

The Urgency of Environmental Education in *Kurikulum Merdeka*: A Geophilosophical Approach

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Abstract

Environmental Education (EE) is currently receiving broad attention in formulating and implementing fostering students' character to be more environmentally conscious. This issue is also entangled with the global commitment to create a sustainable society. Indonesia experienced a curriculum transition from the K13 to *Merdeka* curricula; thus, integrating environmental problems into the new curricula is important. In general, the implementation of EE in schools can be divided into two approaches: integrating it into a specific syllabus and incorporating it into extracurricular or ceremonial school activities. Several obstacles have been identified during the implementation of EE, especially at the high school level and its equivalents, including EE being perceived as a burden on students' study time, a lack of coordination among relevant institutions, insufficient funding, and ineffective EE program formats. These findings are based on focus group discussions (FGDs) conducted in-depth interviews with *Adiwiyata* High School students to determine the implementation of PLH in schools and supporting literature reviews. To address these obstacles, this research adopts a geophilosophical perspective as a novel approach to support education and curricula that promote sustainable environmental awareness, both in affective and practical-contextual actions, by considering the importance of geographical agency in teaching and learning. Consequently, it was discovered that the geophilosophical approach could serve as an alternative model for curriculum development that is more flexible to strengthen *Kurikulum Merdeka*.

Keywords

Geophilosophy; *Adiwiyata*; *Kurikulum Merdeka*; Environmental Education

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1. INTRODUCTION

Kurikulum Merdeka or *Merdeka Curriculum* provides more flexibility for teachers and students to adjust learning to the student's needs. *Kurikulum Merdeka* at the Senior High School level aims to restore foundational competencies (learning loss) due to the COVID-19 pandemic (Kementerian Pendidikan, Kebudayaan, Riset, dan Teknologi, 2021; Cholihah et al., 2023). The realization of this objective is evident in the elimination of the specialization system, which requires all 10th-grade students to take subjects from various fields. This can be envisioned as aiding in the effort to instill environmental



awareness in students, as all students participate in Biology and Geography subjects covering topics related to nature and various activities involving non-human components (Rahmayumita & Hidayati, 2023).

However, a disparity remains between the curriculum's ideals and the actual environmental awareness observed in practice. According to the Environmental Ignorance Behaviour Index Report for Indonesia (*Laporan Indeks Perilaku Ketidakpedulian Lingkungan Hidup Indonesia*) published by the Central Statistics Agency (*Badan Pusat Statistika*) in 2018, Indonesian society still grapples with issues in waste management, private transportation, and water conservation. Thus far, the curriculum's emphasis on the theoretical aspects of biology and geography has not significantly impacted environmental consciousness.

Climate issues are a universal challenge. Therefore, we need support and ideas from various sectors, including students (van de Wetering, Leijten, Spitzer, & Thomas, 2022). Fundamental changes in the field of education are crucial for empowering them. Environmental education should focus on theoretical environmental awareness and affective and practical aspects (Tokur & Akgün, 2021).

Geophilosophy is a philosophical study that focuses on the Earth. This study was motivated by the understanding that a scientific approach to the environment prioritizes benefits for humans alone (Rousell, Cutter-Mackenzie, & Foster, 2017). Geophilosophy can drive efforts to change the paradigm in the curriculum to prioritize the revitalization of nature. Applying geophilosophy in the high school curriculum will directly affect the environmental awareness of students in Indonesia. This is crucial for neutralizing the critical impacts of climate damage.

This research introduces novelty in the analysis of Environmental Education in high schools through a geophilosophical approach capable of addressing crisis issues and awareness within a socio-historical and contextual framework. Finally, the novelty of this study lies in developing a philosophically critical analysis system that has not yet been formally explored in educational curriculum studies.

2. METHODS

This study adopted a qualitative methodology that enlists the participation of multiple individuals, including an environmental observer, two environmental activists, two professors specializing in philosophy and biology, two teachers (public and private), two foreign instructors, and several high school students or their equivalents. The research utilizes a descriptive approach with data collection conducted through the Focus Group Discussion (FGD) technique. The data collection was conducted between April and August 2023, employing virtual meeting platforms such as Google Meet. The selection of participants was purposive, considering the representation of each school or institution, which served as a sample for this study.

In-depth interviews were conducted based on the subject categories. Our Focus Group Discussion (FGD) results were used as qualitative data, which we processed into narratives or presentations from the research participants (teachers, students, and experts). Subsequently, the data were analyzed through categorization, reduction, and further description, following the predetermined research variables. These steps were employed to obtain a more objective overview of the study.

3. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

History and Development of Environmental Education in Indonesia

The beginning of Environmental Education or EE (*Pendidikan Lingkungan Hidup* or PLH) in Indonesia can be traced back to the formulation of the Broad Lines of Education and Teaching (*Garis-*

Garis Besar Pendidikan dan Pengajaran or GBPP) in the field of the environment, designed for primary education. This initiative commenced at the Jakarta Institute of Teacher Training and Education (IKIP Jakarta) in 1975, three years after the Stockholm Conference. The GBPP later became one of the design frameworks for the 1975 Curriculum, integrating EE into various subjects. During this period, the New Order regime emphasized the importance of an efficiency-based curriculum. The 1975 Curriculum appeared almost perfectionist through a strict and centralized administrative system. However, possibly due to insufficient planning and an excessively heavy burden on teachers, the 1975 curriculum did not holistically present EE. Integrating environmental issues across subjects is not visible (Indahri, 2020).

Subsequently, in the 1984 Curriculum, Environmental Education (PLH or EE) reemerged under PKLH (*Pendidikan Kependudukan dan Lingkungan Hidup* or Education on Population and the Environment). This occurred when PKLH subjects were incorporated into the curriculum in 1986. Additionally, PKLH was integrated into other subjects so that each subject included issues related to the population and environment (Basri, 2013:69). The juxtaposition of population issues with environmental issues is noteworthy here. In the PKLH design, the priority problem was population issues, with the environment being sidelined as something managed for the benefit of society.

"[Salah satu tujuan PKLH adalah] agar peserta didik bersikap dan bertindak laku rasional dan bertanggung jawab terhadap pemecahan masalah kependudukan dan pengelolaan lingkungan hidup dilihat dari kepentingan masyarakat umum, bangsa, dan dunia secara keseluruhan." (original text from Basri, 2013: 5).

"One of the goals of EPE is for learners to exhibit rational and responsible attitudes and behaviors towards solving population problems and managing the environment, considering the interests of the general public, the nation, and the world as a whole." (translated with emphasis in Basri, 2013: 5).

The main characteristic of the 1984 Curriculum or *Kurikulum 1984* is the emphasis on students' character. In other words, this curriculum design transitions from teacher-centered learning to student-centered learning (Karnadi, 2008). *Kurikulum 1984* emphasizes that teachers should encourage students to be active and independent learners. In the context of Environmental Education (EE), there was an effort at that time to give students the initiative to analyze environmental issues.

However, the 1994 Curriculum or *Kurikulum 1994* (K-94) did not feature Environmental Education (EE) prominently. This situation arose because of the belief that there was an excessive number of subjects and content materials to cover. In addition to the general subjects that had been part of previous curricula, such as the natural sciences, social sciences, and Pancasila (Indonesian state philosophy), the K-94 introduced local content materials. Students were required to study aspects related to culture and the potential of their respective regions. Arts, regional languages, and so forth became additional components that marginalized EE. Of course, K-94 was later deemed ineffective because of the excessive burden placed on students. Some sources (see Sekarwinahyu, 2008) state that during the implementation of this curriculum, the Directorate General of Primary and Secondary Education or *Direktorat Jenderal Pendidikan Dasar dan Menengah* (Dikdasmen) of the Ministry of Education and Culture developed a guideline book for the implementation of the PKLH for teachers. Unfortunately, the authors could not locate this document or observe its impact.

In 2004, the curriculum was transformed from a content-based approach to a competency-based curriculum known as *Kurikulum Berbasis Kompetensi* (KBK). While the previous curriculum focused solely on learning materials, KBK placed greater emphasis on assessing students' skills, character, and knowledge. Although there were similarities between KBK and its predecessor, K-94, the implementation of KBK marked a shift towards a more process-oriented approach to education. The ultimate goal of learning is not only knowledge but also behavioral change (Saida et al., 2017). Subsequently, PLH or EE was integrated into KBK. In other words, there was no specific subject on EE,

but every subject was encouraged to address environmental issues.

However, the environmental issues PLH addresses in this curriculum still lean towards anthropocentric concerns. PLH within the KBK curriculum was influenced by the Indonesian Summit on Sustainable Development (ISSD) held in 2004. The ISSD agreement established three pillars for sustainable development: economic, social, and environmental. In this conception, once again, the environment became a consideration of lesser priority: economics and society took precedence. This is not surprising. According to this design, sustainable development emphasizes the aspects that benefit humans. When the environment is incorporated into the design of sustainable development, it tends to be neglected; it is not considered something that lives alongside humans but rather as something to be exploited. Basri (2013: 7) notes that the environmental pillar of ISSD "...emphasizes the sustainable management of natural resources and the environment..."

The same pattern can be seen in the advancement of environmental impact assessment education (*Analisis Dampak Lingkungan* or AMDAL) in higher education during the formative stages of environmental education in Indonesia. As its name indicates, AMDAL aims to identify the potential environmental impacts of government or corporate activities. While AMDAL aims to conserve the environment, it is also motivated by economic considerations.

The Education Unit Level Curriculum (*Kurikulum Tingkat Satuan Pendidikan* or KTSP), implemented in 2006, continued the path of decentralization that had begun with K-94. This was due to the issues caused by a centralized curriculum, leading to discrepancies between the central design and the reality teachers and students face in schools. Ultimately, the curriculum could not address relevant problems for students. KTSP went further than K-94, which only incorporated local content materials. In KTSP, materials development was delegated to education stakeholders, including local governments and educational units. The central government only issued educational standards for reference (Baedhowi 2007).

The same year, the Ministry of Environment (*Kementerian Lingkungan Hidup* or KLH) and the Ministry of National Education collaboratively initiated the *Adiwiyata* program. This program awards recognition and titles to schools that advance environmental facilities and learning. To achieve the *Adiwiyata* title, schools typically engage in activities such as environmental cleanup, tree planting, and participation in waste banks. Through this initiative, the government encouraged schools to enhance their environmental awareness.

However, according to the observations of Parker and Prabawa-Sear (2020), *Adiwiyata* has become a competitive platform for schools seeking 'branding.' Environmental education and conservation programs appear to be a means to gain advantages, such as increased student enrollments, government facility assistance, etc. The *Adiwiyata* program has not yet instilled awareness among teachers and students regarding the ongoing environmental crisis. Even if such awareness is cultivated, *Adiwiyata* School's environmental education seems to lack practical impact when students transition beyond the school environment.

There are two reasons behind the failure of the *Adiwiyata* program. The first reason is the lack of commitment from school administrators and teachers (as well as the relevant ministries) to educating students about Environmental Education. Often, the *Adiwiyata* program becomes a documentation competition. The most important aspect for *Adiwiyata* awardees is not the impact and awareness of students but rather how many reports and photos they can produce. It is not uncommon for teachers and administrators to merely act as observers and photographers while, for example, students clean up waste in the surrounding environment. This is problematic because, despite having the role of facilitators, teachers still play a crucial role in curriculum implementation (Herdiana et al., 2017). Teachers can act as role models to implement the *Adiwiyata* program effectively. If Environmental Education truly requires effective learning, practices and feelings should be the most visible aspects for students.

The second reason is the futility of environmental conservation practices learned by students due to the disconnection between learning at school and events outside school. Students can only convince themselves that Environmental Education at school is useful if they feel its impact. However, as observed by Parker and Prabawa-Sear (2020) and through discussions with students, the reality often contradicts this. Waste separation programs involving students are frequently implemented. Students usually have no objection to these activities and willingly participate in them. However, after school time, waste collectors often recombine separated waste. The destruction of students' hopes and affection can begin here. When they see, often directly, that their activities do not lead to productivity and even vice versa, they may become disillusioned with environmental conservation programs. In this case, the waste collectors cannot be blamed. Support in the form of environmental conservation facilities outside the school institution also needs to be provided so that students' productive activities can be followed. If not, the gap between students' expectations and the implemented environmental management system can erode their trust in Environmental Education. Therefore, we need to pay more attention to Environmental Education to prevent it from being neglected amid the chaos of local content materials, as seen from K-94 to the Curriculum 2013.

Based on our exploration and discussions with students, Environmental Education in Indonesia has weaknesses in three aspects: agency, locality, and practice. Regarding student agencies, Indonesia's curriculum since 1984 has indeed started transitioning from *teacher-centered* to *student-centered*. However, interactions in the teaching and learning processes still hinder student agency. According to students' experiences, EE is hindered when teachers still associate natural disasters with punishment and superstitions. Instead of explaining natural disasters in this way, EE would be more effective if teachers provided scientific explanations so that students understand the potential solutions they can offer. It is undeniable that many students, including those who participated in discussions with us, know the importance of the environment and related issues. However, this awareness can become counterproductive if teachers sideline environmental discussions with mythical responses. Students cannot envision solutions because they feel that natural phenomena result from mystical forces beyond them that they cannot comprehend.

Regarding locality, the Indonesian curriculum has been decentralized with local content materials. However, in its implementation, local content materials often do not prioritize Environmental Education. Local content materials tend to emphasize aspects of the arts and culture. One student mentioned that the local content materials she received were related to entrepreneurship. This becomes a problem because the EE continues to be sidelined. To ensure that EE upholds locality, it should present problems closely related to students' daily lives. Global-scale learning, such as climate change, may feel too distant to be achieved and may not align with students' capabilities.

Lastly, in terms of practice, Environmental Education sometimes remains confined to the problems and solutions presented in textbooks. EE learning is still within the classroom and consists mainly of teacher explanations and student discussions. The students in our discussions agreed that EE material subjects or their theories can be self-taught and do not require school intervention. Therefore, true EE learning does not require extensive theoretical materials. EE would be more effective by directly taking students outside the classroom to confront, observe, and find solutions to environmental issues around their schools and homes.

Geophilosophy and Environmental Education

Geophilosophy is an idea that challenges Western philosophy tradition regarding things beyond human existence. The long-standing tradition in Western philosophy has positioned humans as special beings with a superior status to other entities: humans possess an essence not shared by other creatures, namely, the ability to understand themselves and the world beyond them. This capacity for understanding is well-known as "reason" (Roberts et al., 2022:136). Thus, humans can comprehend the world and translate it into knowledge. This special characteristic of humans subsequently influenced

Aristotle in classifying humans as an *animal rationale*; reason was placed as the distinguishing factor between humans and animals (McCready-Fiora 2023:470).

The concept of reason as a fundamental aspect of humanity has persisted and progressed up to the current era. Descartes established the basis for contemporary philosophy by asserting the supremacy of reason as the fundamental quality of human nature through the doctrine of Cartesian dualism. Unlike the body, which has an extension (occupies space), reason exists in a different dimension, not occupying space, and is isolated from the material dimension. This isolation indirectly implies that the relationship between the subject and external object always has a distance (Schiemann, 2007:60). This vantage point indicates that the human-object relationship is characterized by an observer's perspective on knowledge of the observed. While only humans possess the capacity to acquire knowledge of the intrinsic nature and worth of objects, they remain detached from and separate from the objects themselves. Nonetheless, within this realm of knowledge, humans are uniquely equipped to claim authority over an object and exercise judgment upon it.

The consequence is that humans are the only ones with agency worldwide. The fate of the world lies in human hands. The human position as the rightful evaluator of the destiny of everything (*telos*) can lead to arbitrariness in the universe. Furthermore, exploitative activities towards the environment can be justified for two reasons: First, humans can attribute value to nature through scientific claims, thus justifying the exploitation of nature because the essence of nature itself is as such.

Human exploitation of the natural world can be argued to support human existence as knowledgeable beings. Through activities such as scientific research, humans can gain a deeper understanding of nature. However, this exploitation ultimately leads to environmental degradation and crises. At this point, reactions emerge against the historical subject-object relationship, where nature, once seen as an object, begins to be observed, and humans' anthropocentric thinking (speciesism) is critically challenged.

Gilles Deleuze was the first philosopher to use Geophilosophy in his work with Felix Guattari, "What is Philosophy?" (1994). They criticized the relationship between subject and object constructed by Western philosophical traditions to understand objects. Deleuze and Guattari argued that thinking activities always exist in spatial dimensions and are always mediated by Earth itself, as follows:

"Subject and object give a poor approximation of thought. Thinking is neither a line drawn between the subject and object nor a revolving of one around the other. Rather, thinking occurs in the relationship between territory and the earth" (Deleuze & Guattari, 1994: 85).

The main argument is that the reality of objects is not isolated within human subjectivity; rather, human thought is always influenced by objects themselves. The subject-object relationship he referred to goes beyond humans having agency, as everything in the spatial realm influences humans to acquire knowledge about those objects. Objects involved in the process of knowledge imply that, in reality, not only humans have agency but also things outside of humans, in this case, nature.

Haraway (1998) developed a philosophical thesis on *situated knowledge*. Situated knowledge suggests that knowledge evolves within the elements present in a societal group, influencing how humans understand the world (Haraway, 1998:590). These elements can include the environment, whether artificially like culture or norms or naturally like the topography of the inhabited region. The elements present in the environment of a social group are then considered agents that bring forth diverse forms of knowledge. Furthermore, the existence of a group occupies space and depends on the geographical conditions. Ellen Churchill Semple and Jared Diamond have attempted to formulate theories known as geographical determinism, where the social environment emerges and develops as a result of geographical determinants, such as the availability of food, domestication, and the risk of disasters (Wiarda, 2010: 141-157).

Concepts, thoughts, and sciences cannot be separated from geographical space. Differences in

geographical conditions can influence the variations and uniqueness of societies, including methods of knowledge and the knowledge produced. For Deleuze, space plays a role in accommodating dynamic dynamics driven by geological, biological, and social elements. Nothing remains constant in space. There is always a space within. Deleuze refers to the dynamics that occur within space as deterritorialisation and reterritorialisation (Deleuze & Guattari, 1994:86).

"The earth is not one element among others but brings together all the elements within a single embrace while using one or another to deterritorialise territory. Movements of deterritorialization are inseparable from territories that open onto elsewhere; the reterritorialization process is inseparable from the earth, which restores territories. Territory and earth are two components with two zones of indiscernibility— deterritorialization (from territory to the earth) and reterritorialization (from earth to territory)." (Deleuze & Guattari, 1994:86).

Geophilosophy attempts to offer a new way of thinking about nature by grounding transcendental philosophy and trying to break the distance between subject and object so that the subject knows, understands, and experiences nature. The understanding of nature offered by geophilosophy is that it is constantly changing, dynamic, and alive, leading to continually renewed insights into the spatial environment inhabited by society (Shobeiri, 2018:18). Understanding nature is never ending, so humans must continuously "ground" themselves to comprehend changes and dynamics in the environment, whether at the local, regional, or international scale. To understand the Earth, biological bodies must be deeply interconnected with geological and social elements because true understanding is not just a prepositional reference to nature but an exploration of the interconnection between humans and nature (Gasché, 2014:48).

The environment in which a community exists is inherently subject to historical processes, resulting in the community's knowledge of the environment being inherently historical. Therefore, knowledge of the environment is always dynamic, and no environment remains constant, similar to human knowledge of the environment (Casey, 2013). Human subjectivity has always been isolated from the actual environment, and an understanding of the environment has been constructed based on repetitively replicated knowledge. The distance created in the subject-object relationship directs human thoughts not directly toward true nature but is presupposed by repetitively transmitted knowledge (Roberts et al., 2022:137). Geophilosophy invites humans to think differently by directly engaging with nature and creatively producing concepts about immanent nature. From Deleuze and Guattari's perspective, philosophy is constructing concepts continuously generating meaningful novelty in observed phenomena (Semetsky, 2020:444).

Inventing Geophilosophy in Environmental Education Model of Kurikulum Merdeka

The concept of geophilosophy can serve as a foundation for developing environmental education plans within the "Merdeka" curriculum. Conceptually, the term "Merdeka" in the curriculum implies students' agency for exploration and knowledge acquisition. First, based on in-depth interviews with several high school students, they perceived environmental education as important but found the learning methods provided by schools ineffective. In general, during Focus Group Discussions (FGD), students expressed that extracurricular offerings could provide a more engaging aspect of environmental education. This is because students have more direct contact with nature during extracurricular activities rather than just reading about it as a concept in the classroom. They also suggested that the Environmental Education methods in the "Merdeka" curriculum should be more interactive, fostering not only a relationship between teachers and students but also between students and the nature they are studying.

Furthermore, geophilosophy proposes placing students amid an ecological space to foster a more creative and profound understanding of nature. There is a separation between knowledge within the classroom and reality outside the classroom. This separation leads to a fixation on students' preconceived understanding of the environment, referred to by Deleuze as an "image of thought"

(Hurst, 2019:96). Students tend to feel that they already know the environmental issues taught in the classroom, resulting in a static and incomplete understanding of their ever-changing nature. Attempts have been made to eliminate the preconceived elements that create a gap between nature and students from a geophilosophical perspective.

Geophilosophy critiques the transmissive approach to teaching, which confines students to the classroom and restricts their knowledge of nature to textual sources. This traditional method restricts students' ability to engage directly with nature and hampers their imagination of nature. By prioritizing theory over empirical experience, old educational methods limit students' freedom of thought and restrict their embodied experiences with nature. The geophilosophical principle of encouraging students to interact with nature first-hand and "put their feet on the ground directly" enhances their engagement and indirectly affects their cognitive development. Wells's research (2000) shows that outdoor learning activities can provide physical and emotional stimulation, training students' focus. Research conducted by the American Institute for Research (2005) indicated that outdoor learning activities improve students' academic performance by 27% (Cooper, 2015:86).

Geophilosophical concepts that support direct student engagement with nature can integrate environmental education into local contexts. History notes a tendency for curriculum changes to align with power shifts, meaning that educational curricula tend to be centralized and that the issues and urgency of education depend on the prevailing political direction (Maspul, 2022). The trend of curriculum centralization also poses a challenge to the implementation of education in Indonesia, given its geographical diversity. For instance, there are differences in the infrastructure distribution between urban and rural areas. Schools in rural areas may face limitations in infrastructure to achieve learning objectives, including implementing Environmental Education (Amasuba, 2023). Given these educational challenges, there is a need to emphasize the locality or the geographic and cultural uniqueness of the school's location to realize continuous education. Thus far, students have been aware of global environmental issues but may be unable to solve these significant problems.

The focus on locality in geophilosophy can encourage students to recognize issues in their area and apply their knowledge practically. The element of locality means that education begins in a familiar home environment. There is a strong correlation between familiarity and student understanding, implying that the more familiar students are with something, the faster they comprehend it (Zhu et al., 2019:63). Geophilosophy encourages students to understand and apply knowledge in familiar environments before expanding to broader territories.

Second, the results of data descriptions based on interviews with students reveal something very interesting regarding the students' direct experiential background with the environmental conditions. The students' intense and existential personal experiences of directly encountering environmental damage in their living environment, ranging from unhealthy environmental conditions due to waste to disasters such as flash floods that forced respondents to evacuate, are noteworthy. These personal experiences significantly contribute to shaping students' paradigms regarding the urgency of environmental education. Personal experiences also explain why students are more familiar with environmental issues around them than the environmental issues presented in the school curriculum.

The geophilosophical perspective reads knowledge based on students' experiences with their daily lives, providing a profound impression of their experiences, knowledge, and actions toward the current situations and conditions of the environmental crisis. Knowledge built and developed is always related to the spatial conditions of the community itself. Therefore, implementing environmental education can prioritize student activities in their surroundings rather than emphasizing the memorization of environmental issues that students have never experienced. Emphasizing locality can stimulate students to understand their place of residence better, enabling them to continue lessons learned at school in their local environment (home and community) based on the relevance of the knowledge received in school.

Third, during the interview process, some students expressed interesting opinions about the concept of Environmental Education that is solely focused on local content with specific cultural elements without considering the expansion of Environmental Education concepts at the global level. However, contemporary environmental issues go beyond just local concerns. The geophilosophical approach provides conceptual considerations about geographical elements worth considering beyond economic considerations alone. Indirectly, geophilosophy offers continuity of knowledge, so the knowledge transfer process does not stop only at school. Environmental Education offered by geophilosophy emphasizes the right method to create students' understanding of their environment and encourages the production of concepts about the environment by students themselves. It brings creativity to thinking and acting, enabling students to think critically and contemplatively when reflecting on creatively built concepts through their experiences with the surrounding environment. The role of students inside and outside of school can demonstrate a process of knowledge transfer, making student agents capable of contributing both in the school environment and their place of residence.

The element of natural agency offered by geophilosophy can stimulate students' awareness that nature also possesses dynamic characteristics. Every action students take towards nature has consequences that will occur in the future. This awareness helps students become more mindful and cautious when considering and deciding on matters related to the environment. Natural agency can be associated with natural disasters experienced by students or their school areas, where disasters can be reflected upon as evidence that nature can influence human life. Therefore, the correspondence between nature and humans can be understood as an ongoing occurrence in daily life.

Focusing on the concept of natural agency in geophilosophy can be appropriately framed within the confines of a specific locality. So far, preconceived classroom knowledge has hindered creative thinking about the environment, which creates a distance between students and their surrounding environment. Geophilosophy offers students direct participation in formulating an understanding of the environment by engaging with their immediate surroundings, starting from the local environment. This allowed the students to formulate what the environment meant to them creatively. Geophilosophy presents creative and speculative thinking that originates from students' empirical experiences with nature, rather than descriptive thinking that can restrict students from acquiring dynamic knowledge without fixation on the dynamics of the environment.

4. CONCLUSION

Geophilosophy is a philosophical concept that provides a perspective on the relationship between humans and nature, continually influencing events on Earth. Unlike the old anthropocentric philosophical perspective, geophilosophy emphasizes nature's role beyond humans, asserting its agency in determining human life. The spatial principles offered by geophilosophy are always linked to locality, in which the concepts built for a region are always the result of the relationship between the subject and the space it inhabits. This means that views and knowledge of the subject regarding the environment are always different and unique in each area. The human agency offered by geophilosophy involves the subject-nature relationship built without presupposing human dominance over nature. It explores how humans truly exist amid nature, experience it directly, and can construct concepts about nature based on their expressive experiences. The principles of human agency, natural agency, and locality emphasized in geophilosophy can serve as a foundation for designing environmental education in the "Merdeka" curriculum.

As a curriculum that emphasizes a student-centered and student-based nature, the Merdeka

Curriculum is strongly supported by the geophilosophy that researchers have elaborated. The weaknesses of Environmental Education as far as its implementation to date, especially in terms of agency, locality, and practices, can be addressed through the geophilosophy as a solution. Finally, geophilosophy fully supports the design of EE that can sustainably enhance students' environmental awareness, which can be realized in the Merdeka Curriculum.

This preliminary research can serve as a reference for considering alternative dimensions to articulate new ecological dimensions in the discourse and curriculum of Environmental Education in Indonesia. On the other hand, further research needs to be conducted through direct and practical experimentation models so that the study results can be more focused on deepening the character concepts of geophilosophy in implementing the Merdeka Curriculum.

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