



Fitrah Based Learning Method: Improving Independent Learning for Children

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Abstract. *Fitrah* based learning is a learning method by refers to the instinctive potential of the individual. Each individual is assessed as unique with different competencies, so the learning method provided must be by the ability to form a generation that is visionary, creative, mentally healthy, and wise in reason. So that teachers and parents only play a role in assisting and directing children to grow the nature of learning that is according to the instinctive nature that is brought from birth. The purpose of this study was to assess the extent to which *fitrah*-based learning methods improve children's learning independence at the age of 10–13 years. The method used is qualitative with interview techniques. The results of the research are that of the five indicators of learning independence, namely, taking the initiative, formulating learning goals, identifying learning resources, selecting and implementing appropriate learning strategies, and evaluating learning outcomes that have been achieved by children through parental assistance, the differences in results are reflected in the length of time. The application of this method, the explanations of subjects 1 and 2 have been applied for approximately seven years, and tend to explain the development of children who are more significant and mature than subject 3 who has only practiced this method for four years. So, the conclusion is that the nature-based learning method is proven to be able to increase.

Keywords: *Fitrah*-Based Learning · Learning Independence

1 Introduction

The essence of learning is to uphold human values as the foundation of life. This includes the goals of education in Islam, namely increasing actualization, dignity, and human dignity by getting closer to God, realizing that human presence comes from God and will return to God [1]. Learning is an important part of individual life. Learning is also included in the obligation. Learning is an important thing to do, especially for Muslims. The obligation to study is a legacy from the Prophet Muhammad SAW. Rasulullah is the most influential figure in world civilization. As the first position, the Messenger of Allah is recognized as the most influential human being in the history of human civilization, with the advantage of educating his friends and people with achievements that are recognized by the world [2, 3] As a Prophet who brought teachings derived from

holy books, making the learning methods taught by the Messenger of Allah come from the Word or words of God, namely Allah SWT, whose truth is unquestionable [4, 5] It is a must to make Rasulullah SAW as a barometer of children's education patterns.

One of the methods introduced by the Prophet in learning is based *fitrah* [6] According to Baharuddin, *fitrah* is defined as an essential human identity. Opinion strengthened Al Afify [7] the concept of *fitrah* is attempt to understand the concept, structure, and purpose of human creation. Etymologically, *Fitrah* is the beginning of creation, innate, and original, purity, and talent [8]. As a basis that has been brought from birth and will continue to experience development, a process is needed to achieve human development in a better direction, where every human being has brought a tendency towards truth and maintaining this sanctity is a must for all individuals. [9, 10] *fitrah* cannot be changed and will continue to be attached in accordance with the concept of creation by Allah SWT [11]. The concept of *fitrah* is known as a right that is owned by every individual as a creation gift from the Almighty. This view of *fitrah* can be the basis for anyone, especially parents, in understanding the potential of children with the skills possessed and provided by Allah SWT. *Fitrah* is part of the human psychic system which consists of: *ruh*, heart, nafs and mind become a connected whole [11].

The *fitrah*-based learning is a learning method based on the developmental nature of the child. Every child brings their own nature which is equipped with skills and talents that are different from other children. The nature-based learning process is carried out as naturally as possible and in accordance with the *sunnatullah* of the stages of human development. Referring to the theory described above, the concept of nature itself consists of *ruh*, heart, nafs, dan mind, the concept of based *fitrah* learning focuses on optimizing the potential of intellectual, cognitive, affective, and psychomotor intelligence whose output is intellectual logical abilities.

Based on the phenomena that occur in the field and the elaboration of the theory above, a serious problem is found. The identified indications are learning independence that does not grow optimally from within the child. These results were obtained based on preliminary research on one of the informants who said that their child must always be reminded to make assignments from school and repeat lessons, the hope of the parents is that their child is able to realize that learning is a need for the child and can enjoy the learning process at school. Referring to the theory of learning independence put forward by Knowles [12] that the indicator of a child being said to be independent in learning consists of: (1) taking the initiative, either with or without the help of others to diagnose their learning needs, (2) formulating learning objectives, (3) identifying learning resources, either in the form of humans or goods/materials, (4) choose and implement learning strategies that are suitable for themselves, (5) and evaluate their learning outcomes. Based on theory Grow's stages in learning autonomy [13] each individual has different learning abilities, starting from dependent, interested, involved, and self-directed. So that learning independence can be seen from various aspects.

The assumption in this study is how the learning process can be enjoyed by students and fostering independent learning is to replace the method with nature-based learning. This is in line with research conducted by Muniroh [14] that adzkia Kindergarten students have good intelligence and adherence to sharia, besides that the entire curriculum and vision and mission of education are more focused and based on the Qur'an. Based

on research by Husna dan Juwita [15] that learning based *fitrah* has many advantages, namely simple, simple, and easy to apply because of its nature that follows the circumstances and characteristics that have been instilled by God in a child. In line with research, Bhat [16] explained that individuals who focus on behavioristic concepts will tend to form individuals who are not morally and socially responsible for the environment and other humans, so that the formation of human behavior in accordance with their innate nature is important to be implemented as an effort to overcome inappropriate approaches, thus forming a human person who is balanced both physically and psychologically is to behave in accordance with the nature of creation which has been described in the Al-Qur'an. The results of this study further strengthen that learning based *fitrah* can create a conducive and enjoyable learning atmosphere and in line with the developmental tasks experienced by children. Literature studies that discuss about learning based *fitrah* are not too in-depth and are studied exploratively with qualitative methods, so more in-depth research is needed as a contribution to knowledge that nature-based learning needs to be developed as a whole for students. The purpose of this study was to analyze nature-based learning methods in increasing the learning independence of children aged 10–13 years.

2 Method

The approach used in this research is qualitative. The qualitative research approach is research with findings that are not obtained through statistical procedures or other forms of calculation, so that the understanding and interpretation of meaning requires a researcher's perspective [17]. The purpose of choosing this approach is to describe patterns and behavior of human behavior that cannot be measured by numbers, besides that the data obtained does not have special limitations but reaches data saturation [18].

This research is located in Banda Aceh, with subjects who meet the criteria, namely three parents who apply nature-based education parenting and learning with children aged 10–13 years subject 2 in 2017, and subject 3 in 2018. The technique used in this method is the unstructured interview method. Data is collected, then the data will be analyzed by reducing data, then displaying data or presenting data, and continuing with decision making and verification.

3 Findings and Discussions

Interview data that has been reduced, then presented for further verification to obtain the following results: Based on the results of interviews and observations, data is obtained that there are differences in the development of the level of independence of children which is determined based on the length of application of nature-based learning methods by parents, that is, subject LM has applied since 2015, then the ZB subject begins in 2017 and the SA subject begins in 2018. The results of the interviews with the three subjects are:

Table 1. Result of Interview

Indicator	Subject 1 (LM)	Subject 2 (ZB)	Subject 3 (SA)
Take the initiative	Children already have the desire to learn independently	Sometimes, but not intense yet	Not yet
	Depending on what task is given, sometimes enthusiastic, sometimes not interested at all	For tasks that are liked, children are usually excited	Still not consistent
Formulate learning goals	An understanding of the learning objectives has been obtained by the child, because I have explained it since the start of learning.	Understanding after being explained in advance by parents the purpose of learning.	Have not fully understood the purpose of learning
	An understanding of the essence of learning is obtained by the child after he understands the purpose of learning	After explaining the purpose, the child already understands the essence of learning	Do not understand the essence of learning
Identify learning resources	Reference sources are accompanied by parents, but some sources are determined by their own children. Reference resource restrictions remain controlled by the parent	Not yet fully, still in the assistance of teachers and parents	Does not have its own source
	Additional reference sources were obtained from children	Not fully capable	Yes, children are able to add other sources beyond the resources provided by parents or teachers

(continued)

Table 1. (continued)

Indicator	Subject 1 (LM)	Subject 2 (ZB)	Subject 3 (SA)
Choose and implement the right learning strategy for him	According to the nature-based learning concept, usually ages 11–13 have their own way of learning, and children focus on audio-visual	For the preferred way of learning, yes. Children will learn according to their comfort	Yes, children already have their own way of learning
	Yes, able to divert boredom with other things that are liked. But after being diverted, the child returns to complete the task or study. His attitude is more mature in addressing the boredom of learning.	Children are able to respond to the boredom of learning with other things they like, and then return to learning	Depending on the situation, sometimes you can, sometimes you can't
Evaluation of learning outcomes	Assignments corrected by parents	Tasks are corrected by the child himself	Task corrected by mother
	The results of learning become a reference for achievement targets, according to the specified maximum criteria	I invite children to understand that learning outcomes are tools in adding experience, growing reason, and enriching ideas in the child himself	Children understand that the most important thing in learning is the learning process itself

Referring to the interview results Table 1, there are four indicators of independent learning in individuals. Where the four indicators are: taking initiatives, formulating learning objectives, identifying learning resources, choosing and implementing appropriate learning strategies, and evaluating learning outcomes results in the conclusion that the development of soft skills is influenced by the time span of the application of the nature-based learning method itself, the longer the nature-based learning method is applied, the more mature and mature the five skills which are indicators of learning independence will grow.

3.1 Learning Independence Indicators

Taking the Initiative. On the first subject, namely LM explained that children already have a desire to learn on their own

“Already Miss Riska, the older sister knows when it’s time for her to study and why she studies” (Informant LM)

This explanation describes that for time readiness, the child has been able to organize and has found reasons why the child has to learn, so that the child’s desire to have emerged. Then the subject explained that: *“the enthusiasm for learning in children has not appeared intensely, so full assistance from parents must be carried out”* (Informant ZB)

“there are no independent learning initiatives yet, so children must continue to be accompanied to learn” (Informant SA).

In learning based *fitrah* concept, children have a *fitrah* of learning where in *fitrah* of learning, all children are believed to have an instinctive desire to learn. Based on the *fitrah* based learning concept by Santosa [19] Children with an age range of 0–7 are the age for practicing the nature of faith, and aged 7–13 years children have entered the golden age, where children begin to be critical and have a high sense of curiosity. Giving assignments, subjects LM, ZB, SA agreed to answer that when given an assignment, children will be enthusiastic about doing the task when the task is material they like. One of the strong answers is the respondent LM

“Siblings are very happy when given assignments, but their enthusiasm is different from the assignments of the subjects they like, for the assignments of the subjects they like, they tend to finish quickly” (Informant LM).

According to Sholichah [19] there are several things that must be done by parents in fostering learning initiatives, namely: (1) fostering self-confidence by giving children the freedom to do learning so that their creativity increases, (2) providing learning materials that are balanced with practice, (3) materials and reference sources learning must be able to spark reasoning and critical thinking for children, (4) minimize competitive activities that can cause fear and lack of confidence in children. Referring to the concept of nature-based learning put forward, it can be understood that in the age range of 7–13 years, children should already have their own learning initiatives, although they still receive assistance from their parents. The learning initiative has been attached since the child was still in the baby phase [19]. Because learning initiatives are part of the learning based *fitrah*, parents must be able to control themselves in accompanying children. This is because every child has a tendency towards something, and nothing is the same between one child and another, and this tendency is the potential of *fitrah* based learning. So that children need to be given media and assistance to accommodate their imagination, creativity, curiosity, and to recognize and be themselves in fostering a passion for learning. [20].

Based *Fitrah*-learning theory, indicators of initiative in independent learning are included in the *fitrah* based learning component, in which children are believed to always learn throughout their lives. The growth of these skills must start from parents at home and teachers.

Formulating Learning Objectives. The results of the interviews with LM and ZB subjects on the indicators of formulating learning objectives agreed that an understanding of learning objectives was obtained by children after being explained before starting learning, this also applies to understanding the essence of learning, where understanding of

the essence of learning is obtained by children after knowing the purpose of learning, so parents or teachers must first explain to the child. Part of the respondent's answer.

"before studying, I first explain the purpose of learning, after that the children are given time to study with assistance of course miss, my reason is that children first understand that every learning activity has a purpose, especially great benefits that are not felt by themselves" (Informant ZB)

This is a reference for children in understanding the purpose of learning that is carried out and lived. Then the other subjects explained that

"It has not fully explained the purpose of learning, so that children do not fully understand the essence of children learning for what kind of purpose" (Informant SA)

The application of learning based *fitrah* concept aims to foster a *fitrah* of learning with the understanding that every child is unique and a learner. This means that every parent or teacher must be able to convey learning concepts in a method that is easily understood by children, and in accordance with the needs and developmental tasks of children. Because, if learning becomes an activity that puts pressure on children, then children will experience stress and learn under pressure, one of the causes of self-pressure is that children are forced to understand the material being taught with various methods that children do not understand [20]. Parents or teachers should explain the purpose of learning before learning begins, this aims to strengthen children's thinking constructs about the meaning of learning that should be, and their needs for the learning activity itself. The formation of independence in understanding learning objectives is also aimed at the natural needs of talent at the age of 10–14, namely pre-*aqibaligh* age, which is believed to develop the ability to think logically [21]. Referring to this discussion, understanding learning objectives is a need for children to be able to maximize their talents and potential.

Identifying Learning Resources. Subjects LM, ZB, and SA agreed in answer that the reference sources used by children were sources directed and accompanied by parents, so that children did not have their own references.

"All resources must pass our parents' screening, especially me, so that children continue to study under our supervision and we also understand the contents of their study references" (Informant SA)

This is related to the age of the child who is still at the age of assistance, so that the selection of references must be accompanied and with the knowledge of the parents, such as sources from the internet, then books that do not qualify properly, etc. On the aspect of adding references outside of the main reference, the LM subject revealed

"After implementing nature-based learning, children begin to understand that adding reference sources is a way or method of enriching knowledge, and children tend to add learning references to material they like and make a passion for themselves" (Informant LM).

Then the ZB subject felt that the child was not fully able to choose additional references outside of the main reference, and the SA subject explained that the child was able to add reference sources outside of the main reference. Based on the elaborations of the three informants, it can be understood that the application of nature-based learning is able to increase children's interest in increasing knowledge by not only referring to one main source provided by parents or teachers. Thus, the child's horizons are expanding.

Selecting and Implementing the Right Learning Strategy. The indicators for selecting and implementing learning strategies for children, subjects LM, ZB, and SA agreed to answer that children at the age of 11–13 years already have their own way of learning in which the way of learning is adapted to the child’s pleasure and comfort. The subject respondent explained

“The ages of 11–13 years in the nature-based learning concept are actually the age that is ready to be released, Miss, so that their learning preparations have started since the age of 6, so that at the age of 11–13 years it is already clear what learning methods children like to apply themselves by child” (Informant LM)

Related to emotional management, namely the diversion of learning boredom.

“The child is able to divert boredom with other activities he likes, where after the boredom is gone, the child will start studying or doing assignments again” (Informant ZB)

“Children have not been able to overcome boredom wisely, they still depend on the emotional situation in children” (Informant SA)

This elaboration is a reference that the application of nature-based learning, in addition to cultivating nature in children, namely specifically the *fitrah* of learning, but also strengthens the child’s mentality as an independent individual. This aims to train children’s maturity in dealing with situations that are not liked or negative feelings. So that children are able to determine what attitude to do when faced with this unpleasant situation. According Oktorini [22] *fitrah* interpreted as potential and basic abilities that can be developed in real life, where every human being is given complete potential in the form of reason, imagination, and ideas or ideas. So that the role of the educator is not to produce a superior generation or in accordance with the maximum criteria, but instead plays a role in growing the basic potential and tendency of children towards something so that they are interested in it according to their abilities and talents [23]. One way is to have closeness both physically and psychologically when learning between parents or teachers and children [21], Mentally mature children will find it easy to control negative emotions in a wise way.

Evaluation of Learning Outcomes. On the learning outcome evaluation indicators, the LM and SA subjects answered that all assignments would be corrected by their parents. This means that both parents play a role in accompanying children’s learning activities. Then, the ZB subject applied the learning evaluation carried out by the child himself, and was shown to the parents. Furthermore, on the aspect of the meaning of the results of learning, the LM subject explained that

“The results become a reference in describing the extent of success and achievement of the maximum targets from the criteria set by us when compiling the curriculum” (Informant LM)

“Children understand that results are a tool in adding experience, growing reason, and enriching ideas in children” (Informant ZB)

“I instill in children that results are not the main focus, because the most important thing is the learning process itself” (Informant SA)

The answers from the three respondents are the main points of implementing nature-based learning. Where children are not forced to compete and get high scores that are beyond their abilities. Because the concept of the nature of learning is to accompany

children in learning by following the nature that has been entrusted by Allah SWT as the potential of every child. In line with Oktori's opinion [22] *fitrah* based learning is prioritizes an educational process that is natural and in accordance with human development, where the aim is that each child develops according to his potential, then understands that his duty as a servant has a vision and mission in carrying out his role as caliph on earth. Children grow up with the understanding that each individual is unique, and plays a role according to their respective potentials. This understanding is expected to be able to make children not have a selfish and competitive mentality but instead become strong individuals and deepen the learning process. In the learning process, children become independent individuals and are ready for other developmental tasks by not always being oriented towards the values and appreciation of other individuals.

4 Conclusion

Referring to the results of the research described above, it can be concluded that learning based *fitrah* contributes to increasing children's learning independence. This can be understood through indicators of learning independence, which is mostly achieved by children with the application of nature-based learning methods. Subjects who are parents who apply learning based *fitrah*, describe that after implementing learning based *fitrah* in the family, learning conditions are more interesting and not a burden, because of the similarity of views and understanding of the concept of learning which is natural for every child born.

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