

STRENGTHENING STUDENTS' INDEPENDENT CHARACTER THROUGH THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE LEARNING BY DOING METHOD IN SCOUT EXTRACURRICULAR ACTIVITIES IN ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

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ABSTRACT

. This study aims to analyze the strengthening of students' independent character through the implementation of the learning-by-doing method in scouting extracurricular activities in elementary schools. The novelty of this study lies in the critical analysis of the role of the learning-by-doing method in scouting activities as a strategy for strengthening students' independent character. This research method is qualitative with a case study design at SDN Tayem 01, Cilacap Regency. The subjects were 2 scout leaders, 6 students, and the principal. Data were obtained from interviews, observations, and documentation. Data were analyzed interactively with the stages of condensation, data presentation, and drawing conclusions. Data were validated through triangulation of sources and techniques. The results of the study indicate that the implementation of learning by doing through real practice, meaningful learning experiences, courage to act, and problem-solving based on experience, as well as interaction and collaboration in scouting extracurricular activities, can encourage the development of students' independent character gradually. Students become more self-confident, independent from others, and complete tasks with self-awareness without being reminded.. It was concluded that learning by doing in scouting extracurricular activities is effective in forming the independent character of elementary school students. Teachers and all related parties need to optimize the application of experience-based learning in extracurricular activities to strengthen students' independent character in a sustainable manner.

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Introductions

Research Method

This research uses a qualitative method with a case study design to in-depth analyze the strengthening of students' independent character through the implementation of the learning-by-doing method in in scouting extracurricular activities in elementary schools. The qualitative approach was chosen because it allows researchers to understand phenomena holistically, contextually, and meaningfully, based on real-world conditions (Moleong, 2018). Furthermore, Walidin & Tabrani (2021) explain that the case study was used because this research focuses on a specific location as the object of in-depth study.

This research was conducted from February to April 2026 at SDN Tayem 01, Cilacap Regency. The location was selected based on academic considerations: the school consistently implements in scouting extracurricular activities as a means of strengthening student character, particularly independence, making it relevant to the study's focus on the implementation of the learning-by-doing method in the context of scouting. The research subjects included two scout leaders (P1-P2), students participating in in scouting extracurricular activities (S1-S6), and the principal (KS) as the policymaker and supporter of the extracurricular scouting program and character building. Subjects were selected purposively, based on their direct relevance to the research focus. Ethically, the research was conducted with official permission from the school, maintaining the confidentiality of participants' identities, and upholding the principle of volunteerism during data collection.

Data were obtained through observation, interviews, and documentation. Observations were used to directly observe the implementation of the learning-by-doing method in in scouting extracurricular activities at the elementary school, particularly in group work activities, field activities, and skills training that require students to be independent in completing tasks. In-depth interviews were conducted with Scout leaders and students to gain insight into their experiences and the meaning they experienced during the activities. An example interview question was: *"How is the application of the learning-by-doing method in in scouting extracurricular activities to foster student independence?"* Documentation was used to supplement the data, including in scouting extracurricular activities programs, photos of student activities, and activity implementation notes relevant to strengthening independent character.

The validity of the data in this study was maintained through source and technical triangulation techniques. Source triangulation was conducted by comparing information from teachers, students, and school documents to ensure consistency of data related to the implementation of in scouting extracurricular activities and the development of independent character. Technical triangulation was conducted by comparing the results of observations, interviews, and documentation to ensure that the research findings were not one-sided. This effort is crucial, according to Sugiyono (2021), who stated that data validation through triangulation is used to ensure that research results truly reflect the reality on the ground in a valid, credible, and scientifically accountable manner.

The data analysis in this study used the interactive analysis model of Miles, Huberman, & Saldaña (2018), which includes data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion drawing. Data obtained from the field were selected according to the research focus, then categorized into themes of learning-by-doing implementation and student independence character. Then, they were presented narratively to examine the interrelationships between the findings before drawing in-depth conclusions. The implementation of learning-by-doing was analyzed based on the following indicators: direct practice, meaningful learning experiences, striving through concrete actions, understanding the learning process, and collaboration in activities (Dewantara, 2013). Meanwhile, independent character was analyzed based on the scout concept, which self-confidence, independence from others, and completing tasks with self-awareness (Prasetya, 2019).



RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Result

The results of this study were obtained from qualitative data collected through observation, interviews, and documentation on scouting extracurricular activities at SDN Tayem 01. Furthermore, the data were analysed using an interactive analysis model to understand how the application of the learning-by-doing method contributes to strengthening students' independent character.

The analysis focused on the relationship between the implementation of learning-by-doing and the development of students' independent character. Independent character was analyzed through three indicators: self-confidence, independence from others, and completing tasks with self-awareness. These three indicators were examined through the implementation of learning-by-doing, which included engaging in learning activities through real-life practice, engaging in and experiencing meaningful learning experiences, having the courage to take action, understanding processes and solving problems based on experience, and interacting and collaborating during learning activities. To clarify the findings in the field, the research data are presented in Table 1 below.

Table 1: Strengthening Students' Independent Character through the Learning-by-Doing Method in Scouting Extracurricular Activities

Independent Character Indicators	Learning by Doing Indicators	Observation Results	Interview Results (Teachers & Students)	Documentation Results	Meaning of Findings
Self-confidence	Carrying out learning activities through real practice	Students were observed confidently participating in activities such as knot-tying, marching drills, and group games	Teachers reported that students became more confident during practical activities. Students also expressed greater courage to try without hesitation	Activity journals showed that students were actively involved in the activities	Direct experience increased students' confidence and courage
	Being actively involved and experiencing meaningful learning	Students appeared enthusiastic and actively participated in every activity	Teachers observed that students were more focused and engaged. Students also stated that learning became easier to understand through practice	Reflection sheets showed active participation and high enthusiasm throughout the activities	Meaningful learning experiences helped strengthen students' self-confidence in learning
Independence from others	Having the courage to make real efforts in action	Students began completing activities without waiting for full instructions from the scout instructor	Teachers stated that students became more independent. Students admitted they were more confident to try on their own	Activity notes showed active student participation in small groups	Students demonstrated early independence through the courage to act without relying fully on the instructor
	Understanding	Students tried various	Teachers reported that students were	Instructor notes and activity	Understanding problem-solving

Independent Character Indicators	Learning by Doing Indicators	Observation Results	Interview Results (Teachers & Students)	Documentation Results	Meaning of Findings
	processes and solving problems based on experience	approaches when encountering difficulties during field activities	able to find solutions independently and learn from mistakes during practice	evaluations showed improved problem-solving skills and better work procedures after repeated trials	processes through experience helped students become more independent in finding solutions when facing challenges
Completing tasks with self-awareness	Interacting and collaborating in activities with self-awareness without needing reminders	Students divided tasks, carried out their respective roles, and completed activities until finished, including repeated knot-tying practice and field tasks	Teachers stated that students had begun to take responsibility for their tasks. Students understood the importance of completing their assigned responsibilities without repeated reminders	Group work documentation and activity reports showed that tasks were completed thoroughly according to role distribution	Interaction and collaboration accompanied by responsibility helped students complete tasks independently with self-awareness without needing reminders

Data sources: Observations, Interviews with Supervising Teachers and Students, and Activity Documentation (February–April 2026).

Table 1 shows that the implementation of the learning-by-doing method in Scouting extracurricular activities significantly contributes to strengthening students' independent character. Activities that place students in direct involvement through practice, meaningful learning experiences, completing assignments, problem-solving, and group interactions encourage the gradual development of an independent attitude. The learning experiences gained through this active involvement provide students with opportunities to learn through the process of experimenting, facing difficulties, finding solutions, and completing tasks in real-life situations.

These findings indicate that independent character is not formed instantly but rather develops through the direct learning experiences students encounter during the activities. This process aligns with Ki Hajar Dewantara's belief that knowledge and character development are acquired through concrete actions and direct experience. The findings in the table are then explained in more depth based on each indicator of independent character that emerged during the implementation of learning-by-doing in Scouting extracurricular activities.

Self-confidence

Self-confidence in this study was reflected in students' involvement in scouting extracurricular activities implemented through the *learning-by-doing* approach. In activities such as knot-tying, marching drills, and group games, students participated directly in practical tasks, allowing them not only to receive explanations from the scout leader but also to experience the learning process firsthand through active participation. Their engagement was evident in their enthusiasm for taking part in each activity and completing the assigned group tasks. Experience-based learning enabled students to understand the material more easily because knowledge was gained through practice rather than solely through verbal explanations. The scout leader stated that students' involvement in practical activities contributed to increased self-confidence: "*Students are now more willing to*



try things on their own during activities because they are accustomed to direct practice." (Interview with P1, 06/03/2026).

Similar findings were expressed by the students. S2 stated, *"I am now more confident in trying things on my own during Scout activities."* (Interview with S1, 13/03/2026). S2 further explained that direct experiences helped develop greater independence. The principal also noted that students appeared more active, courageous, and confident when given opportunities to participate directly in activities. Supporting documentation likewise showed students' active involvement in knot-tying practice, marching drills, and group work.

However, observations indicated that the increase in self-confidence was not evenly distributed among all students. At the beginning of the activities, some students were still hesitant and required encouragement from the scout leader, particularly when facing tasks they had never performed before. This finding suggests that the implementation of *learning by doing* still depends on initial guidance to help students gradually adapt to the activities. Over time and through repeated practice, students demonstrated greater confidence in attempting and completing tasks independently.

Overall, students' participation in practice-based and meaningful learning experiences provided opportunities for them to recognise their own abilities. Through trying, actively engaging, and directly experiencing learning situations, students gradually developed confidence in their capabilities. These findings indicate that learning centred on direct experience can support the development of self-confidence, although initial guidance remains necessary to ensure that all students can develop optimally.

Independence from Others

The aspect of independence from others began to emerge when students no longer fully waited for instructions from the scout leader during scouting activities. Students were given opportunities to be directly involved in various tasks, which gradually helped them become accustomed to taking initiative in completing assigned work.

At the initial stage, some students still appeared hesitant and required guidance, especially when facing tasks they had never done before. This condition indicates that a habituation process is still needed so that students can adapt more effectively to practice-based activities.

As time progressed, students began to show changes in how they completed tasks. They became more active in taking roles within small groups, dividing tasks, and carrying out activities according to their respective abilities. The scout leader stated that students showed development in independence: *"Students are now more willing to try on their own and do not always wait for full instructions."* (Interview with P2, 06/03/2026). The principal also noted that scouting activities provide a good space for students to learn independence, as seen in their increased courage and ability to make simple decisions in group activities.

When facing difficulties in the field, students did not immediately rely on others but tried to find ways to complete the tasks. In some situations, they also discussed within small groups to determine appropriate steps based on previous experiences. S3 added, *"Now I am more confident in doing tasks without always being directed."* (Interview with S3, 13/03/2026). Activity records also showed improvements in students' work after repeated attempts, such as in knot-tying practice and group work, until better results were achieved.

In general, the aspect independent from others in scouting extracurricular activities developed gradually through the implementation of *learning by doing*. Direct involvement in activities provided opportunities for students to learn how to complete tasks, understand the flow of activities, and find solutions based on their experiences. These findings indicate that independence is not formed instantly but through a process of practice, direct experience, and continuous improvement from mistakes.

Completing Tasks with Self-Awareness

Students' ability to complete tasks with self-awareness developed through direct involvement in scouting

activities that require teamwork and independent task completion. In practice, students not only followed the instructions of the scout leader but also began to learn how to complete their assigned responsibilities without being constantly reminded.

During the activities, students were observed dividing tasks, carrying out their respective roles, and striving to complete activities thoroughly. In knot-tying practice, marching exercises, and field tasks, students repeatedly practised and improved their work until it met the required standards. This indicates that students began to develop self-awareness in completing tasks independently and responsibly.

The scout leader stated that students had begun to show progress in performing tasks independently. The principal also added that scouting activities provided students with opportunities to develop self-awareness through tasks that require seriousness and independence. According to the principal, habituation in completing tasks according to assigned roles helps students develop self-awareness towards their responsibilities.

This is supported by interview findings with students. S5 stated, *"I try to complete my tasks with self-awareness until they are finished."* S6 stated that he made efforts to complete his part so that group work could run smoothly (Interview with S5, 13/03/2026). This is also reflected in group work results and activity reports showing that tasks were completed thoroughly according to the assigned roles.

However, at the beginning of the activities, some students still required guidance in understanding task distribution, especially for new activities they had never done before. Over time, through habituation, students showed improvement in responsibility and the ability to complete tasks with self-awareness. Overall, learning-by-doing-based activities through interaction and collaboration provided learning experiences that helped students understand responsibility within groups. This process not only developed task completion skills but also gradually strengthened students' independence through direct experience in activities.

Discussion

The research findings indicate that the implementation of the learning-by-doing method in scouting extracurricular activities plays a crucial role in strengthening the independent character of elementary school students. Through direct involvement in various activities, students gain the opportunity to learn through real-life experiences, rather than simply receiving theoretical explanations. This process provides space for students to experiment, experience, face difficulties, and find solutions independently. These findings align with the views of Ananda et al. (2022), who assert that character education will be more effective when built through concrete experiences that enable students to internalise the values they learn.

These research findings are also relevant to the policy of strengthening character education as stipulated in the Ministry of Education and Culture of the Republic of Indonesia Regulation Number 20 of 2018, which places independence as a core value in education. Ma'ruf (2020) explains that character formation requires consistent habits through real-life activities. In the context of this research, scouting activities are an effective medium for building these habits because students are directly involved in various activities that require concrete action, responsibility, and problem-solving. In contrast to previous research which emphasised the urgency of character education in general, this research shows more specifically how the learning-by-doing method becomes a process that encourages the formation of students' independent character.

Regarding self-confidence, students' involvement in hands-on activities such as rope-making, marching, and group games appears to provide them with the space to be more confident and perform without hesitation. Change does not occur immediately, as at the beginning of the activity, some students still lacked confidence and tended to wait for guidance from their instructors. With practice and familiarization, they gradually became more

independent and braver in trying things on their own. This situation supports the findings of Norvia et al. (2023), who stated that learning by doing can increase students' self-confidence through hands-on learning experiences, creating a more meaningful learning environment that encourages active student engagement. However, the current study provides a more detailed explanation of the process of developing self-confidence, namely through the stages of courage to try, habituation through repeated practice, and growing confidence in their abilities after students successfully complete the activities themselves.

Judging from the indicator of independence from others, at the beginning of the activity, some students still tended to rely on guidance from their instructors. Through consistent and repeated practice and hands-on experience, students began to demonstrate the ability to complete tasks without always having to wait for full guidance from their instructors. When faced with obstacles, they tend to seek solutions based on experiences gained from previous activities. This finding aligns with research by Prasetya (2019), which asserts that Scouting activities are effective in fostering student independence. The difference is that this study does not stop at the conclusion that scouting fosters independence but rather demonstrates how this process develops through the courage to act, the experience of facing difficulties, and the ability to understand the problem-solving process based on the students' real-life experiences during the activities.

In terms of completing tasks with self-awareness, students' abilities develop gradually. The process begins with an introduction to the task and repeated practice, and ultimately, students are able to complete the work independently. At the beginning of the activities, some students still need reminders, but over time, they become more aware of their responsibilities. Through group collaboration, students also understand that the success of the activity depends on each member's commitment to their respective tasks. This finding supports research by Pramasanti et al. (2020), which asserts that collaborative activities can foster student responsibility. However, the current research confirms that responsibility is not merely a characteristic in itself but an integral part of independence. The ability to complete tasks completely with self-awareness initiative shows that students' independence grows through collaborative experiences that provide opportunities to learn real responsibility.

All of this research's findings align with the thinking of Ki Hajar Dewantara, who views education as an effort to guide students' natural potential to develop optimally through direct experiences in everyday life. Dewantara (2013) emphasized that character development cannot be achieved solely through lectures or informational instruction, but must be fostered through habituation and active student involvement in educational activities. This principle is reflected in scouting extracurricular activities, which provide students with opportunities for hands-on learning, encountering real-life situations, correcting mistakes, and completing assignments independently through their experiences.

Based on these findings, this study makes a new contribution by clarifying the relationship between learning-by-doing indicators and indicators of student independent character. Unlike previous research, which tends to describe the impact of scouting activities in general on character, this study explains in a more structured manner how direct learning experiences play a role in building self-confidence, reducing dependence on others for help, and fostering awareness in completing tasks. Scouting activities based on learning-by-doing can be understood as an effective approach to strengthening the independence of elementary school students through a continuous and meaningful experiential process.

CONCLUSION

The application of the learning-by-doing method in scout extracurricular activities can strengthen the independent character of elementary school students. Direct involvement of students in real practice, meaningful learning experiences, courage to act, and problem-solving based on experience, as well as interaction and collaboration in groups, encourage students to have more confidence in their own abilities, dare to take initiative

without always depending on others, and be able to complete tasks with self awareness without having to be reminded. This process shows that independent character is formed gradually through consistent direct experience, reflection, and continuous habituation so that learning by doing becomes the right approach in developing student independence through scout extracurricular activities that are contextual, active, and meaningful.

Theoretically, these findings support that learning by doing is in line with Ki Hajar Dewantara's concept of experiential education in strengthening independent character. Practically, scout activities have the potential to be effective in fostering students' self-confidence, independence, and responsibility if they are carried out based on direct experience. Therefore, teachers are advised to design activities that provide space for student practice and initiative; schools need to support the provision of facilities and experience-based learning policies, while students are expected to be more actively involved, dare to try, and be responsible in every activity.

This study is limited by its subject coverage, which involved only one elementary school in extracurricular Scout activities, so the results cannot be broadly generalized. Furthermore, the study focused on three indicators of independent character, leaving other aspects of character incompletely revealed. Observations are largely dependent on the specific circumstances of the activity taking place at a specific time. It is recommended that future research expand the location and number of subjects to obtain a more diverse picture, expand the study to other character indicators, and utilize a more diverse data collection approach or a longer timeframe to allow for more in-depth and consistent observation of student character development.

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