

Representation of Independence in *Guru Aini's* Novel and Its Implications for Literacy Practices in Schools

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Abstract

Independence is a crucial character trait that needs to be developed in educational settings. This study aims to analyze the representation of independence in Andrea Hirata's novel *Guru Aini* and examine its practical implications for literacy practices in schools, specifically focusing on students' behavioral and psychological conditions regarding literacy habits. This qualitative descriptive study employed a case study approach based on literary psychology perspective. Data consisted of words, statements, quotations, and sentences containing independence meanings from the 200-page novel *Guru Aini* published by Pustaka Belitung. Data collection utilized analytical reading and note-taking techniques. Data validity was ensured through source and method triangulation. Content analysis with literary psychology approach was employed, followed by interactive data analysis including data collection, reduction, presentation, and conclusion drawing. The study identified three forms of independence representation: (1) Emotional independence - characters' ability to manage feelings without external support; (2) Social independence - adaptation and interaction capabilities in diverse environments; (3) Professional independence - autonomous decision-making in academic and career pursuits. The analysis revealed that literacy habits focusing on independence support students' development of critical thinking, autonomous learning, and responsibility. Literary works can serve as effective media for instilling independence values in students. The implications suggest that incorporating independence-themed literature in school literacy programs can enhance students' character development and learning autonomy.

Keywords: *independence representation, teacher aini novel, literacy school, literary psychology, character education*

Introduction

The erosion of independence character among students in the globalization era presents significant challenges in educational contexts. Contemporary students increasingly rely on technology for instant solutions rather than developing personal problem-solving capabilities (Akbar et al., 2020; Nikitina & Ishchenko, 2023). This dependency manifests in rising plagiarism rates, where students copy others' work without critical thinking or independent innovation. Online learning systems, while beneficial, often enable shortcuts that contradict independent learning principles (Sumbawati et al., 2020). The digital environment and consumptive culture among youth further exacerbate this issue, requiring schools to implement more effective approaches to strengthen student independence (Birch, 2011; Miller, 2020). Despite

globalization's positive impacts in introducing diverse learning methods that can encourage creativity and independence, without proper educator guidance, these benefits remain unrealized. Therefore, innovative educational approaches are needed to address these challenges while maintaining the advantages of technological advancement. This situation demands a comprehensive understanding of how independence can be effectively cultivated through educational media.

Literary works serve as valuable media and learning resources in education, particularly in developing elementary school students' literacy habits. Literacy programs begin with students' curiosity and interest in exploring diverse materials, especially those found in literary works (Birch, 2011; Miller, 2020). In the current independent curriculum era, novels have become dominant literary forms used in education (Cohen, 2018). Early literacy implementation in elementary schools aims to provide students with consistent thinking processes that develop cognitive, affective, and psychomotor aspects through literary works as media and learning resource. Literacy habituation encompasses not only reading and writing skills but also critical thinking abilities and literary appreciation (Cohen, 2018; Miller, 2020). The integration of character values through literary works represents a promising approach to addressing contemporary educational challenges. This approach allows students to develop both technical literacy skills and essential character traits simultaneously. The potential of literature as a medium for character development has gained increased recognition in educational research.

Independence refers to attitudes and behaviors that habitually rely on personal abilities without burdening others. Independent attitudes include autonomous learning, independent action, responsibility, confidence, decision-making independence, self-discipline, problem-solving skills, and initiative (Ahmed et al., 2015; Roesler, 2017). The literary psychology approach connects literary works with psychological aspects of authors, characters, and readers (Titorini et al., 2024). This approach explores psychological dimensions underlying literary creation processes, character dynamics, and works' influence on readers' emotions, thoughts, and behaviors. The combination of independence concepts and literary psychology provides a robust theoretical framework for analyzing character representation in literature. This integration allows for deeper understanding of how literary characters can serve as models for developing independence. The theoretical foundation supports the examination of literature's role in shaping readers' psychological and behavioral patterns.

Previous studies have examined literature's relationship with character education, but research specifically investigating independence representation in literary works and its implications for elementary school literacy habits remains limited (Ahmed et al., 2015; Roesler, 2017). While Pratiwi's study examined independence values in teacher-themed novels and Majid's research analyzed independence in *Laskar Pelangi*, neither deeply explored implications for elementary school literacy habituation. This study's novelty lies in combining literary works with educational service programs as nation-building efforts (Oktaviani & Kulsum, 2023). The research contributes to understanding how Indonesian language learning relates to literary content in supporting early literacy habit creation in elementary schools. Andrea Hirata's novel *Guru Aini* provides an ideal case study for examining independence representation due to its educational themes and character development. The novel's focus on educational struggles and personal growth offers rich material for analyzing independence manifestations. This research fills a significant gap in understanding the practical applications of literary psychology in educational settings. The study's findings are expected to provide concrete guidance for

educators seeking to integrate character development with literacy education. For that, this study aims to describe independence representation in Andrea Hirata's novel *Guru Aini* and its implications for school literacy habituation, providing insights for developing literature learning that focuses on character formation alongside literacy technique mastery.

Method

The method used in this study is qualitative descriptive (Nugrahani). The approach used in this study is a pinned case study based on the perspective of literary psychology (Agustin et al., 2023). The case revealed in depth in this study is the representation of independence in the novel *Guru Aini* by Andrea Hirata and its implications for literacy habituation in schools. The data used in this study are in the form of words, statements, quotes, and sentences in paragraphs in the novel *Guru Aini* by Andrea Hirata which contain the meaning of independence. The source of the data was obtained from the 200-page novel *Guru Aini* by Andrea Hirata published by Pustaka Belitung. Data collection techniques with analytical/critical reading techniques and note-taking techniques. After reading the novel *Guru Aini* by Andrea Hirata, an intensive examination was carried out to find a representation of independence that was in harmony with the implications of literacy habituation. Statements, quotes, and sentences resulting from the reading and reading process are continued in the recording in the data card. The data were grouped based on the aspect of independence and the category of literacy habituation as secondary data.

This study uses a purposive sampling technique that focuses on the aspect of independence and its implications for literacy habituation in elementary school students in the novel *Guru Aini* by Andrea Hirata published by Bentang Pustaka in Yogyakarta. The sample used is in the form of 5 statements in the novel *Guru Aini* by Andrea Hirata as follows.

"Aini feels that she is strong even though she does not have the support of her parents", "She stands firm even though many doubt her ability" and "Aini feels that she is strong even though she does not have the support of her parents", "Aini always tries to understand and adapt to her friends at school", "She decides to continue her studies even though she has to work while studying", and "Aini feels that success comes from her own efforts. not from the help of others"

The validity of the data used to determine the validity of the data was used the triangulation method. Two triangulations are triangulation of data sources and methods. The data sets that have been checked for validity are grouped based on the aspect of independence and its relationship with literacy habituation. If there is data that is not suitable based on the formulation of the problem and research objectives, a reduction process is carried out with simplification according to the needs of the research. Furthermore, the data is presented in an interactive descriptive manner referring to each problem formulation. Finally, from the processed data presentation, a competent conclusion is produced,

The researcher checked the validity of the data obtained by checking the relevance of the content of the literary work with the existence of literary psychology theories on the independent aspect and its implications for the literacy habituation program. Data that have been grouped based on research objects in the form of representation of independence and literacy habituation are analyzed using content analysis starting from data collection, data interpretation, and presentation of conclusions. The data analyzed

is associated with the theory of literary psychology, that each data presented is related to the feelings and perspectives of independence in the novel *Guru Aini* by Andrea Hirata. In addition to content analysis, data that is already known to be up-to-date is analyzed interactively with the stages of data collection, data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion drawn.

Results

The findings in this study reveal how the representation of independence in the novel *Guru Aini* by Andrea Hirata and its implications for literacy habituation in schools. The findings of the results described in the form of descriptions are statements formed by words, phrases, and sentences in a paragraph in a novel based on a literary psychology approach.

Representation of Independence in the Novel *Guru Aini* by Andrea Hirata based on the Perspective of Literary Psychology

The findings in this study discuss several statements that researchers have found on the basis of literary psychology. Each statement found in the novel has a meaning related to the representation of independence that is studied based on the characteristics of the main character in each event described by the author. The discussion of each representation of independence that falls into the realm of psychology of literary works is as follows.

Data 1: Emotional Independence

"Aini feels strong even though she doesn't have the support of her parents"

"Aini merasa dirinya kuat meskipun tidak memiliki dukungan dari orang tua"

The above statement describes one of the forms of emotional independence possessed by the main character, Aini. Emotional independence refers to an individual's ability to manage and cope with life's feelings and challenges without relying on external support, especially from close people such as parents. In this context, Aini shows an independent attitude by not letting the absence of parental support hinder her determination and enthusiasm to keep going. Although she feels emotionally neglected or does not have support from her family, Aini manages to strengthen herself to face life's difficulties and challenges. In the course of the story, Aini continues to struggle to achieve her dreams and goals even though her family's conditions are not supportive, an attitude that reflects strong emotional independence. This shows that emotional independence, Aini is not only reflected in her actions, but also in how she responds to difficult situations in her life, which illustrates the inner strength in overcoming disappointment and helplessness. This novel illustrates that emotional independence, especially in facing life's challenges, is a form of psychological strength that is very important for individuals who struggle in the midst of limitations.

"She stands firm even though many doubt her ability" and "Aini feels strong even though she doesn't have the support of her parents"

"Dia berdiri teguh walaupun banyak yang meragukan kemampuannya" dan "Aini merasa dirinya kuat meskipun tidak memiliki dukungan dari orang tua"

The above statement describes the emotional journey of the main character, Aini, in facing life's challenges full of doubts and lack of external support. Aini, who grew up in a less supportive environment, showed very strong emotional independence. Even though he did not have the support of his parents, he was able to maintain his steadfastness and

still fight to achieve his goals. This reflects the internal motivation that pushes Aini to keep going, despite many obstacles. In the context of literary psychology, this internal motivation can be understood as a psychological drive that comes from within Aini to achieve a goal, even though the surrounding environment does not provide a positive encouragement. The emotional independence that Aini shows in this novel is a form of mental resilience that allows individuals to stay focused on their goals and not be swayed by external pressure. In this case, Aini is a clear example of how inner strength, even in a state of deprivation, can lead a person to achieve what he wants, indicating a strong relationship between internal motivation and the achievement of emotional independence in facing life. Andrea Hirata's novel *Guru Aini*, by describing Aini's psychological condition full of struggles, shows how important the power of internal motivation is in overcoming difficulties and building emotional independence.

This statement demonstrates emotional independence—an individual's ability to manage life's feelings and challenges without relying on external support, particularly from close people like parents. Aini exhibits independent attitudes by not allowing absent parental support to hinder her determination and enthusiasm. From a literary psychology perspective, this reflects internal motivation driving Aini toward her goals despite environmental lack of positive encouragement. Emotional independence represents mental resilience enabling individuals to maintain goal focus without external pressure influence (Shanshan & Loang, 2024; Wicks, 2023). This finding aligns with research showing that individuals capable of managing emotions independently tend to be more resilient against stress. Students with strong emotional independence demonstrate better abilities in overcoming academic difficulties and higher motivation in achieving educational goals.

Data 2: Social Independence

"Aini always tries to understand and adapt to her friends at school"

"Aini selalu mencoba memahami dan beradaptasi dengan teman-temannya di sekolah"

The statement reflects the social independence that has been built in Aini, a leading figure who struggles to face social challenges in the school environment. Aini's social independence is manifested in her efforts to adjust to a new and diverse social environment, even though she comes from a different background. This illustrates how Aini tries to overcome the social and cultural gaps that exist around her, which can affect relationships between individuals. The internal conflicts experienced by Aini can be seen in the process of finding identity and adapting to social expectations at school. Although she wants to be accepted and appreciated by her peers, Aini has to deal with feelings of anxiety, insecurity, and sometimes feeling alienated. These internal conflicts are part of a psychological process that shows how individuals try to manage their feelings and maintain a sense of self-esteem amid social pressures. In literary psychology, this leads to the concept of self-actualization which shows Aini's efforts to find a balance between her personal identity and the social needs that exist in her environment. Aini strives not only to adapt externally, but also to overcome feelings of insecurity arising from social and cultural differences. This process of adaptation, while challenging, shows how individuals shape their social independence through self-understanding and interaction with others in a broader social environment.

This statement reflects social independence through Aini's efforts to adjust to new and diverse social environments despite different backgrounds. This illustrates overcoming social and cultural gaps affecting individual relationships. The internal

conflicts experienced by Aini appear in identity-seeking and adaptation processes to school social expectations. Although wanting acceptance and appreciation from peers, Aini must handle anxiety, insecurity, and sometimes alienation feelings. In literary psychology, this connects to self-actualization concepts showing Aini's efforts to balance personal identity with environmental social needs (Aini et al., 2023; Jaworowska, 2024). This adaptation process, while challenging, demonstrates how individuals shape social independence through self-understanding and broader social interaction.

Data 3: Professional Independence

“He decided to continue his studies even though he had to work while studying”

“Dia memutuskan untuk melanjutkan studi meskipun harus bekerja sambil belajar”

The above statement illustrates professional independence which is an important part of the character development of the main character. The context of this event shows the mature mindset and decision-making of the character, which reflects the ability to be independent in living life and achieving goals. Despite being hampered by economic circumstances and the demands to work, this figure chose to continue his education, understanding that success in the profession and social life depends on the knowledge and skills acquired through study.

Based on the perspective of literary psychology, the statement indicates how the character manages his life priorities and makes decisions based on careful personal reflection about the future. His mindset that values education as an investment in self-development and long-term success reflects a deeper understanding of the importance of professional independence. The decision to work while studying is not only related to financial need, but also part of an effort to enrich yourself with the skills necessary to face the professional world.

This character's decision-making pattern is closely related to the concept of professional independence, which includes the ability to face life and work challenges without relying on others, as well as taking full responsibility for his own future. In the context of this novel, the decision reflects the psychological maturity of the characters that develops along with the decision-making process that is driven by realistic thinking and high ideals. This shows how this character seeks to develop himself in a limited situation, while reflecting psychological development in the face of difficulties, something that is very relevant to the theory of literary psychology that focuses on the relationship between the character and the internal conflicts he faces.

“Aini feels that success comes from her own efforts, not from the help of others”

“Aini merasa keberhasilan itu datang dari usahanya sendiri, bukan dari bantuan orang lain”

The above statement illustrates the strengthening of the value of professional independence which is reflected in Aini's character. In this context, Aini shows a very independent attitude, believing that her achievements are the result of hard work and personal effort without relying on external help. This attitude is in line with the concept of literary psychology which discusses the dynamics of external and internal motivation. External motivation, in this case, arises from the social and professional environment that supports Aini to become a dedicated teacher, but she chooses not to rely excessively on external support. Instead, her internal motivation, which includes a sense of responsibility and a desire to give her best for her students, drives her to continue to grow and innovate in her profession, despite often having to face tough challenges. In literary psychology, it reflects how characters like Aini, inspired by personal goals and

idealism, are able to develop strong professional independence. Aini does not only rely on external factors such as facilities or the support of others, but chooses to develop her potential and focus on what she can control her efforts and personal dedication. This indicates the existence of a close interaction between external and internal motivations in the process of developing professional independence, which in turn, forms a determined character in the pursuit of ideals, even in situations that are not always ideal.

This statement illustrates professional independence as essential character development. The event context shows mature mindset and decision-making reflecting life independence ability and goal achievement despite economic circumstances and work demands. From literary psychology perspective, this indicates how characters manage life priorities and make decisions based on careful personal reflection about the future (Aini et al., 2023; Jaworowska, 2024). The mindset valuing education as self-development investment reflects deeper understanding of professional independence importance. This decision-making pattern relates closely to professional independence concepts, including ability to face life and work challenges without relying on others while taking full responsibility for personal future (Cleven et al., 2023; Lombardo et al., 2023; Maloney, 2022). The character's psychological maturity develops alongside decision-making processes driven by realistic thinking and high ideals.

The Implications of the Representation of Independence in Andrea Hirata's *Guru Aini* Novel on Literacy Habituation in Schools

The representation of independence in Andrea Hirata's *Guru Aini* provides practical implications for developing literacy habits in elementary schools. These implications are organized into three main categories corresponding to the types of independence identified: emotional, social, and professional independence. Each category offers specific strategies for enhancing students' literacy engagement and character development through evidence-based approaches (Ferro et al., 2024; Novyk & Mazur, 2021; Törrönen et al., 2018).

Emotional Independence Implications

The emotional independence demonstrated by Aini in managing feelings without parental support translates into practical literacy education strategies supported by contemporary research. Students can develop emotional resilience when facing challenging literacy tasks such as complex text comprehension or essay writing, as evidenced by studies showing improved academic outcomes through emotional regulation training. This emotional independence helps students manage anxiety and frustration that commonly arise during difficult academic tasks, ultimately increasing their persistence in literacy learning (Gotlieb et al., 2022; Schoenbach et al., 2011). Educational programs should integrate emotional regulation techniques within literacy activities, allowing students to build confidence in their abilities while developing reading and writing skills. The novel's portrayal of emotional strength provides a model for students to understand that academic challenges are opportunities for growth rather than insurmountable obstacles, consistent with findings on growth mindset development in literacy education (Bess, 2019; Hu et al., 2025; Sheehan & Ryan, 2017). Students who develop emotional independence in literacy contexts demonstrate better long-term academic achievement and increased motivation for lifelong learning. This emotional foundation supports not only literacy skill development but also overall academic resilience, as documented in longitudinal studies on student success (Eliyahu-

Levi, 2024; Jang et al., 2023). The integration of emotional independence training within literacy programs creates a supportive learning environment where students feel empowered to take risks and engage deeply with texts.

Aini's ability to remain steadfast despite external doubts offers valuable lessons for literacy education, supported by research on resilience building in academic contexts. Students can learn to manage stress and uncertainty when encountering unfamiliar texts or complex writing assignments, skills that transfer across academic domains. This stress management capability enables students to approach literacy tasks with confidence and persistence, even when initial attempts are unsuccessful, as demonstrated in studies on academic perseverance (Romas & Sharma, 2017). Teachers can use examples from the novel to help students understand that temporary setbacks in literacy learning are normal parts of the growth process, an approach validated by educational psychology research. The development of emotional independence in literacy contexts contributes to students' overall psychological well-being and academic success. Students who master emotional regulation in literacy activities often transfer these skills to other academic areas, creating a positive cycle of learning confidence (Comission, 2020; Ouellet Dallaire et al., 2018). This emotional competence becomes particularly important in collaborative literacy activities where students must navigate social dynamics while maintaining focus on learning objectives.

Social Independence Implications

The social independence demonstrated through Aini's adaptation to diverse school environments provides a framework for developing collaborative literacy skills, as supported by research on cooperative learning in literacy education. Students can learn to work effectively in literacy groups while maintaining their individual perspectives and contributions, a balance crucial for meaningful learning communities. This social independence enables students to participate meaningfully in book discussions, collaborative writing projects, and peer review activities without losing their unique voices, as documented in studies on student engagement (Comission, 2020; Ouellet Dallaire et al., 2018). The novel illustrates how individuals can support each other's growth while maintaining personal autonomy, a crucial skill for literacy learning communities validated by educational research. Students who develop social independence in literacy contexts become more effective communicators and critical thinkers. This social competence enhances their ability to engage with diverse texts and perspectives, broadening their understanding of literature and the world. The development of social independence also prepares students for lifelong participation in learning communities and professional collaborations, as evidenced by longitudinal studies on educational outcomes.

Aini's efforts to understand and adapt to friends from different backgrounds demonstrate the importance of intercultural competence in literacy education, supported by multicultural education research. Students can develop appreciation for diverse perspectives and experiences through engagement with multicultural literature and diverse classmates, an approach validated by studies on inclusive education. This intercultural understanding enhances students' ability to comprehend texts from various cultural contexts and to express their own experiences effectively in writing (Comission, 2020; Ouellet Dallaire et al., 2018). The novel's emphasis on mutual understanding and respect provides a model for creating inclusive literacy learning environments, consistent with best practices in multicultural literacy education. Students who develop intercultural social independence become more empathetic

readers and more effective communicators across cultural boundaries (Comission, 2020; Ouellet Dallaire et al., 2018). This competence is increasingly important in contemporary education where students encounter diverse texts and collaborate with peers from various backgrounds, as highlighted in global education research.

Professional Independence Implications

Aini's decision to continue studying while working demonstrates professional independence that can inspire students' academic commitment, supported by research on student motivation and self-direction. Students can develop leadership skills within literacy contexts by taking responsibility for their learning progress and supporting peers' development, as documented in studies on peer mentoring programs. This professional independence manifests in students' ability to set literacy goals, monitor their progress, and adjust their strategies as needed, skills validated by research on metacognitive learning strategies (Comission, 2020; Ouellet Dallaire et al., 2018). The novel's portrayal of dedicated persistence provides a model for students to understand the value of consistent effort in developing literacy skills. Students who develop professional independence in literacy learning become more self-directed and effective learners. This independence enables them to continue developing literacy skills beyond formal schooling, supporting lifelong learning and personal growth, as evidenced by longitudinal educational studies (Comission, 2020; Ouellet Dallaire et al., 2018). The cultivation of professional independence also prepares students for future academic and career challenges requiring autonomous learning and problem-solving.

Aini's innovative teaching methods and dedication to student success illustrate the importance of creative problem-solving in education, supported by research on pedagogical innovation. Students can develop professional independence by experimenting with different literacy strategies and finding approaches that work best for their individual learning styles, as validated by studies on personalized learning. This professional independence encourages students to become active participants in their literacy education rather than passive recipients of instruction, consistent with constructivist learning theories (Borrás, 2016; Hristoforova & Pavītola, 2024; Narushima et al., 2018). The novel's emphasis on finding creative solutions to educational challenges provides inspiration for students to approach literacy learning with curiosity and determination. Students who develop this form of professional independence often become peer mentors and leaders in literacy activities, as documented in research on student leadership development. This leadership development contributes to a positive classroom culture where students support each other's learning and celebrate collective achievements.

Integrated Implications for Literacy Culture

The comprehensive representation of independence in *Guru Aini* suggests that effective literacy education must address emotional, social, and professional dimensions simultaneously, as supported by holistic education research. Students who develop all three types of independence become more engaged, resilient, and effective literacy learners, as evidenced by comprehensive studies on student achievement. This integrated approach to independence development creates a strong foundation for lifelong learning and personal growth (Chen, 2024; Kucuksuleymanoglu, 2024). The novel's portrayal of interconnected independence types provides a holistic model for character education within literacy programs, consistent with contemporary educational frameworks. Schools implementing this comprehensive approach to

independence development often see improvements in both literacy achievement and student well-being, as documented in institutional research studies (Chen, 2024; Kucuksuleymanoglu, 2024). The integration of independence development with literacy education supports the broader goals of preparing students for active citizenship and meaningful participation in society.

Conclusion

This study reveals three independence representations in Andrea Hirata's novel *Guru Aini*: emotional independence (managing feelings without external support), social independence (adaptation and interaction capabilities), and professional independence (autonomous decision-making). These representations connect with literary psychology through mindset and decision-making, internal motivation, internal conflicts, and external-internal motivation interactions. The practical implications for school literacy habituation include: (1) strengthening emotions in difficult situations, (2) enhancing intercultural character understanding, (3) developing educational dedication and leadership, (4) building enthusiasm and integrity in social life, (5) fostering resilience and evaluation capabilities, and (6) strengthening sustainable self-development. These findings contribute to literature learning development that not only focuses on literacy technique mastery but also on forming independent, responsible students capable of facing future life challenges. The recommendation supports involving literary works as media for independent character formation implemented through school literacy habituation programs.

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