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Self Directed Learning Model on Social Sciences Learning Outcomes in Grade IV Students of Elementary School

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ABSTRACT

The low learning outcomes of students in social sciences, especially in the material of cultural traditions in Indonesia, are often caused using learning models that do not encourage students' independence in exploring the material. This study aims to examine the effect of the self-directed learning model on the learning outcomes of fourth-grade students at Elementary School 2 Latihan SPG Ambon in the social studies subject of cultural traditions in Indonesia. Method: This study uses a quantitative approach with an experimental method. Data collection techniques include written tests, observation, and documentation. Data analysis is carried out through instrument validity and reliability tests, as well as prerequisite tests that include normality and homogeneity tests. Hypothesis testing is conducted to ascertain the significant impact among variables. The results of the study indicate that the self-directed learning model has a significant effect on improving student learning outcomes. This improvement is evidenced by the rejection of H_0 and acceptance of H_a through the acquisition of a significance value of 0.000, which is smaller than the significance level of 0.05 (0.000 < 0.05). Descriptive analysis strengthens the finding that the application of this model effectively encourages better academic achievement. This research contributes to teachers' selection of innovative, student-centered learning models to improve the quality of social studies instruction in elementary schools. Furthermore, these results serve as a reference for schools in their efforts to increase the effectiveness of their independent learning-based curriculum.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Education is not simply a process of transferring knowledge but rather a conscious and planned effort to create a learning environment that allows students to actively develop their potential (Murphy et al., 2023). In the context of human life, education plays a vital role as a determining instrument in achieving dignified life goals. Abd Rahman et al. (2022) emphasize that education plays a crucial role in shaping the character and competence of the younger generation. As the foundation for national

identity, quality education is an absolute requirement for a nation to face increasingly disruptive global challenges (Jumari et al., 2024).

In Indonesia, strengthening the quality of education continues to accelerate, particularly at the elementary level. Elementary school is a crucial phase, or golden age, for students' cognitive and social development (Fitriadi et al., 2024; Pasaribu et al., 2024). Failure to instill a foundation for learning at this stage will have systemic impacts at subsequent levels of education. Therefore, elementary education should not focus solely on end results but must emphasize the process by which a child learns to become independent (Irwan & Aslan, 2024; Kilag et al., 2022).

The essence of education is human liberation. In line with the thinking of national education figure Ki Hajar Dewantara, as quoted by Maisaroh and A'yun (2024), education must prepare students to stand on their own two feet (independent), not dependent on others, and able to manage their lives sovereignly. This independence encompasses a broad spectrum, from independence of thought (intellectual independence) and action to independence in solving complex problems and making wise decisions.

Psychologically, fourth-grade elementary school students are in a transition period toward the formal operational stage, where they begin to think logically and systematically (Widyawulandari & Indriayu, 2019). Cultivating independence during this phase is a strategic step toward creating emotionally and socially resilient individuals. However, the main challenge faced is how to transform the learning system, which has been paternalistic, into one that respects student autonomy.

Addressing this need for independence, the Self-Directed Learning (SDL) model has emerged as an increasingly relevant learning paradigm in the 21st century (Morris, 2019; Van Zyl & Mentz, 2022). Izzatanur and Rachmadtullah (2024) explain that SDL provides space for students to take control of their learning process. In this model, students are no longer viewed as empty vessels waiting to be filled by teachers but rather as proactive learners who consciously seek, evaluate, and apply knowledge (Kõiv & Saks, 2023; Ricotta et al., 2022).

A key characteristic of SDL is the shift in the student's role from passive to active. In today's information explosion, the ability to learn independently (learning how to learn) is far more valuable than simply memorizing content (Charokar & Dulloo, 2022; Supe et al., 2024). SDL encourages positive attitudes through collaboration between students and provides a platform for individual creativity at every stage of instruction (Purwaningsih & Widodo, 2023). SDL stimulates students' intrinsic motivation by instilling a sense of moral responsibility for their academic success.

The implementation of SDL at the elementary school level, particularly in fourth grade, is supported by various empirical data. Research by Anjun and Tobroni (2025) provides concrete evidence that SDL contributes significantly to learning outcomes. The data showed an increase in average scores from 74.02 to 80.13 after the implementation of this model. This demonstrates that elementary school-aged children already have the capacity to manage independent instruction if provided with the right framework.

Furthermore, Sarahono et al. (2024) suggest that SDL is an alternative solution for teachers in addressing classroom boredom. By training students to take initiative without relying entirely on others for help, the teacher's burden shifts from "teacher" to "facilitator." Simanungkalit et al. (2024) reinforce this argument by stating that SDL is an autonomous process in which individuals improve their skills and achievements through independent initiative in planning and evaluation. Although students still require supervision, the authority for learning remains in their hands (Febrianti et al., 2024).

The success of a learning model is ultimately measured through learning outcomes as an indicator of understanding and the effectiveness of the process (Caspersen et al., 2017; Nainggolan & Manalu, 2022). However, SDL offers more than just numbers on paper. Charokar and Dulloo (2022) highlight that the SDL approach guides learners towards holistic transformation. Through reflective writing, self-assessment, and critical thinking strategies, students learn to recognize their own strengths and weaknesses.

In practice, the teacher's role in SDL in elementary schools remains vital yet supportive. Teachers are tasked with ensuring that the independence granted does not turn into directionless freedom. Puspita et al. (2024) emphasize that teachers provide space for the development of students' interests while remaining within the established learning objectives. Research by Samini et al. (2023) also indicates that SDL fosters creativity and responsibility, which are essential components of long-term learning outcomes.

While theoretically, SDL offers broad benefits, field observations reveal contradictory conditions. Building upon in-depth interviews with fourth-grade teachers at Elementary School 2 Latihan SPG Ambon, it was discovered that the learning process remains trapped in a rigid conventional paradigm. Learning remains teacher-centered, with the teacher being the sole source of authority in the classroom. The phenomenon observed in the field includes students tending to simply receive material without attempting to construct their own understanding. Students rarely dare to ask critical questions or explore literature beyond the textbook provided. Students feel incapable of completing assignments without detailed, step-by-step instructions from the teacher. Learning is viewed as an external obligation to earn a grade, rather than a necessity for self-development. This situation directly impacts low social studies learning outcomes, particularly in the topic "Ethnic and Cultural Diversity in Indonesia." This material is often viewed as mere memorization, even though its essence is contextual understanding and appreciation of the nation's noble values.

The topic of Indonesian ethnic and cultural diversity holds significant sociocultural significance, particularly in a region like Ambon, which boasts a rich and complex history of diversity. Understanding cultural identity requires in-depth reflection, not simply memorizing the names of traditional dances or houses (Pugra et al., 2025). Students need space to think critically about how their local culture interacts with national identity (Pitts & Brooks, 2017; Rasidi et al., 2025). Therefore, the application of the Self-Directed Learning (SDL) model to this topic is crucial. With SDL, students

can be guided to conduct independent observations of their surroundings, interview community leaders, or seek digital sources about Nusantara traditions. This will build an emotional connection between students and the material being studied, ultimately improving their learning outcomes.

This research has a novel aspect that distinguishes it from previous SDL studies. The novelty of this research lies in the integration of the Self-Directed Learning model into social studies material that contains local sociocultural values in a school environment with a strong educational history, such as Elementary School 2 Latihan SPG Ambon. While previous research has focused more on the effectiveness of SDL in improving general cognitive learning outcomes (Doo et al., 2023; Kim & Choi, 2018; Lee & Chang, 2025), this study attempts to examine how SDL can be used as an instrument to foster students' "reflective independence" in understanding cultural diversity within a heterogeneous society. Furthermore, the use of the latest data from 2025 provides a realistic snapshot of elementary school students' adaptation to the digital transformation of education in Eastern Indonesia.

Synthesizing, it can be concluded that there is a gap between the potential of the SDL model to create independent learners and the reality of conventional learning at Elementary School 2 Latihan SPG Ambon, which remains passive. The SDL model offers a framework within which students can plan, organize, and evaluate their own learning activities with the guidance of the teacher as a facilitator. Through this approach, it is hoped that learning motivation will increase, independence will develop, and in turn, it will have a significant positive impact on social studies learning outcomes, particularly in contextual historical and cultural materials.

2. METHOD

This study utilised quantitative research with an experimental approach aimed at examining the effect of the Self-Directed Learning model on student learning outcomes. Meanwhile, the research design used is a pretest-posttest design.

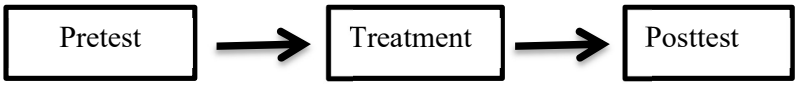

Figure 1. Pretest-Posttest Design

This study was conducted at Elementary School 2 Latihan SPG Ambon, located at Jl. Dr. Tamaela, Urimesing Village, Nusaniwe District, Ambon City, Maluku. The population in this study was all 252 students at Elementary School 2 Latihan SPG Ambon in the 2025/2026 academic year. Meanwhile, the sample in this study consisted of 30 fourth-grade students at Elementary School 2 Latihan SPG Ambon, comprising 10 male students and 20 female students. Furthermore, the research variables in this study were the independent variable (Self Directed Learning model)

and the dependent variable (student learning outcomes about ethnic and cultural diversity in Indonesia).

The research instruments used were learning outcome tests and observation sheets. Meanwhile, the data collection techniques used were written tests, observation, and documentation. Furthermore, the research results were analysed using instrument validation and reliability tests, normality tests, homogeneity tests, and hypothesis tests.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Results

Description of Social Studies Research Results

The collected data obtained from the observations were then presented as research data analysis material. The results of collecting variable X and variable Y data were still in the form of raw scores. For statistical testing purposes, the raw scores were converted into standardised scores/numbers. The results of the analysis of the research data are presented as follows.

Valitadion Test

Instrument testing will be conducted using 25 multiple-choice questions (MCQs) based on the Pearson Correlation significance test. The analysis findings provide the correlation coefficient between the item score and the total score, which is subsequently compared to the r table value. The table's r coefficient will serve as a benchmark for the computed r value of each item/question. The subsequent results pertain to the validation of each question, presented in the form of measures as follows:

The validity levels for each score are categorized as very high, high, moderate, and low. Out of the 25 items analyzed statistically using the SPSS program, 18 items were deemed legitimate and categorized as very strong, high, and moderate, whereas 7 things were considered invalid. According to the findings of the item validation analysis, the 18 items deemed valid will be utilized for evaluating the learning process.

Reliability Test

This reliability test uses Cronbach's Alpha in SPSS software. To determine whether the questions asked are reliable questions/factors for a variable or not, the questions are analysed using Cronbach's Alpha. According to Suharsimi, (2002), reliable questions are those with a correlation value greater than 0.40.

Table 1. Reliability Test Results

Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items	Coefficient interval r	Category
756	15	$0,70< r_{11}\leq 0,90$	Reliability: high

Data Results (Pretest) of the Self-Directed Learning Model

Overall, 30 students took the pretest. The data shows variations in students' initial abilities, divided into three main categories in Table 2.

Table 2. Pre-Treatment Learning Outcomes Data (Pretest)

No	Category	Value Range	Number of Students	Percentage
1	High	80−100	3	10%
2	Quite High	60−79	11	36.70%
3	Currently	0−59	16	53.30%
	Total		30	100%

This data reinforces the urgency of your research. With 53.3% of students in the "Average" category, it's clear that previous conventional methods haven't been able to improve students' basic understanding evenly. The dominance of scores in the 45-55 range is a strong reason why a more independent and active learning model like Self-Directed Learning needs to be implemented to boost these learning outcomes.

Implementation of the Self-Directed Learning Model

The implementation of social studies learning using the Self-Directed Learning model begins with the planning stage. At this stage, the teacher explains the learning objectives, the competencies to be achieved, and provides an overview of the topics to be studied, such as social and cultural diversity in Indonesia. Students are then invited to develop their own learning plans, including determining the sources of information to be used, appropriate learning methods, and the targets they wish to achieve. In this way, students not only receive material, but also learn to manage their own learning process independently. The next stage is orientation and motivation. Teachers act as facilitators who provide guidance on the importance of independent learning and the benefits of social studies material in everyday life. Students are given the opportunity to choose learning activities that best suit their interests and learning styles. For example, some students observe their environment, while others gather information through the internet or reference books. This process fosters a sense of responsibility in students for the learning they are undergoing.

In carrying out core activities, students actively seek, process, and analyse information relevant to social studies topics. For example, students are asked to write a simple report on economic activities in traditional markets or cultural diversity in their region. Teachers provide space for students to work independently or in groups, so that they can develop critical, analytical, and creative thinking skills. These activities make social studies learning more contextual and meaningful because students are directly involved with the social realities around them.

The monitoring process is carried out throughout the learning activities. Teachers monitor students' learning progress through class discussions, individual guidance, and learning reflection notes. Any difficulties encountered by students are responded to with guidance and support that encourages them to continue actively seeking solutions. In addition, evaluation does not only emphasise results such as reports or presentations but also assesses the independent learning process carried out by students, including independence, creativity, and cooperation in groups.

The final stage is presentation and reflection. Students present their learning outcomes in front of the class, followed by a discussion to exchange views. The teacher provides feedback, reinforces understanding, and encourages students to reflect on their learning experiences. Thus, the application of the Self-Directed Learning model in social studies learning can train independence, foster critical thinking, and increase students' social awareness of their environment. Before ending the lesson, the teacher and students reflect on the learning that has taken place, and the teacher gives appreciation to students who can answer the teacher's questions by applauding. The teacher also asks the students how they feel after the learning session and concludes by summarising the learning material. This is followed by assigning homework and asking the class president to lead a prayer. Based on the observations, the implementation of the Self-Directed Learning model by the teacher has been carried out in accordance with the steps that have been designed.

Data Results (Posttest) of the Self-Directed Learning Model

After the treatment was given, there was a significant increase where there were no more students in the "Medium" category and a new category appeared, namely "Very High".

Table 3. Learning Outcomes Data After Treatment (Posttest)

Category	Value Range	Number of Students	Percentage
Very High	85−100	17 Students	56.70%
High	75−80	11 Students	36.70%
Quite High	65−70	2 Students	6.60%
Total		30 Students	100%

After the Self-Directed Learning model was implemented, there was a very positive shift in the distribution of scores. A new category emerged, namely "Very High" which dominated the class with 17 students (56.7%) in the range of 85–100 scores. There were no more students in the "Medium" category. The lowest score increased drastically from 45 to 65. There were students (M.L and T.P) who managed to achieve a perfect score of 100. These results indicate that the implementation of the Self-Directed Learning model has a significant and positive impact on the learning outcomes of fourth-grade students of SD Negeri 2 Latihan SPG Ambon. The significant increase from the "Medium" category at the beginning to the dominant "Very High" category at the end indicates that the research hypothesis is accepted.

Normality Test

The normality test is used to determine whether data follows a normal distribution or not, and to determine whether the data is normally distributed or not, it can be tested using the Kay square method. The normality test was done using a computer tool with the SPSS 16.0 program. The Asymp. Sig. value for the pretest data is 0.180, which is greater than 0.05. According to the testing criteria, it can be said that the data is normally distributed. The Asymp. Sig. value for the post-test is 0.206, which is greater

than 0.05. According to the testing criteria, it can be said that the data is normally distributed. The Asymp. Sig. values for the pretest and posttest are known to be greater than 0.05 based on the computations above. This shows that the pretest and posttest data distribution is normal and usable in the study.

Hypothesis Test

This section will discuss hypothesis testing based on the tabulation of data obtained from tests administered to test subjects. The tabulated data will then be processed and analysed statistically to test the hypotheses proposed earlier. This analysis will test the hypothesis regarding the influence of variable A, the Self-Directed Learning model, or variable B, learning outcomes. The basis for deciding whether to accept or reject the hypothesis is the significance value generated by the SPSS program and a significance level (α) of 0.05. The decision criteria are: if the significance value is > 0.05, then H0 is accepted, and if the significance value is < 0.05, then H0 is rejected. The following will present the two-way analysis of variance data.

Table 4. Paired T-test Sample Results

Sources of Variance	Mean	Sig.
Pretest – Posttest	673	000

The analysis of the effect of learning models on student learning outcomes can be described as follows:

a) Formulating statistical hypotheses
   H0: α1 = α2 (no effect of learning models)
   Ha: α1 ≠ α2 (there is an effect of learning models)
b) Determining critical values
   Significance level selected: 0.05 (5%)
c) Sig. value
   Based on statistical calculations using SPSS ver-27, the sig value is: 000.
d) Test criteria:
   Ho is accepted and Ha is rejected if Sig> 0.05
   Ho is rejected and Ha is accepted if Sig < 0.05

By comparing the sig value and the degree of freedom, it can be concluded that Ho is rejected, and Ha is accepted because the Sing value of 0.000 < 0.05. This indicates that the implementation of the Self-Directed Learning (SDL) model has a very significant impact on improving student learning outcomes. A value of 0.000 indicates that the probability of error in this conclusion is very small (approaching zero), making the results of this study scientifically reliable.

Discussion

This study seeks to evaluate the implementation of the self-directed learning model on student learning results in social studies, specifically regarding ethnic and cultural diversity.

This statistical analysis method was employed to evaluate the hypothesis concerning the impact of variable X, the Self-Directed Learning model, or variable Y, learning outcomes. The determination to accept or reject the hypothesis relies on the significance value produced by the SPSS program and the significance level (α) of 0.05. The decision criteria stipulate that if the significance value exceeds 0.05, then H0 is accepted; conversely, if the significance value is less than 0.05, then H0 is rejected. Upon comparing the significance value with the degrees of freedom, it may be determined that the null hypothesis (Ho) is rejected and the alternative hypothesis (Ha) is accepted, as the significance value of 0.000 is less than 0.05. This indicator signifies that the implementation of the self-directed learning approach substantially enhances student learning outcomes. The descriptive analysis indicates a substantial effect of the learning model on student learning outcomes, with a p-value of 0.000

Successful learning outcomes necessitate an efficient learning paradigm that facilitates teaching for educators and comprehension for students (Zajda, 2021). Prior to the implementation of the Self-Directed Learning model, observations indicated that students exhibited passivity, hesitance in articulating their thoughts or inquiries, and infrequently posed questions to the teacher. Students exhibited diminished enthusiasm due to the teacher's predominance in the learning process. Students were instructed solely to focus and record the teacher's statements. In question and answer sessions, only a select group of pupils ventured to pose and respond to inquiries, while the remainder stayed mute. Such behavior hindered the teacher's ability to assess the pupils' comprehension of the studied topic, as numerous students chose to keep mute, regardless of their understanding. Teachers must comprehend the features of their students in every learning process to ensure that the implementation of the learning model positively influences student results (Setiawan et al., 2021).

Subaedah (2024) asserts that elevated learning motivation typically correlates with enhanced attention, effort, and perseverance in confronting problems. Consequently, by implementing the self-directed learning approach, educators serve solely as facilitators, enabling students to reconstruct their knowledge through their competencies in posing and responding to inquiries. This aligns with the perspective of Yudho et al. (2023) that self-directed learning facilitates students in managing their learning activities through self-initiative, independent management, exploration, and extensive learning autonomy to attain optimal educational outcomes.

The pre-test data for Grade IV students in social studies indicates that there are 3 students in the High category, 11 students in the Quite High category, and 16 students in the Medium category, with an average score of 1765. The post-test results indicate that there are 17 students in the Very High category, 11 students in the High category, and 2 students in the Quite High category, with an average score of 2500.

The analysis of student learning outcome data indicates that students exhibit a commendable proficiency in comprehending and mastering social studies content following the implementation of the self-directed learning approach. This aligns with the definition of the Self-Directed Learning model articulated by Hidayah et al. (2025), which asserts that Self-Directed Learning is a pedagogical approach that prioritizes

students as the focal point. This methodology effectively engages students and offers them opportunities to comprehend the distinctions between academia and daily life. According to Mariadi et al. (2022), the SDL learning model consistently engages students in the educational process, as the essence of learning in this model is the students' responsibility, with the teacher serving merely as a facilitator. This effect is seen when pupils successfully answer tests and articulate their acquired knowledge.

4. CONCLUSION

The use of the self-directed learning (SDL) model has been proven to significantly improve student learning outcomes in the topic of Indonesian cultural traditions. This model successfully overcomes the problem of low student independence in exploring the subject matter. Based on the hypothesis test, a significance value of 0.000 was obtained, which is much lower than the alpha level of significance of 0.05 ($0.000 < 0.05$). The result means that H_0 is rejected, and H_a is accepted, indicating a significant and positive effect of the use of the SDL model. Furthermore, the results of the descriptive analysis reinforce the finding that a student-centered approach promotes better academic achievement than conventional methods, especially in social studies subjects that require a deep understanding of cultural diversity.

As a recommendation, teachers are expected to implement the self-directed learning model as an alternative, innovative one in the classroom. Given that this model demands independence, teachers should act as effective facilitators in guiding students to explore cultural traditions independently but in a measured manner. Further researchers can develop this research with a wider scope of material or combine the Self-Directed Learning model with digital learning media (ICT) to see whether there is a greater increase in effectiveness in student learning outcomes at the elementary school level.

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