

**EXPLORING THE GAP IN GOVERNMENT MONITORING AND
EVALUATION OF INDEPENDENT ENGLISH COURSES: A
QUALITATIVE STUDY AT ONE OF THE ENGLISH INSTITUTIONS
IN MEDAN**

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to investigate how the profound absence of government monitoring and evaluation (M&E) influences the methods an independent English course uses to maintain teaching quality and to analyze the specific manifestation of educational decoupling within its daily operations. Utilizing a qualitative method with a single-case study design, the research focuses exclusively on the unfiltered experience of One of the English Institutions in Medan. The primary data source involves the institution's founder, while secondary data are derived from institutional documents and administrative records. Techniques of data collection include an in-depth virtual interview and structured institutional observations, utilizing a semi-structured interview guide with the researchers acting as the primary instruments of inquiry. Data analysis is conducted through a qualitative descriptive approach to systematically extract narrative information regarding strategic management perspectives. Findings reveal a significant regulatory vacuum after the initial licensing phase, where government interaction drops to zero post-establishment. This structural gap forces the institution to implement self-regulatory initiatives, including routine internal evaluations and collaborative knowledge sharing, to substitute for absent external audits. Furthermore, educational decoupling manifests as a daily survival strategy, where formal bureaucratic rules are maintained for legal legitimacy but remain detached from actual classroom practices which prioritize student communicative needs. The implications suggest that independent courses serve as vital functional alternatives to formal schools by filling practical communication gaps. Ultimately, the study advocates for a shift in government policy toward active pedagogical support and a more practical edupreneurship focus in university education curricula.

Keywords: Educational Decoupling, Government Monitoring, Quality Assurance, Independent English Course, Non-Formal Education.

INTRODUCTION

The overarching efficacy of any national educational ecosystem is intrinsically tied to the robustness and inclusivity of its Monitoring and Evaluation frameworks. In Indonesia, formal educational institutions are strictly regulated and continuously audited through standardized accreditation systems to ensure absolute alignment with national curricula. However, as the educational spectrum transitions into the non-formal sector, this regulatory framework becomes significantly fragmented. A stark systemic dichotomy exists wherein formal schools receive consistent oversight, while non-formal independent English courses frequently operate within a regulatory blind spot. This structural inconsistency breeds a precarious environment where stringent policies designed to guarantee educational quality exist primarily on paper but fundamentally fail to penetrate grassroots implementations. Consequently, the quality of instruction in these independent centers is not measured against external benchmarks but relies almost entirely on independent internal initiatives.

The urgency to investigate this non-formal sector is driven by the rapid proliferation of independent English courses across the nation. This widespread phenomenon is deeply rooted in the profound disconnect between formal school curricula and actual communicative market needs. In many formal education settings, English instruction is disproportionately fixated on grammar mastery and theoretical examination performance. This academic rigidity often leaves students practically inept in real-life communicative contexts. Consequently, local educational entrepreneurs establish independent language centers to fulfill a massive unmet demand, positioning these institutions as essential functional alternatives where students can dynamically utilize the language rather than merely chasing academic grades.

Despite their crucial pedagogical role, the operational reality of these independent institutions presents alarming cases of systemic neglect and isolation. A glaring issue is the immense burden placed on instructional delivery. Without government sponsored pedagogical training programs specifically tailored for independent educators, the responsibility to train and evaluate teachers falls entirely on the founders. Compounding this challenge is the high operational mortality rate of newly established learning centers. Many startups initiated by fresh education graduates are forced to permanently close because their young founders severely lack the business management, financial, and administrative acumen required to sustain an institution. Furthermore, this isolation is exacerbated by a prominent systemic bias within Small and Medium Enterprises support programs, where state funded initiatives disproportionately favor businesses producing physical goods over service sector educational startups.

To address this critical situation, this study offers a unique novelty by providing a grassroots perspective of how the complete absence of government intervention shapes local educational entrepreneurship. Rather than observing systemic issues from a macro perspective, this research focuses on the unfiltered daily operational experience of a specific independent institution. This approach provides a fresh and in depth perspective on how local founders strategically construct quality assurance frameworks in a landscape utterly devoid of external guidance.

The absolute necessity of investigating this regulatory vacuum is heavily substantiated by empirical preliminary data gathered through initial observations and preliminary interviews at One of the English Institutions in Medan. The findings explicitly reveal that while the institution successfully managed its initial administrative licensing, there has been a total absence of subsequent monitoring, evaluation, or pedagogical mentoring from local education authorities since its inception. The management confirmed that they have operated entirely independently without a single official supervisory visit. In response to this profound neglect, the founder has been forced to independently construct

robust internalized quality assurance mechanisms through rigorous routine internal evaluations and collaborative knowledge sharing among tutors.

To address this critical situation, this study offers a unique novelty by providing a grassroots perspective of how the complete absence of government intervention shapes local educational entrepreneurship. Therefore, to systematically guide this investigation, the study explicitly formulates three main research problems: (1) How does the complete lack of government monitoring structurally influence the institutional approach to maintaining teaching quality? (2) What specific concrete internal steps and self-regulatory initiatives are taken by the independent English course to ensure educational standards are met? and (3) How does the concept of educational decoupling practically manifest in the daily management and English teaching operations of the institution?

METODE

This study employs a qualitative method utilizing a single-case study design to deeply explore the intricate operational realities and the phenomenon of educational decoupling within the non-formal education sector. Qualitative research is deliberately selected because it is fundamentally suited for comprehensively understanding complex organizational behaviors in their natural settings. By concentrating the academic investigation entirely on the unfiltered experience of one specific entity, One of the English Intitutions in Medan, the researchers can capture a highly detailed, bottom-up perspective of local educational entrepreneurship operating autonomously outside the traditional governmental supervisory radar.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

This section exclusively presents the direct outcomes and discovered realities from the field investigation. To explicitly answer the formulated research problems, the concrete qualitative data gathered from the primary informant and institutional observations are elaborated in detail through the qualitative data matrices below.

1. The Structural Influence of Absent Government Monitoring

The first major finding addresses the first research problem regarding how the complete lack of government monitoring structurally influences the institutional approach to maintaining teaching quality. The qualitative data reveals a stark operational reality where the institution operates entirely independently from local education authorities.

Table 1. Concrete Data on Government Interaction and Institutional Reality

| Operational Phase | Concrete Data on Government Involvement | Discovered Institutional Reality and Impact |
|-----------------------|--|--|
| Initial Establishment | High Involvement: The government actively participated only during the initial administrative phase. | The institution strictly followed formal bureaucratic procedures and submitted complex paperwork solely to obtain legal operating licenses from the authorities. |
| Routine Operations | Zero Involvement: There has been an absolute absence of official supervisory visits post-licensing. | The management concretely confirmed that they operate daily without any external monitoring, structured guidance, or pedagogical mentoring from the local Education Office. |
| Quality Control | Zero Involvement: The government does not facilitate external accreditation for the independent course. | The responsibility to evaluate teaching effectiveness falls entirely on the internal management. This vacuum structurally forces a heightened sense of professional responsibility upon the founder to guarantee premium educational services. |

Based on the concrete data presented in Table 1, it is evident that the relationship

between the government and the independent English course is purely administrative and highly transactional. The interview data explicitly reveals that once the legal operating license was successfully issued during the initial establishment phase, all forms of governmental pedagogical supervision abruptly ceased. Consequently, this profound regulatory vacuum acts as a powerful catalyst for the institution. Instead of degrading the teaching quality, the absolute absence of external monitoring structurally forces a heightened sense of professional responsibility upon the management team, compelling them to independently guarantee that their students receive premium English educational services.

Primary Interview Evidence for Table 1

To concretely validate the data matrix above, the following is the verbatim interview excerpt with the founder regarding the absolute lack of government monitoring.

- **Researcher:** *"Dalam perjalanan merintis lembaga ini, seberapa intens interaksi One of the English Intitutions in Medan dengan instansi pemerintah terkait perizinan maupun pembinaan?"*
- **Informant (Founder):** *"Kalau untuk urusan perizinan di awal, tentu saja kami berinteraksi dengan instansi terkait agar legalitas lembaga kami jelas dan resmi beroperasi. Kebetulan suami saya juga banyak membantu mengurus hal-hal administratif tersebut. Namun, kalau kita bicara soal pembinaan, monitoring, atau evaluasi rutin dari pihak pemerintah atau Dinas Pendidikan, jujur saja interaksinya hampir tidak ada. Sejak awal berdiri sampai sekarang, kami berjalan secara mandiri tanpa ada kunjungan pembinaan khusus dari dinas terkait."*

2. Concrete Internal Steps and Self-Regulatory Initiatives

Addressing the second research problem, the findings detail the specific internal mechanisms proactively constructed by the institution to ensure educational standards are consistently met without government oversight. The concrete data shows that One of the English Intitutions in Medan implements a robust self-regulatory framework to substitute the absent external accreditation process.

Table 2. Detailed Data on the Internal Quality Assurance Framework

| Self-Regulatory Initiative | Concrete Implementation Strategy Based on Field Data | Primary Pedagogical Objective |
|--|---|--|
| Continuous Skill Enhancement | The management strictly mandates tutors to independently upgrade their teaching skills and English proficiency outside of formal teaching hours. | To actively guarantee that teachers possess the pedagogical capacity to deliver premium learning materials effectively. |
| Routine Internal Evaluations | The founder conducts regular and rigorous internal assessments where the management directly reviews curriculum delivery and classroom performance. | To accurately identify teaching deficiencies early and substitute the traditional role of government auditors in maintaining educational standards. |
| Collaborative Knowledge Sharing | The institution deliberately facilitates a peer-to-peer learning environment for its teaching staff. | To allow experienced teachers to actively share successful pedagogical strategies with newer tutors, building a strong internal community of practice. |

The data detailed in Table 2 clearly outlines the concrete self-regulatory initiatives executed by the institution to survive the systemic isolation. The management refuses to use the lack of government sponsored training as an excuse for poor pedagogical delivery. Instead, they proactively implement continuous skill enhancement and rigorous routine internal evaluations to directly assess how tutors handle classroom dynamics. Furthermore, by facilitating a collaborative peer-to-peer knowledge sharing system, the founder

successfully establishes a strong internal community of practice among the English tutors.

Primary Interview Evidence for Table 2

The concrete internal steps taken by the institution are explicitly confirmed by the founder through the following interview excerpt.

- **Researcher:** *"Mengingat institusi kami belum pernah mengikuti pelatihan dari pemerintah, bagaimana pandangan Bapak/Ibu sendiri tentang pentingnya pelatihan guru?"*
- **Informant (Founder):** *"Menurut saya pribadi, pelatihan guru itu sangatlah krusial dan tidak bisa ditawar. Meskipun kami belum pernah difasilitasi langsung oleh program pemerintah, bukan berarti kami jadi mengabaikan kualitas pengajaran. Justru karena tidak ada yang mengawasi dari luar, saya merasa punya tanggung jawab yang jauh lebih besar. Saya selalu menekankan kepada para tentor di sini bahwa kita harus terus meningkatkan skill, mengadakan evaluasi internal secara rutin, dan saling berbagi ilmu antar pengajar agar kualitas kita tetap terjaga dengan baik."*

3. The Practical Manifestation of Educational Decoupling

Answering the third research problem, the concrete findings address how the concept of educational decoupling clearly manifests in the daily operations and decision-making processes of the independent English course. The data perfectly illustrates a structural disconnection between formal institutional policies required by the government and the actual classroom practices executed by the teachers.

Table 3. Concrete Evidence of Educational Decoupling Manifestation

| Structural Component | Concrete Data from the Field | Operational Manifestation |
|-------------------------------------|---|--|
| Formal Administrative Facade | The initial licensing process acts purely as an administrative shell. | The data shows that the institution fulfilled all complex bureaucratic requirements solely to be perceived as legitimate by the state and to operate legally within the market. |
| Actual Classroom Practices | Formal rules completely detached from daily pedagogical activities once the official license was granted. | The concrete findings confirm that government policies exist merely on paper and absolutely do not influence how the teachers actually deliver the English materials or conduct classroom assessments. |
| Survival Strategy Execution | The founder navigates this profound neglect by maintaining the formal facade while operating an independent system. | Daily operational decisions are entirely driven by actual student communicative needs and practical market demands rather than by formal government mandates. |

Table 3 provides concrete empirical evidence of how educational decoupling practically manifests as a daily survival strategy for the institution. The qualitative data vividly illustrates a complete structural disconnection between the formal policies demanded by the local education authorities and the actual English teaching practices executed inside the classrooms. The complex bureaucratic licensing process was fulfilled by the founder solely to establish legal market legitimacy. However, once this formal administrative facade was successfully established, the government rules became entirely obsolete in daily operations.

Primary Interview Evidence for Table 3

The phenomenon of educational decoupling and the resulting operational flexibility is concretely validated by the founder's statement.

- **Researcher:** "*Menurut Bapak/Ibu, apakah ada keuntungan tersendiri menjadi lembaga yang independen (mandiri dalam melatih guru tanpa campur tangan birokrasi pemerintah)?*"
- **Informant (Founder):** "*Tentu saja ada keuntungannya. Menjadi lembaga yang sepenuhnya independen membuat kami jauh lebih fleksibel dan lincah dalam bergerak. Kami bisa dengan cepat mengubah atau menyesuaikan materi dan kurikulum sesuai dengan tren terbaru atau kebutuhan spesifik dari murid-murid kami, tanpa harus menunggu proses persetujuan birokrasi yang panjang. Kami punya otonomi penuh untuk menentukan standar kualitas kami sendiri dan bisa langsung mengeksekusinya di dalam kelas.*"

Discussions

This section synthesizes the concrete findings to explicitly verify the theoretical frameworks utilized in this study and comprehensively explores their profound implications toward English Language Learning (ELL) in Indonesia.

1. Verification of the Theoretical Frameworks

The concrete data gathered from the field explicitly verifies the Theory of Educational Monitoring and Evaluation by confirming that a structural regulatory blind spot genuinely exists within the non-formal education sector. The findings verify that once the initial administrative licensing is complete, government supervision drops to absolute zero. In direct response to this vacuum, the study strongly verifies the Internal Quality Assurance Theory. The independent course does not allow the lack of external audits to degrade its teaching standards. Instead, the management proactively constructs robust self-regulatory mechanisms, such as routine internal evaluations and collaborative peer-to-peer knowledge sharing among tutors.

Furthermore, the operational reality of the institution perfectly verifies the Educational Decoupling Theory. The data confirms that the founder maintains the formal administrative facade strictly for legal legitimacy, while completely detaching it from the actual classroom practices. Therefore, educational decoupling is verified not merely as an abstract organizational concept, but as a mandatory daily survival strategy for independent learning centers operating in systemic isolation.

2. Implications toward English Language Learning

The most crucial contribution of this qualitative research is identifying the direct implication of educational decoupling toward English Language Learning (ELL). Because the institution operates autonomously and is completely decoupled from rigid national curricula, the English tutors possess the ultimate freedom to radically redesign their pedagogical approach. In many formal educational settings, English instruction is frequently fixated on theoretical grammar mastery and standardized exam scores. However, this study implies that the regulatory absence paradoxically empowers the independent course to shift its entire pedagogical orientation toward practical communicative competence.

This institutional autonomy implies that English Language Learning within independent centers becomes highly dynamic, immersive, and directly contextualized to real world situations. Tutors can rapidly adapt their learning materials to fulfill the authentic communicative demands of the students without waiting for lengthy bureaucratic approvals. Consequently, independent English courses serve as vital functional alternatives that successfully fill the practical communication gaps left by the formal schooling system. Ultimately, the resilience of these independent institutions implies that true English pedagogical excellence is driven by a profound understanding of student needs and continuous internal skill enhancement, rather than strict adherence to formal government mandates.

CONCLUSION

The final chapter of this qualitative study presents a comprehensive synthesis of the research findings and provides strategic recommendations for institutional improvement. These conclusions directly address the formulated research problems regarding the regulatory gaps and internal quality assurance within the independent English course sector. By offering targeted suggestions, this section aims to bridge the systemic disconnect between government authorities and private educational providers to enhance the quality of non-formal education.

Conclusion

This study concludes that a significant structural gap exists in the government monitoring and evaluation system regarding independent English courses in Indonesia. The findings demonstrate that once the initial administrative licensing is secured, these institutions operate in a complete regulatory vacuum without any ongoing pedagogical supervision from local education authorities. However, this study highlights that such a lack of oversight does not necessarily lead to a decline in educational quality. Instead, it paradoxically fosters a high degree of institutional resilience and self-reliance, as the management is compelled to establish its own rigorous internal quality assurance mechanisms to maintain market legitimacy and student trust.

Furthermore, the research identifies that educational decoupling serves as a vital survival strategy for independent learning centers. By detaching their formal administrative status from their actual classroom practices, these institutions gain the pedagogical flexibility needed to bypass rigid bureaucratic constraints. This autonomy allows them to prioritize practical communicative competence and rapidly adapt their curricula to meet the real-world English language needs of their students. Ultimately, while the government remains absent in the operational phase, independent English courses successfully fill the educational gap by providing a more dynamic, responsive, and learner-centered approach to English Language Learning.

Suggestions

To resolve the issue of educational decoupling and improve the quality of the non-formal education sector, the following targeted suggestions are proposed.

1. For the Medan City Education Office (Dinas Pendidikan Kota Medan)

Specifically, the Division of Pendidikan Anak Usia Dini (PAUD) or Early Childhood Education and Pendidikan Non-Formal (PNF) or Non-Formal Education is advised to shift its regulatory paradigm from purely administrative licensing to active pedagogical mentoring. The office should establish a decentralized monitoring framework that provides Lembaga Kursus dan Pelatihan (LKP) or Course and Training Center founders with direct access to government-sponsored teacher training, instructional resources, and transparent communication channels to ensure independent institutions are supported rather than marginalized.

2. For Independent LKP Managers and Founders

Since external government benchmarks are currently absent, managers of independent English courses in Medan are strongly advised to form collaborative networks or consortiums with other local non-formal education providers. By establishing a shared community of practice, these institutions can conduct cross-institutional peer evaluations and share resources for teacher professional development to strengthen their institutional credibility.

3. For Universitas Negeri Medan (UNIMED) and English Education Students

While the English Education Study Program already incorporates an Edupreneurship course, it is highly suggested that the curriculum further intensifies its practical modules regarding the complex administrative realities of the industry. This includes providing students with hands-on simulations for navigating legal licensing, understanding tax compliance for service-based educational startups, and managing the specific bureaucratic requirements of the local education authorities. Strengthening these practical aspects will ensure that graduates are not only pedagogically sound but also administratively resilient in sustaining their educational ventures.

4. For Future Academic Researchers

Given that this study is a single-case study focused exclusively on One of the English Institutions in Medan, future researchers are encouraged to conduct comparative qualitative studies involving multiple independent English courses across different regions in North Sumatra. Further research could also explore the impact of this regulatory gap directly from the students' perspectives to provide a more holistic evaluation of how self-regulated teaching quality affects actual language acquisition.

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