

## **FROM DISRUPTION TO MOBILIZATION: IRE TEACHERS' PERSPECTIVES ON INDEPENDENT LEARNING POLICY**

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**Abstract:** The policy on Independent Learning was established by the Indonesian government to promote teacher performance in midst of disruption in the educational aspect during this COVID-19 pandemic. However, teachers may not share the same perspective related to the policy. This study aims to examine Islamic Religious Education (IRE) teachers' perspectives on Independent Learning policy. The research participants were IRE teachers who passed the 2019 In-service Teacher Profession Training Program at a State Islamic University in East Java, Indonesia. The mix-method research design with a qualitative-quantitative sequential exploratory analysis was used in this study. Qualitative data were obtained through telephone interviews, non-participant observations, and investigative documentary tracing, while quantitative data were obtained through a survey using online questionnaires. The collected data were analyzed using the descriptive qualitative phenomenological technique and descriptive statistics. The findings show that the increase in the use of mobile learning by IRE teachers is an implication of the disruption leading to the mobilization of the educational sector to approach the Independent Learning policy based on performances in three perspectives. First, the policy is considered a critique of traditional educational practices. Second, the policy serves as a space for independence with rules and regulations that are more open for students and schools. Third, the policy is an effort to free education from social and political pressures and restraints. This study provides a new understanding of the philosophical inter-connection in teachers' perceptions to the practice of distant learning implementation based on informational technology.

**Keywords:** *disruption, independent learning, mobilization, Islamic religious education.*

## **DARI DISRUPSI KE MOBILISASI: PERSPEKTIF GURU AGAMA ISLAM DALAM KEBIJAKAN MERDEKA BELAJAR**

**Abstrak:** Kebijakan Merdeka Belajar ditetapkan pemerintah untuk mendorong mobilisasi kinerja guru di tengah disrupsi sektor pendidikan selama pandemi covid-19. Namun, belum tentu semua guru memiliki kesamaan persepsi terhadap kebijakan tersebut. Penelitian ini bertujuan mengeksplorasi bagaimana persepsi guru Pendidikan Agama Islam (PAI) terhadap kebijakan Merdeka Belajar. Subjek penelitian adalah guru PAI yang lulus program Pendidikan Profesi Guru Dalam Jabatan 2019 sebuah universitas Islam di Jawa Timur, Indonesia. Pendekatan mix-method lewat studi eksploratoris sekuensial secara kualitatif dan kuantitatif digunakan dalam penelitian ini. Data kualitatif diperoleh melalui wawancara via telpon, pengamatan tidak terlibat, dan tracing investigatif documenter, sedangkan data kuantitatif diperoleh melalui survei via angket daring. Analisis data menggunakan teknik deskriptif kualitatif fenomenologis dan statistik deskriptif. Hasil penelitian mengungkap bahwa peningkatan penggunaan mobile learning oleh guru PAI merupakan implikasi disrupsi menuju mobilisasi sektor pendidikan dalam menyongsong kebijakan Merdeka Belajar berdasarkan kinerja dalam tiga perspektif. Pertama, kebijakan dianggap sebagai kritik terhadap praktik pendidikan tradisional. Kedua, sebagai ruang kemandirian dengan peraturan yang lebih terbuka bagi siswa dan sekolah. Ketiga, sebagai upaya pembebasan pendidikan dari pengekangan dan tekanan sosial politik. Kajian ini menawarkan pengetahuan baru bagaimana interkoneksi filosofis dalam persepsi guru ke tataran praktis dalam implementasi pendidikan jarak jauh berbasis teknologi informasi.

**Kata Kunci:** *disrupsi, merdeka belajar, mobilisasi, pendidikan agama Islam.*

## INTRODUCTION

The Internet of things (IoT) has become the cause of disruption in every field (Dai, Zheng, & Zhang, 2019), including in the process of learning and environment of education (Ramlowat & Pattanayak, 2019; Al-Emran, Malik, & Al-Kabi, 2020). IoT is known as the third Internet wave on the stage of the 4.0 industrial revolution, from the incumbent industries to the smart industries. The reality of the smart industry transformation has made El Kharki, Bensamka, & Berrada (2020) believe that the educational landscape needs radical changes. They bring up the emergence of virtual laboratories as an example. Notwithstanding, the problem of the inadequate fulfilment of educational values remains a big question. Virtual labs have not been considered as being able to provide haptic skills and instrumentation awareness, two features that can be commonly attained by hands-on laboratories.

The empirical facts described above gives a picture of how radical changes using IoT have become an important mark of innovation of the 21-century educational technology. The use of the term radical refers to the more principle and neutral entity. When the actors of education are able to keep up with changes, they will lead. Those who will not be able to keep up with changes will be regarded just as followers. It is why education is confronted with competition and collaboration. The schools that own adequate resources will certainly choose to compete with other schools. When resources are limited, on the other hand, there is no other choice than collaborating. Jones (2019) designate collaboration as one in the example of the *open educational resources* (OER). The improvement of accesses, saving of funds, and mutual benefits from OER are important ammunition in the main battle of the integration of technology into education.

Anderson, Doney, Hendrix, Martinez, Stoddart, & Wright (2019) explains OER by adapting the premise of the *Five Laws of Library Science* from Ranganathan (1931). These five OER laws are (1) educational resources are used; (2) every learner is with their educational resources; (3) every educational resource is with their learner; (4) time saving by teachers and students; and (5) OER is a growing organism. Generally, the adaptation of these Ranganathan

five laws signify that advocacy towards the appropriate fulfilment of students' needs becomes the collective commitment of the caretakers and facilitators of educational services. Wong, Xie, Zou, Wang, Tang, Kong, & Kwan (2020) offer their support by exploring a case study in how OER supports and facilitates self-regulated learning (autonomous learning).

Autonomy is seen as one of the important characteristics of distant learning. In addition, there is openness, learning where ever and when ever, and based on information and communication technology. The management of distant learning has been regulated by the authority of the Government of Indonesia by the Ruling of the Ministry of Education Number 7 Year 2020, Chapter VII, Article 42. Autonomous learning places the learner's conditions and speed of learning as the main reference for the process, amount, and control of learning. Openness, meanwhile, is a flexibility in the learning method, length, venue, and evaluation. The Minister of Education of the Republic of Indonesia has planned to make distant learning permanent with a continuity expectation of 15 years through 2030-2035.

In chronology, the policy of Independent Learning was launched in the late 2019 as a response to Indonesian students' performances issued by *Program for International Student Assessment* (PISA). In 2018, the Indonesian standings among 80 countries decreased from the previous ranking in 2015. In literacy, the score decreased from 397 to 371; numeration from 386 to 379; and science from 403 to 396 (OECD, 2015; 2018). For this, through the policy of freedom of learning, the Government is planning an increase of standings in the primary and high schools by (1) PISA scores of 451 for literacy, 407 for numeration, and 414 for science; (2) 30 thousand driving schools; (3) roughly 85% participation of pre-schools and 100% of primary and secondary schools; (4) 400 thousand graduates of the new teachers' profession training program; (5) 300 thousand driving teachers; and (6) 150 thousand school principals with driving teacher-backgrounds (Kemendikbud.go.id, 07/07/2020). These targets have pushed more active mobilization from the disruption of the educational sectors.

A number of studies have been conducted on disruption of the educational management such

as Saavedra & Pe´rez (2018), Kearney, Burden, & Schuck (2019), Goode, Johnson, & Sundstrom (2020), and Rusydiyah, Purwati, & Prabowo (2020) that lean to look at the competencies of teacher candidates in digital literacy. The policy of Independent Learning has also been studied such as Mustaghfiroh (2020), Fadhil (2020), and Suntoro & Widoro (2020) while Yanti (2019) looked more at the pros and cons of the stakeholders towards the policy. In relation to the pandemic contexts, studies were conducted by Abidah, Hidaayatullaah, Simamora, Fehabutar, & Mutakinati (2020) by finding out the impacts of the Covid-19 pandemic over the education world. Meanwhile, a study by Berry (2020) looked into teachers’ perspectives in the context of disruption to increase learners’ participation. Different from the foregoing studies, the present study is intended to look more specifically into the involvement of teachers, especially of Islamic religion education (IRE). This focus has given novelty to research in this field.

It is therefore intentionally designed that the present study is aimed at describing the perceptions of the IRE teachers on the increment of their performances within the policy of Independent Learning, specifically in facing disruptive barriers, more especially of being “forced” by the pandemic emergency contexts. Their role as an engaging teacher becomes an important factor in realizing their views on the policy. The choice on these IRE teachers is based on the consideration of the highest criterion of the Pancasila learners as the subjects of the Independent Learning policy to be “having faith, piety to God, and noble characters”. Rahmawati (2018) reminded of the signs of shifts in Islamic religion education due to the disruption era, so that the crucial realities that question the IRE teachers’ perspectives must be answered objectively by empirical research.

An, Kim, & Kim (2008) moreover, accentuate that the success of on-line learning is very much determined by the teacher’s initial perspectives.

## METHOD

Using the mixed research method (MRM) approach, the study was designed exploratively sequentially combining qualitative and quantitative studies consecutively. The research population consisted of the IRE teachers from various regencies in East Java Province who had attended the teachers’ profession in-service training program in 2019 in a State Islamic University, East Java, Indonesia (Figure 1). The choice of these teachers was based on (1) the 2019 in-service training was held at the same time as the launching of the Independent Learning policy through the driving teacher program; (2) when the study was in progress, the 2020 training program was cancelled by the Ministry of Religious Affairs due to the Covid-19 pandemic; and (3) they had more updated knowledge on educational and professional teachers of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Meanwhile, sampling was done using the snowball and purposive sampling techniques on those who passed the training program up to the total of 563 teachers.

The research instruments varied; however, as part of a qualitative study, the researchers played the role of the main instruments, most specifically during the earlier phase of the study. During this phase, data were gathered by way of telephone interviews, non-participation observation, and tracing of investigative documents. This technique of data elicitation was selected on the basis of considering the social-distance policy made by the Government due to the pandemic causing limited accesses to research subjects. Subsequently, focus group discussion (FGD) sessions were held the results of which were used as references for

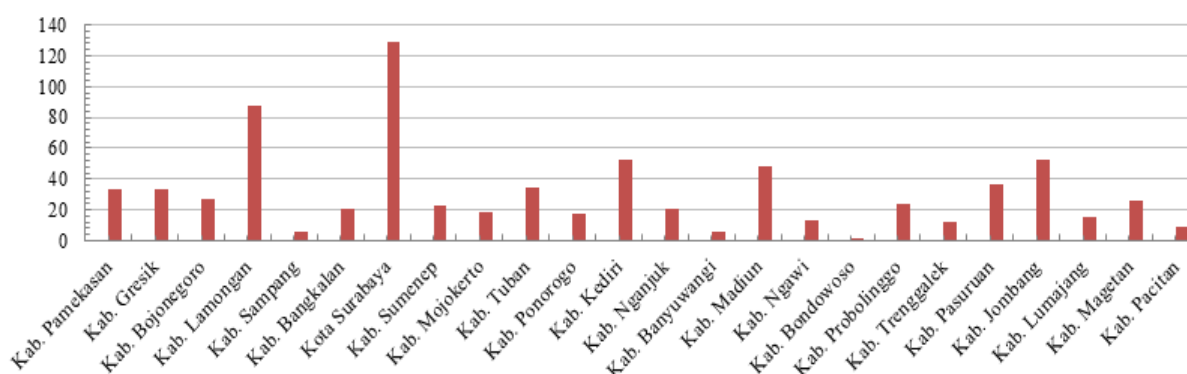


Figure 1. Research Subjects by Regency Origins in East Java Province

the subsequent preparation phases. Secondly, surveys were conducted using questionnaires to obtain more quantitative data. The questionnaires were conducted through a online survey form and online group chat. For the distribution of the questionnaires, a total of 192 returns (34.1%) were obtained. This number was considered representative. Seen from the subject lessons, there were 55% of Alquran-Hadist teachers, 32% of Arabic Language teachers, 9% of Islamic Behaviour teachers, 3% of class teachers, and 1% of Islamic Law teachers. The table of specification for the interview and questionnaire is represented by Table 1.

Instrument validation was conducted by 9 panelists or subject-matter experts. From the CVR calculation, an average score of .81 was obtained. Since a minimum score for a CVR with 9 panelists is .78 (Lawshe, 1975), the

instruments were accepted as valid. In order to obtain more accurate data, triangulation treatments were given by cross-checking the data across methods, peer-reviewing by colleagues, and re-confirming the research informants as the data sources. After being validated, the data were then coded in accordance with the pre-determined criteria. Qualitative data from the interview and observation were analyzed using the descriptive qualitative phenomenological techniques of the Miles, Huberman, & Saldana (2019) interactive model that consists data condensation, data presentation, and conclusion. Data from the documentation were analyzed using the content-analysis and discourse-analysis techniques. Meanwhile, the quantitative data from the surveys were analyzed using the descriptive quantitative statistics.

**Table 1. Table of Specification of the Research Instruments**

Dimension	Indicators	Instruments
Disrupting	Competence: Understanding, skills	Interview, Questionnaire
	Technology: Using mobile learning	Interview, Questionnaire
	Institution: Supporting distance learning	Interview, Questionnaire
Mobilizing teacher	Teacher performance	Interview, Observation
	Student engagement	Questionnaire
	Teacher engagement	Questionnaire
	Classroom engagement	Questionnaire
Independent learning	Policy understanding	Interview, Questionnaire
	Policy implementation	Interview, Documentation, Observation

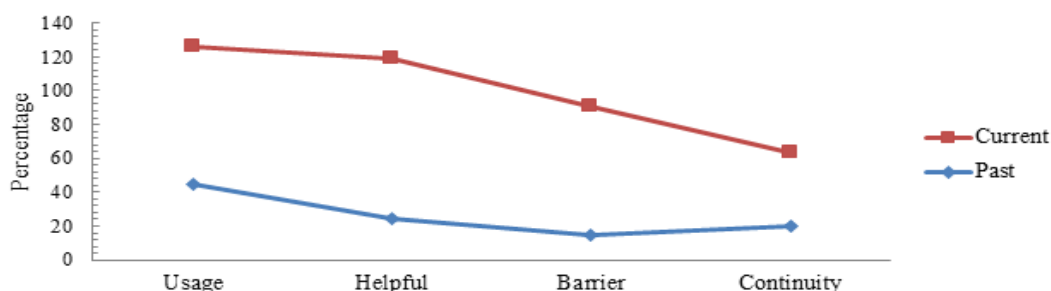
**FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION**

**Findings**

The disruptive environment, competence, technology, or institution-wise, has given an important offer to the electronic and internet-based learning of Islamic religion. Everyone is pushed to know and befriended to mobile-learning tools. Especially during the Covid-19 pandemic, the plague has not left any other choice but to use them. From the gathered data, it is well known that there is significant increase in the use of mobile-learning devices such as *Teams, Google Classroom, Zoom, Google Meet,*

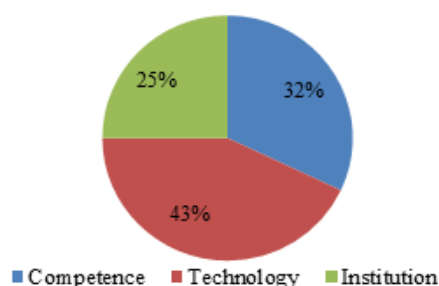
*Edmodo, Webex,* and other such e-learning facilities by IRE teachers during August, September, and October 2020.

The percentage of use increases by 36% from 45% to 81%. This increase has given positive impacts in learning within the accompanying conditions as much as 71%, from 24% to 95%. On the other side, this increase has also given learning barriers as much as 61% from 15% to 76%. Meanwhile, continuity of learning has been impeded as much as 23% from 20% to 43%. This situation is visualized in Figure 2.



**Figure 2. The Use of Mobile Learning during the Covid-19 Pandemic**

In the contexts of the disruption and pandemic, teachers' efforts in the running of distant learning have left other serious problems starting from the unpreparedness of supporting technological appliances, lack of teachers' competences, to unpreparedness of the institution in running the activities. These constraints are shown in the Figure 3 pie chart.



**Figure 3. Constraints of Disruption to Teacher Mobilization**

The increases of the conditions above have indicated the emergence of a sharp shift in learning patterns within the disruptive conditions in the educational sectors from face-to-face learning to distant learning. In their conviction, teachers feel that they cannot make a compromise with the existing conditions and

the school policies. The pandemic emergencies and school policies have disallowed learning activities in classroom face-to-face modes. This has been implemented in conforming to the local government authority who has issued strict controls over the prohibiting policies, especially in areas with a red or orange mark of the Covid-19 spread. In yellow and green-marked zones, class activities are carried out using the classroom flipped pattern, classroom sessions in limited time, and on-line platforms. Notwithstanding, a teacher from a boarding school in Lamongan Regency acknowledged to have kept using classroom meetings as can be seen in the statement coded 1 in Table 2.

Meanwhile, teachers' perceptions in their role as engaging teachers in the policy of independent learning can be seen in Table 3. It is known that the average scores of the IRE teachers' perception scales in the six driving teacher indicators are uncertain/neutral = 16.43%, agree = 36.83%, and strongly agree = 42.43%. This shows an indication that the IRE teachers have a strong tendency to follow the policy of Independent Learning although many of them still show uncertainty.

**Table 2. Imports of Results of Interviews with Research Informants**

Code	Fact Condensation	Content Material of Finding
1.	Keep using face-to-face learning mode (1a) School applying micro-restriction (1b)	Problem of learning mode, face-to-face or distance learning
2.	Learners must be given freedom (2a) Attention to potentials of individual students (2b)	Problem of orderly autonomy and openness
3.	Teacher and students happy (3a) Not many binding rules (3b)	Problem of freedom of education from social political constraints and repressions
4.	Obligation to replace old modes of learning (4a) Teacher and students' cooperation in technology (4b)	Problem of critique over traditional learning
5.	School's measured freedom with rules (5a) Rules that are not short-lived, but reach long-range life (5b)	Problem of autonomy of teacher, students, and school using measured rules

**Table 3. IRE Teachers' Perception Score (N= 192)**

No. Driving Teacher Indicator	Frequency of score					Total Score	Mean	SD
	1	2	3	4	5			
1. Understand the independent learning	2	0	19	48	123	866	4.510	.757
2. Involve students in class discussion	0	0	28	91	73	813	4.235	.686
3. Develop students' cooperativeness	4	2	18	82	86	820	4.271	.835
4. Involve class in social work	6	15	51	60	60	729	3.797	1.063
5. Develop students' individual potentials	4	13	48	65	62	744	3.875	1.008
6. Guide colleagues	3	0	25	80	84	818	4.260	.800



## Discussion

Referring to Figure 2, it can be stated that IRE teachers' performance from the disruptive to the mobilization phases is not stable but markedly dynamic. That the high responses from the teachers of Al-Quran-Hadist and Arabic Language are in strong contrast with those of the class teachers, Fiqih teachers, and Akhlak teachers gives an indication that there is a serious problem in perspectives that influence their performance. Dichotomically, these two subject matters are truly not only limited to cognitive understanding, but also have psychomotoric contents which commonly require face-to-face meetings between the students and the teacher. In the method of Al-Quran reading, there are what are called *talaqqi* and *musyafaha*. These two methods require face-to-face interaction and one-to-one interaction (Yusof, Razali, Omar, Abdelgelil, & Hamzah, 2018: 561) since learning the Al-Quran does not only require listening and watching, but it also requires imitating, feeling, practicing, and evaluating which need direct face-to-face interactions. The same case applies to the learning of the Arabic language which also is the language of the Al-Quran. In reality, these standard procedures must collide with the policies of the distance learning management on the conditions of the emergency pressures from the raging Covid-19.

Pressures onto these teachers have made them unable to make choices other than applying distant learning. This situation has challenged these teachers to be more critical in considering which topics in the instructional materials belong to theory and which belong to practice. This complex situation can probably be linked to the Shaky Common Ground philosophy of Davis, Sumara, & Luce-Kapler (2000). This philosophy is related to the selection of instructional materials, which belong to theory and which to practice, and how teachers must take standing in the situation of choosing between these two pulling choices. In this case, the researchers notice a red line between this context and the views of Gale & Densmore (2007) that the phenomenon of a disruptive jump towards teacher mobilization is a sign of a radical democracy agenda at school. To them, the engaging teacher agenda is directed towards the educational market, professionalism, policy, leadership, and community.

This concept is understood at least in two

stages. First, it is an appeal for teachers to be involved in the restructuring of the school for purposes that are democratic and have social justice. This perspective is not merely concerned with agreement or rejection to be involved, but it is more concerned with the mutual commitment among teachers, students, and parents in determining what they must do. All this proceeds as a collective piece of work, exploring and taking actions on mutual causes. Second, it is to give appreciation to every teacher's effort in the participation of reconstructing the school in ways that are attractive and useful for the common interests of the public.

Different from Gale & Densmore (2007) who tend to look at the perspectives outside the school, Kachur, Stout, & Edwards (2013) see that the matter of engaging teachers must be resolved primarily from the inside of the classroom. A practical guide to improve teachers' performance designates teachers not only as administrators, but those who are able to develop teaching strategies that are based on the school cultures and build collegialities and mutual missions in an on-going professional development cycle.

This Figure 2 has indicated an increase in the use of mobile learning as a realization of teachers' work from disruption leading to mobilization. However, this fact cannot be understood as a justification that the previous learning activities are traditional. This interpretation will not be highly acceptable since the increase percentage of 36% in fact shows that previously some of the IRE teachers have made use quite a lot of technological devices in their teaching and learning processes. It is why the researchers give an interpretation that the use of technology by the religion teachers has actually shifted from a mere technological medium to facilitate communication to what is presently called a smart medium which offers everything. It is also true that the percentage for the advantage gain is also very high, 71%. This may show that much of the learning process depends upon the benefit that can be obtained from the use of mobile learning, connected to IoT (Dai *et al.*, 2019) with the support of AI (Malik, Tayal, & Vij, 2019). AI has been useful for the teacher and students in providing smart and quick accesses for the learning-teaching activities from preparation to evaluation.

In spite of all of these, obstacles are also

high that hamper teacher mobilization through the use of mobile learning. This becomes an important point due to the fact that the increase of the percentage for continuity is low, a mere 23%. In other words, there is a suspicion on the part of the researchers that teachers tend to be inconsistent in continuing mobilization using smart appliances when there is a loosening in the policies of distance learning. This empirical reality is in contrast with the expectation of the Minister of Education RI (Kompas. id, 03/07/2020) who boasts to make distance learning as a permanent policy for its continuity in promoting the freedom of learning era to last 15 years into the future (2030-2035). It is here that evaluation is specifically needed in terms of to what extent distant learning is made permanent, not permanent, or permanent within certain restrictions. This is because, from the aspect of instructional material, Islamic religion education is not merely a matter of transfer of knowledge through smart devices representing humanistic figures as a digital humanity study.

In most probability, the critical question by Liu (2011) "Where is cultural criticism in the digital humanities?" is worth borrowing in this context. Moreover, transfer of values in religious learning is dominated by learning by modelling (examples). The researchers feel that the testimony in the interview data coded 1. a and 1. b in Table 2 represents this argumentation. Schools in the environment of particular boarding schools prefer face-to-face interactions though with strict health protocols because of the pandemic. In these schools, the students are boarders, not 'bats', a term used to describe students who do not stay in the boarding but go home to their houses. The preference for face-to-face learning is in line with the views that concern that the learning by the religious teachers will be "dry of values" due to the shift of the Islamic religion education system in the disruption era (Rahmawati, 2018). This is because teachers' attention towards the students become hindered or even cut off. Teachers are no longer free to monitor the progress of the religious values that are taught to the students. The learning instruments in distant learning via mobile learning accommodate more of the cognitive and psychomotoric aspects of the learning outcomes. Since the top-most objectives of the freedom of learning are for the students

to become Pancasila learners who have faith in God, piety, and noble deeds, the mobilization of religious teachers in the context of distant learning can be positioned as bearing heavier moral loads than other teachers.

In the meantime, teachers who choose to carry out learning by way of mobile learning turn out to be from more established schools, geographically from the towns. In most certainty, the smart technological devices are supported by more stable Internet networks than those in the villages and mountainous places. Some of the teachers try to overcome the problem by setting up 'Wajan Bolic' antennas claimed to be capable of accessing Wifis from a distance as far as nine kilometres, by either making them by themselves or buying them in the market places. However, not many teachers with Internet network limitation can afford to make or buy such antennas. Moreover, they are also faced with the reality that not all students own smartphones which are compatible with teleconference applications, such as via *Zoom*, *Meet*, or *Teams*.

In this condition, a number of teachers prefer to schedule home visits to their students. They also set up online group chat to support the smoothness of the triangle communication among teachers, students, and parents. This impediment of technological devices shows how teachers' efforts from disruption to mobilization need to be improved through comprehensive educational policies. Otherwise, a concern will materialize of the emergence of a new cluster that can be called the lost generation. This mention does not refer to individuals born after World War I (Se-moon, *The Korea Times*, 22/12/2019), or the generation lacking in nutrition (Nency & Arifin, 2005), but it more reflects a generation with marginal spirits and confused thoughts, especially from the educational segment based on smart technology.

Considering the discussion above, a strong indication has shown how the low percentage of teacher mobilization continuity in using mobile learning is tied directly to the unpreparedness of supporting technologies. This is multiplied by the conditions of a number of realities. First, geographically, the Indonesian communities are widely spread across islands and oceans from East to West. There is a worry that many areas are not in access of good Internet networks. Second,

science-wise, the characteristics of subject matters are different among each other. Some materials in the religious subject matters require direct face-to-face instructional activities since transfer of values is not adequately represented through distant learning modes. Third, the expenses for the running of distant learning are deemed to be very high, too high for the average ability of the teachers. This condition is also experienced by students. Subsidy from the Government for purchasing Internet credits, very often, in the reality in the field, is not on-target. Misuse of the subsidy also occurs out of control after the fund is received. Meanwhile, school operational funds, that usually help schools to give out financial assistance, also experience impediment due to certain slash policies. Fourth, some teachers are still technology-blind, or their technological competence is not updated. It is no wonder that, if the distant learning policy is to be implemented permanently (Kompas.id, 03/07/2020), in the midst of unfinished problems, they regard the policy is half-way forced as a form of educational socio-political hegemony.

This point needs a comprehensive evaluative attention from all the educational policy makers, national or regional, or even on the school level. This is because, while distant learning brings in positive impacts such as efficiency, not all are deemed as effective. Moreover, Abdullah (2016) has cautioned that teachers' initial perspectives play an important role in the continuity and success of on-line learning. The Engaging Teacher Program (ETP) by the Government must be implemented systemically and equally for all teachers in building the same perceptions of the Independent Learning policy. On the contrary, it must not become a campaign for teachers to claim as the elite force (news.detik.com, 03/07/2020) and front runner of education innovation (YouTube Channel Kemendikbud RI, 03/07/2020).

There is a concern over the fact that almost all of the targets of the Independent Learning policy are concerned with teachers' professional roles especially for the first category (primary and secondary schools) and the third (vocational education and university). Another concern is related to managerial matters in the environment of decision makers (Kemendikbud.go.id, 07/07/2020). As it can be seen in Figure

3, in disruption to teacher mobilization, it turns out that more problems emerge in the school and technology disruptions. Of the obstacles that are found with teachers, 32% are dominated by their unpreparedness especially during the early stages of the implementation of distant learning caused by the Covid-19 pandemic. In the confession of the research informants, they acknowledge the use of social media such the WAG not because it is a supporting device supporting for mobile learning application, but because it is their main choice as they are not able to use the e-learning application provided by the school.

Although there is a jump quite significant in teacher mobilization, especially in the use of mobile learning, in fact, this has open up to four premises. First, the Independent Learning policy has not given a significant push to teacher mobilization. They take all actions in the frame of distant learning more because of the emergency conditions of the Covid-19 pandemic which forbids the use of face-to-face learning modes. Second, the use of mobile learning applications is not yet maximal. A bigger portion of the teachers still experience a number of difficulties in terms of the availability of its technological facilities and usability. Third, the involvement of students in the classroom teaching-learning interactions and in the community life around the school via on-line options is not yet optimal. Fourth, teachers are not seen to have found a community development pattern that is constructive among their colleagues for the purposes of online-based professional mobilization as a new team habit. Changes in habits related to learning habits, meeting habits, and project habits should have brought changes in a considerable amount (Kim, Mascarenaz, & Lai, 2019). In this case, the ETP by the Ministry of Education is expected to be able to cover a representative of all teachers. The teachers' high motivation to be involved in this program (Antara, 21/10/2020) shows a reality that is parallel with these four premises.

In comparison to the premises above, Table 3 presents more detailed specification of teachers' perspectives towards the Independent Learning policy within six indicators of engaging teachers. In the Likert's scale, which the religious teachers give agreement concerning towards their perspectives, it can be seen that they understand the policy of Independent Learning (64.0%), involve students in class discussions



(38.2%), develop cooperation among students (44.4%), involve students in community work (31.1%), develop students' individual potentials (32.6%), and guide colleagues (43.8%). The size of the percentage of the teachers' perceptions on their understanding of the Independent Learning policy is obtained more from seminars, group discussions, and mass media rather than from the ETP training. This is because many teachers have not joined the ETP training due to its limited recruitment quota despite their high motivation in joining.

This narration invites a question mark the more as to what actually is their understanding of the Independent Learning policy like, as the first indicator. This is because the percentages for the other five indicators do not come closer to 50% at level 5 of the Likert's interval scales. The proposition that this is caused by their unpreparedness, the school unpreparedness, and inadequate technological support for mobilization in the distance learning program in the midst of the Covid-19 pandemic can still be accepted. Efforts in improving students' involvement in class discussions are not optimal. The teachers are not fully able to develop interaction strategies and involve and exercise control over students in the distant learning activities. The same thing happens in their efforts in developing class cooperation, inside and out, and in developing students' individual potentials. Meanwhile, in giving guidance to colleagues, the teachers have not found the ideal pattern to do it using the on-line modes.

In fact, the potentials for development are high. The use of the flipped learning strategy is an example. In the learning of alms giving, other than the basic e-learning infrastructure of the *Learning Management System* (LMS), electronic appliances, and the Internet (Garad, Al-Ansi, & Qamari, 2021), the teacher can make a video software about the religious obligation to give alms by way of the *EdPuzzle*. To monitor learning progresses, the teacher can use *Formative Quiz*, through *ClassMarker*, *Quizis*, *Kahoot*, *Online Quiz Creator*, *Poll Maker*, and other applications that they like. Students can be asked to plot a mind map using *Mind Node* followed by class grouping for group discussion, synchronously or asynchronously. The learning products can be suited with the characteristics of the project such as videos, storybooks, posters,

memes, or infographs.

Of these discussions, the following interpretations can be made. First, as a matter of fact, in term of policy making, it is difficult to say that the previous Indonesian education practices are traditional, as exposed in the first perception. Before the policy of Independent Learning, a number of Government's policies have supported efforts for school modernization. In the case where the indicator that is used is to promote learning by way of the Internet, two years before the launching of the Independent Learning policy at the end of 2019, the Government has run the *Universal Service Obligation* (USO) program. This program was conducted to provide Internet accesses for schools in the three-m zone (most frontier, most lagging, and most outward) in 122 regencies and 24 provinces of the country (kominfo.go.id, 16/11/2017).

Second, the perspectives represent the development of education in a natural, but ordered, way forwards. This perspective seems to follow the argumentative logic of Mustaghfirah (2020:146) who puts side by side the translation of Independent Learning with John Dewey's progressivism. Both agree with the freedom of educational development in a natural way through experience as the best stimulus. The teacher becomes a facilitator and guide under the cooperation between the school and the home or parents. In his book, *Democracy and Education*, Dewey (2004: 86) states that education is not only progressive, but also conservative. For him, education can be understood retrospectively, that is, the process of saving the future to the past, in a prospective way, that is, the use of the past as a resource for the future that is developing.

It is why the formulation of education objectives by Dewey (2004) is stated in three criteria. First, objectives must be the product of the existing condition. Second, as the first formulation, objectives must be tentative sketches. Third, objectives must always represent freeing activities. It is this representation of freeing activities that makes Savage (2003) regard it as Dewey's liberalism. It is a view that sees self-development as a personal achievement through a process of searching and active efforts and not a product given by somebody else and not something that someone does for us. However, when the active efforts are an independence, the policy of Independent Learning, called by

the same term by Suntoro & Widodo (2020), is, the researchers convince, is more idealistic; and therefore is also chosen as the title of the present study.

Third, the perspectives indicate a reference to the conceptual idea of the freedom of education by Freire (2001). He further refers to the “political” aspect of education as man’s action to reach the dream, ideals, utopia. To him, education is an action of love that must not be afraid of realities that hurt and be detached from creative discussion (Freire, 2005). This view has been strongly influenced by the human philosophy based on *Christian-Marxist Humanism*. Education is not free from values; but it is political so that it always gives out political contents. It is because education is based on practical philosophy, authentic and dialectical relation between reflections and actions (Nuryatno, 2011). Shih (2018) concludes three important things from Freire’s ideas: (1) every individual can made a dialogue with another in a critical vision; (2) the formulation of learning activities must be freedom-based; and (3) the designing of the curriculum must be a fully people-oriented process.

To look at the curriculum of the ETP that is presently being conducted by the Ministry of Education RI, it can be seen that the learning outcome is for the teachers to understand the educational philosophy of Ki Hadjar Dewantara, supplemented by the ability of critical reflections on the relations of the elements inside it to educational contexts, locally and nationally ([sekolah.penggerak.kemdikbud.go.id](http://sekolah.penggerak.kemdikbud.go.id)). As it is generally known, in the 1922 speech of principles, Ki Hajar Dewantara pronounced his idea of the ‘among’ method as the implementation of the *Taman Siswa National Onderwijs*. This method, principally, avoids coercion and more emphasizes on the giving of life guidance to the learners so that they can nourishedly develop safely, both physically and mentally ([Kemendikbud.go.id](http://Kemendikbud.go.id), 03/07/2017).

Guides to this method stand on three pillars of ethno pedagogy, known as the *Patrap Triloka*, namely: in front give examples, in the middle work, at the back give psychological supports. In the core, these elements are (1) modelling, (2) work, and (3) support (Subekti, Susilo, Ibrohim, & Suwono, 2018). Meanwhile, in the practice of learning, the three A’s are used

(alert, accrue, add). To be alert means that the learners must observe carefully using all their senses. To accrue means that the learners must do, practice, what has been observed by way of repetition. To add means that the learners must add, adapt, and build a model based on their observation and practice in line with their own creativities (Fadhil, 2020).

At a glance, the learning outcomes of the ETP curriculum above signal the notion that the Independent Learning policy can be understood in the perspectives of progressive education (Dewey, 2004) and liberal education from Thomas Huxley (Robinson, 2019), and Newman (Stewart, 2020) which, in social studies, has a right inclination. Meanwhile, in the researchers’ views, the Islamic religion teachers’ perspectives are in the moderate position, but tend to lean towards this progressive liberal education rather than to freedom of learning (Freire, 2001) which is based on emancipatory education or pedagogy of the oppressed (Freire, 2018) and critical pedagogy (Giroux, 2020) which has a left inclination. It is why the researcher would prefer the term mobilizing teachers for those who give controls over the running of education during the disruptive era in responding to the Independent Learning policy since this term sounds more neutral although it is not as popular as the term engaging teachers (Gale & Densmore, 2007; Kachur, Stout, & Edwards, 2013; Chen, Horn, & Nolen, 2018; Ngai & Chan, 2019). In the meantime, the term organic teachers has a similar meaning and is widely used (Gross, 1978; Nickeson, 2015; Masaud, 2016). However, this term more represents social groups of the left-oriented which, in another discourse, are called involved organic intellectuals in the society (Yogev & Michaeli, 2011).

Notwithstanding, the perceptions of the IRE teachers towards the policy of Independent Learning in their working process from disruption to mobilization need appreciating. This is because the quantitative findings in Table 3 have given justification to their perceptions qualitatively in Table 2 with a variety of epistemological argumentative perceptions over their working performance. Score averages show that the IRE teachers have a strong tendency to be mobilizing teachers seen from the important indicators such as the involvement of teachers, students, classes, and colleagues.

However, the number of the undecided teachers (16.43%) may become a practical barrier, especially within the intervening variabilities due to different perceptions among them. This finding offers a contribution as (1) early warning values in the running of distance learning based on informational technology; (2) classroom consideration for teachers of subject matters with similar characteristics in the running of ETP; and (3) important references for the Organization of Subject-matter Teachers (OSMT) of IRE for the optimization of the active roles institutionally in building common perceptions among IRE teachers.

For this, of the policy of Independent Learning for schools which have a direct implication on the performance of the teachers, as mobilizing teachers, especially for IRE teachers, the following recommendations can be considered. First, promotion of mobilizing teachers in the scheme of endorsing the policy Independent Learning shall not put aside the high values of IRE and local wisdom. Second, distance learning as an instrumentation of engaging teachers in implementing the policy Independent Learning must be evaluated comprehensively before it is made permanent. Third, ETP must be realized as extensively as possible to build up common perspectives for teachers of the frontiers, of the most lagging areas, and of the outmost zones; they must all be given the same opportunity to join. Fourth, the mobilizing organization programs (MOP) must not become pragmatic projects for third-party bodies; but they must be really optimized in their role consistencies in making a synergy with the OSMT to improve the quality of the teachers and school by looking at their perspectives as a reference. This is because teachers' perspectives are deemed to be highly unequivocal in the successfulness of the program (An *et al.*, 2008; Abdullah, 2016).

## CONCLUSION

Disrupting education is an inevitability that has endorsed mobilizing teachers through distant learning as an instrument with various mobile learning applications as their platforms. This context has been responded to in varied and dynamic ways by IRE teachers who become the subjects of this study. The technological-based mobilization through distant learning

shows a prospect for more practical running of learning; however, its continuity is still widely open to debate. This can be seen more clearly especially in the cases of Islamic religious learning such as in the facilitation of transfers of learning which, up to the present time, is done by the *talaqqi* and *musyafaha* methods. For them, distant learning, which is designated to be a permanent policy, in the scheme of the policy Independent Learning implemented by the Government, needs correcting since it still leaves behind some obstacles that need to be resolved. Three of these obstacles have been related to teachers' competencies, availability of supporting technology, and school preparedness.

The teachers' perspectives over the policy Independent Learning through the mapping of the performances as mobilizing teachers are seen from three angles of views. First, the policy Independent Learning is regarded as a critique against traditional educational practices. This view is difficult to accept if it is used to generalize a policy. This is because modernization in education has occurred in previous educational policies. Second, this policy is an education innovation to give space of independence to educational performers in a more open manner. This perspective leads to the concepts of progressive education or liberal education. Third, the scheme is a policy to free education from social and political restraints and pressures. The perspective leads to the concepts of freedom of learning, emancipatory education, pedagogy of the oppressed, and critical pedagogy. Representation of the second and third perspectives indicates that, as mobilizing teachers, the Islamic religious teachers are in the position of maintaining the moderate view although, in actuality, they would like to be closer to progressive education than to freedom of learning.

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