children as capable individuals with the strengths and capacities they have, adults are no longer the center of child control. So that children and adults can work and collaborate. REA sees that in terms of rights, children and adults are balanced. This right must be heard, understood, and expressed in 100 languages.

Ki Hajar Dewantara believes that the Among system is a fundamental strategy in education. Learning and education are not carried out by force nor allow children to grow and develop freely without direction. But they educate with love and nurturing by setting an excellent example for children. Despite having a similar philosophy with REA, Ki Hajar Dewantara has different thoughts in describing children's self. Ki Hajar Dewantara agrees with the convergence theory view that the interaction between heredity and environmental factors affects children's attitudes and behavior. Children are born with positive and negative potentials, so children need an educational environment that can obscure negative possibilities and develop positive prospects through education and parenting.

Ki Hajar Dewantara's educational trilogy is also a role model for teachers implementing education in Indonesia. Educational trilogies are the same as tree symbols when illustrated and expressed with values, language, and anthologies. Tut Wuri Handayani solidified the value idea that teacher education is the main supporter of students from behind. Just as tree roots always follow and encourage trees to grow, teachers also encourage their students to achieve their goals. The teachings of Ing Madya Mangun Karsa are like a tree branch with many leaves. This means the support and presence of teachers to provide guidance and knowledge to students. Meanwhile, Ing Ngarsa Sung Tuladha is likened to a fruit enjoyed by students with the example given by the teacher. Students can easily find the ideal figure to be used as a benchmark that is easy to follow (Daniel Zuchron, 2021)

Analysis of Reggio Emilia and Ki Hajar Dewantara's Educational Goals

Emphasis on the main goal in RE schools is to carry out learning by providing experiences according to the rights and self-image of children and then supporting their ability to express themselves in a hundred different languages. Children can use words, movements, drawing, painting, building, sculpting, shadow play, collage, play a play, or music. The teacher acts as a researcher who actively studies theory and practice and reflects with fellow teachers, atelieristas, and pedagogies. Don't forget their role in documenting children's learning process activities. Focus on partnerships in education is the third goal of RE schools by focusing on

partnerships in the field of education; parents and other community members are involved in the decision-making process through their participation in school-based parent-teacher councils, RE schools are collaborative spaces where the public can participate in observing, listening, and reflecting on and learn about children and parenting. RE school teachers and pedagogues (specialists, education coordinators) almost weekly plan teacher support for each child's development, discuss how to organize an exploratory rich environment, provide space for problem-solving, and document learning in each context. Additional art teachers (*atelieristas*) are also specially trained in visual arts to encourage children's expression through art media.

Ki Hajar Dewantara appreciated and was inspired by the work of Tagore, Montessori, and Fröbel. In terms of educational goals, Dewantara agrees with Fröbel that "the purpose of education is to encourage and guide man as a conscious, thinking and perceiving being in such a way that he becomes a pure and perfect representation of that divine inner law through his own choice; education must show him the ways and meanings of attaining that goal." According to Dewantara, education aims to achieve the perfection of human life, namely, to fulfill the soul and body to meet life's needs and goals. In his educational teachings, the concept of *tri-ngo* education is also contained, namely *ngerti* (understanding), *ngroso* (feeling), and *nglakoni* (doing) to understand and feel the surrounding environment and bring good actions to the community with character, where activities are carried out because there is a unity of mind, feeling, and will.

Like educational figures who inspire nature education, Ki Hajar Dewantara also recognizes the importance of learning from nature and believes that lessons can be learned from nature, everyday objects, and human interactions. Because of this, there is the concept of three educational centers; family, school, and environment. Dewantara positions the responsibility for educating and caring for children not only on the teacher but also on the family and the environment or society. If Tagore uses the metaphor of a teacher as a gardener whose job is to ensure that the gardens (students) develop, the teacher's role in Ki Hajar Dewantara's educational concept is to be a role model and provide motivation and enthusiasm so that students do not give up and fall behind.

With an educational background that opposes the colonial education system, Ki Hajar Dewantara suggested the importance of education for the community or indigenous people to learn their history and culture by using their mother tongue to promote local culture (*tri-kon*). Indonesia has a variety of cultural arts. Cultural arts are artistic, artistic, and creative works of art rooted in the nation's norms, values, behavior, and products expressed through artistic activities. Art and culture in education aim not only to make children artists or creative workers but to focus on the meaning of art with attitudes and creativity, ethics, and aesthetics. Conceptually, art has a multilingual nature for developing self-expression with various media, languages, sounds, motions, roles, and other combinations. Art is also multidimensional, namely the development of various knowledge, appreciation, analysis, creation, and understanding packaged in harmony. Another characteristic of art is that it is multicultural, which is to develop awareness and appreciation of the various cultures of the archipelago and abroad.

Art can be enjoyed and done by anyone, with any media. Local wisdom of Indonesian culture that can serve the needs of early childhood development is a traditional game that can be a place for children to meet and socialize. Although simple, traditional games have many meanings, such as the dakon game, which contains elements of learning to count, communicating, negotiating, and playing honestly, Cublak-cublak suweng; children learn to predict and predict which friends carry stones in their hands, learn to play in groups, strengthen motor skills by holding stones and turning them. In traditional games, in addition to gestures, the child's senses of mouth also move to recite meaningful folk songs (Wulansari, 2017). These advantages can make the unity of the human soul, namely creativity (mind), taste (heart), and intention (will), into the human mind. Therefore, education should prioritize one strength and all elements of the soul to fulfill human needs and live a useful life.

Analysis of Reggio Emilia and Ki Hajar Dewantara's Education Curriculum

REA and Ki Hajar Dewantara use the philosophical theory of John Dewey, Piaget, and Vygotsky regarding constructivism which helps children learn with their learning construction and according to age levels. The REA model uses an in-depth study of topics or concepts meaningful to children with project learning that can last for days, weeks, months, or even years. Because REA emphasizes using children's interests as a basis for understanding, not with teacher lesson planning, it is essential to provide a curriculum that is not tied to a schedule, is not rushed, and is flexible. The educational curriculum must be adapted to the child's residence to be a meeting point for the REA and Ki Hajar Dewantara curriculum ideas. Italy and Indonesia have a diversity of arts and cultures. If there are schools that want to use the REA approach, they cannot be one hundred percent the same as REA in Italy. Therefore there is an additional word inspired or inspired by Reggio Emilia. Similar to Ki Hajar Dewantara, the many cultures in Indonesia do not allow for uniformity of learning. It would be better to adapt to the surrounding area's customs, culture, and customs to introduce the child's immediate environment.

Discussion

First, Freedom to learn, according to Reggio Emilia, is seeing children have 100 languages, which means they have control and can build their own learning process. Children have incredible powers and abilities to express their potential in various ways. Meanwhile, Ki Hajar Dewantara views independent learning as a human being who is free to build his own culture, an independent way of life by developing a sense of independence in everyone's heart through educational materials based on aspects of nationalism and natural law that everything is the embodiment of God's will. The atmosphere needed in education is the system that builds an atmosphere based on kinship, kindness, empathy, and love.

Second, Freedom of Learning is a learning curriculum concept that the government is preparing to answer the challenges of changing times and prepare the nation's next generation to face the new order of life. Freedom to learn in the context of early childhood education (PAUD) restores the concept of the natural world of children, namely playing. Play is a moment

for children to explore as much as possible with all their potential. When playing, children can freely move, communicate and interact with peers, generate ideas, and learn new things through direct experience. In the 2022/2023 academic year, education units can determine the choice of implementing an independent curriculum (IKM) using independent learning, independent change, and independent sharing. In independent learning, several sections of IKM still use the 2013 curriculum or the simplified 2013 curriculum (emergency curriculum). The concept of the independent learning program is taken from the philosophy and thoughts of Ki Hajar Dewantara to provide freedom for teachers and students to implement an effective learning system that is fun with extracurricular learning and strengthening the profile of *Pancasila* students, namely 1) having faith and piety to God Almighty and having noble character; 2) independent; 3) work together; 4) global diversity; 5) critical reasoning; and 6) creative.

Third, the relevance of the similarities and differences in the concept of independent learning that was initiated has similarities with the two comparisons, namely Loris Malaguzzi as the character behind the Reggio Emilia Approach (REA), has the view that children are born with 100 languages and various potentials, Ki Hajar Dewantara views children born with potential positive and negative at the same time. Education and character are needed to strengthen children's positive potential and obscure their negative potential. Both approaches have similarities in giving freedom to children. In REA, children are given the freedom to explore by learning the negotiated curriculum (emergent). In contrast to the freedom of REA, Ki Hajar Dewantara offers children the freedom to play in the natural environment with the care and guidance of teachers as guardians, motivators, and role models for children. Project-based learning that can be imitated from REA provides an interlude in the project with cultural learning and an introduction to the profile of *Pancasila* students through art activities—familiarizing education with art, whether writing, painting, lyrics, songs, song harmony, or movement, becomes a complete education of creativity, work, and initiative.

Conclusion

The conceptualization of education is needed to prepare future generations to face the future. The world needs a new education system that is about ranking and caring for oneself and the environment. REA philosophy and Ki Hajar Dewantara are good alternative considerations for educational development. Dewantara's ideas have advantages compared to outside thoughts, namely adjusting his nation's culture. Unfortunately, this idea has not been continued or developed, so until now, the Indonesian people always refer to education and arts from the west. In this study, the author has limited funds to access Loris Malaguzzi's writing "Fragment". Despite these limitations, the momentum of the independent learning curriculum can be a learning model that offers opportunities for teachers and students to experiment, observe, investigate, and encourage the development of children's critical thinking, which is stimulated by art vehicles to enhance students' cognitive development. As a suggestion for teachers and schools, applying the approach of both Reggio Emilia and Ki Hajar Dewantara is a challenge worth taking to see how the collaborative value of the education and art environment can support children's learning.

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