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The Implementation of Ignatian Pedagogy in a Jesuit University in Indonesia: Students' Perspectives

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Abstract

The goal of Jesuit education is to grow a whole person through its signature Ignatian Pedagogy. When entering Indonesia, it surely has its own uniqueness. Thus, this study aims at exploring how Ignatian Pedagogy is implemented in the teaching and learning process in a Jesuit university in Indonesia. This qualitative study used questionnaires to collect the data from 613 students. The results revealed significant findings related to each element. In Context, the lecturers have made efforts to understand the students' backgrounds through direct interaction in and outside the classroom as well as through social media. In Experience, the lecturers mostly used discussions to trigger students' engagement. Moreover, the way the lecturers asked the students to do the Reflection was quite varied, ranging from giving written guiding questions to spontaneously inviting the students to do it. In Action, the lecturers asked the students to make some plans, do positive activities, and express individual intent. The Evaluation done includes cognitive, affective, and psychomotor ones. Suggesting holistic collaborative and contextual education, the findings also reflect the characteristics of education as outlined in the Regulation from the Minister of Education and Culture of Indonesia. Yet, *cura personalis* seems to be challenging to be implemented in Indonesia.

Introduction

Learning in university should be specifically designed for adults. The theory of adult learning is built upon the concept which states that adults learn differently from children. A specific term to refer to pedagogy for adult is andragogy. It views that adult learning depends on their needs and experiences.¹ Thus, motivation is central to adult learning. Therefore, higher education should approach teaching and learning through appropriate andragogy.

In Indonesia, higher education has to play a strategic role in educating the nation, advancing science and technology by applying the values of humanity and sustainability of civilization and empowerment by taking into account the situation and condition of education in Indonesia.² To realize the goal, each higher education institution in Indonesia may apply various kinds of pedagogy which are in line with the characteristics of adult learning.

In 2002, the Society of Jesus in the United States published a document *Communal Reflection on the Jesuit Mission in Higher Education: A Way of Proceeding*, which emphasized five characteristics of Jesuit higher education: (1) dedication to human dignity from the perspective of Catholic faith; (2) continuous appreciation and reflection on human experience; (3) creative cooperation with coworkers; (4) concern for students; and (5) understanding justice and solidarity.³

In sum, the main purpose of Jesuit education is a complete personal growth that leads to an action in accordance with the spirit and presence of Jesus Christ, namely to be human to each other (man for others). This goal requires a complete and deep formation of human beings. This formation is also referred to as “excellence,” which means to achieve human potential, which includes not only intellectual and academic aspects but also other aspects.

In line with characteristics of Jesuit higher education, Ignatian Pedagogy as one paradigm in adult learning is implemented in a Jesuit university in Indonesia.⁴ It was first introduced in 1993 in response to a prominent question addressed to teachers in Jesuit schools: Are there differences between a Jesuit approach and the teaching itself? Ignatian Pedagogy is inspired by Saint Ignatius, who emphasized the spirit of being humanistic. While St. Ignatius was influenced by the movement of Renaissance Humanism, the term “humanistic” is distinct from the anthropological definition. In John O’Malley’s publication “How Humanistic Is the Jesuit Tradition?”, the first level comprises the practical and the more broadly humanizing potential of the humanities, while the second one is on the level of concern for the yearnings of the human heart arising from Ignatian spirituality.⁵

Another distinctive value that Ignatian Pedagogy (IP) holds is individual attention to students, which is known as *cura personalis*. It implies that teachers really care about how they can help students in their learning and development. How educators relate to students, how educators understand learning, how educators engage students in finding the truth, what educators expect from their students, and the integrity and idealism of educators have a significant impact on

the growth of learners. Through these elements, the goals of Jesuit education can be realized.

The principles of IP are: (1) lecturers play a role in serving students, are sensitive to the talents and difficulties of students, are personally engaged, and help develop the internal capabilities of each student; (2) students need to be actively engaged in learning, discovery, and personal creativity; (3) relations between lecturers and students are personal and sustainable; (4) syllabus and teaching are adjusted to the level of students’ ability; (5) content and materials are arranged in a logical order; (6) preview and review are truly pursued for better mastery, better assimilation, and a deeper understanding; and (7) the depth of material is more pivotal than the breadth of coverage (*non multa, sed multum*).⁶

In helping students develop their personal integrity, Ignatian Pedagogy is based on the way of life of Jesus Christ. This means accompanying young people in giving and sharing the joy of their lives with others. That means helping them find what they most want to offer beyond what they have. It means helping young people understand and appreciate that other people have the greatest wealth. It means walking with them on their own journey towards greater knowledge, freedom, and love. Education in the jurisdiction of the institute seeks to transform how young people see themselves and others, in social systems and structures, in the global community, and in all-natural creation. If done well, Jesuit education results in a radical transformation, not only the way in which people have the habit of thinking and acting, but the true way in which they live in the world, as people who are competent, listen to conscience, and compassionate, to seek greater goodness (*magis*). In Jesuit education, moral responsibility and the foundation of primary education lie not in curricular or extra-curricular procedures or activities, but in educators. Jesuit education is a face-to-face community where authentic personal relationships between educators and students develop. The relationship of trust and friendship between educators and students is a condition for increasing growth with a commitment to values.

Jesuit pedagogy is concerned in the overall growth of the human side, which includes: intellectual,

feeling, mind, and heart. This pedagogy has an effort to explore secrets, insights, conclusions, problems, solutions, and implications in understanding human meaning. In general, pedagogy which involves active learning, reflection, and critical evaluation is better teaching in increasing the involvement of students in the learning process. Jesuit pedagogy lays the foundation and belief about traditional learning involvement techniques. Although the Jesuits have religious roots, pedagogical techniques and teachings are not exclusively about Christian teaching. Jesuit pedagogies have more spiritual ethos than religious motivations and can be applied to all matters and all beliefs. Jesuit pedagogy allows students to use modern pedagogical techniques that accommodate issues of equality, justice, and life values. Pedagogy is a method used by educators to accompany learners in their growth and development. Pedagogy cannot be simplified as a methodology, but rather an art of educating. Implementation of Jesuit pedagogy is classified as flexible, while the main goal is personal growth that leads to behavior. The aim of this behavior is to make learners have self-discipline and initiative.⁷ The ultimate goal of Jesuit education is to achieve full growth as a human being that leads to action. The purpose of this action, based on sound understanding and reflection, encourages learners to carry out self-discipline and initiative, fight for integrity and truth.

In addition, students should be considered as the main actor in learning. Therefore, it is important to understand students' perceptions of lecturers and learning. As seen from students' perspectives, good teachers are those who master the learning material, explain the materials well, make the learning enjoyable, give regular feedback, and offer extra assistance when needed.⁸ Teaching effectiveness is a result of the combination of methods, students' efforts, and teachers' commitment.⁹

This study is carried out based on the goals as mentioned above of education in Indonesia, the principles practiced in a Jesuit university and the importance of understanding students' perceptions, and the limited number of studies that report how those aspects are practiced in a Jesuit university. In particular, this study seeks to

understand how the principles of IP (Context, Experience, Reflection, Evaluation, and Action) are implemented as seen from the students' perspectives.

The Elements of Ignatian Pedagogy

1. Context

The task of educators is to build a supportive learning environment by considering the needs and characteristics of learners. The learning environment is what affects the learning process. Individualization and personalization of instruction are the main keys of Ignatian education.¹⁰ Context is about things that need to be known about learners (environment, background, community, and potential), so that educators can educate well and effectively. Personal attention and focus on individuals (*cura personalis*) is an essential feature in Jesuit education and requires educators to truly know the context and life experience of learners. Educators must know as much as possible about the real context where the learning process takes place. Educators need to understand the world of students, including family life, friends, culture, politics, economics, religion, media, art, music, and other world realities that influence the lives of students.

2. Experience

Experience is the best way to involve learners as human beings as a whole in the teaching and learning process. Educators must create a condition where students collect material from their experience to filter out what students have understood in the form of facts, feelings, values, insights, and intuition and carried in lecture material. Furthermore, educators direct students to bring together new information with further experience so that their knowledge can grow and contain truth.

3. Reflection

Reflection is an attempt to understand more deeply what has been learned. Educators lay the foundations for learning how to learn through involving students in reflection skills and techniques. Memory, understanding, imagination, and feeling are used to find meaning and value

that are the essence of what is learned, to find its relationship with human knowledge and activities, and appreciate its implications in continuing the search for truth. The ongoing process of experience, reflection and action is at the heart of Ignatian Pedagogy.

4. Action

Action is the way educators encourage learners to change knowledge into action. Educators provide opportunities that will challenge imagination and train the willingness of learners to choose the best possibility of an action from what students learn. What students do is a result under the direction of the educator, which should be an educational step aimed at directing new experiences, continued reflection, and consequent actions in the subject area.

5. Evaluation

Evaluation is an activity to measure the development of students in aspects of mind, feeling (heart), and enthusiasm. Daily, weekly, or monthly quizzes, as well as semester examinations are instruments commonly used to measure the level of mastery of knowledge and skills achieved by students. In Ignatian Pedagogy, the purpose of evaluation does not only cover the academic mastery of students as an indication of their development; educators also assess indications of development through a process of discussion in the classroom as well as the kindness of students in responding to their surrounding needs (sensitivity).

Another element that is central to IP and Jesuit education is *cura personalis*, which is defined as personal care to students.¹¹

Methodology

This study is qualitative. The data were gathered through questionnaires that contain both closed-ended and open-ended questions. The participants of this study were 613 students of a Jesuit university in Indonesia. The researchers chose one class in each study program which consisted of at least thirty students. The selection of classes also considered the representation of the participants' batch (semester two, four, or six). The participants

were asked to fill out the online survey using a Google Form. There were twelve questions in total, consisting of nine closed-ended and three open-ended questions. The data was gathered in April and May 2018.

The data analysis technique for the closed-ended questions was carried out through descriptive analysis. The descriptive analysis technique is done by creating a frequency distribution table from the answers chosen by students; then the results are presented in bar or circle diagrams. Then, the findings were interpreted. The data analysis for the open-ended questions was done through content analysis. Content analysis was used to interpret the data in the form of text through a systematic classification process in the form of coding and identifying various themes or patterns.¹²

Findings and Discussion

There were 613 students who filled out the surveys. As many as 67% of the students are male and 33% are female. Based on the study period, 40% of the total respondents were second-semester students, 24% were fourth-semester students, 24% were sixth-semester students, and 12% were students from semester ten or above.

Context

In general, the participants thought that their lecturers had tried to get to know their students. While 14.5% of respondents stated that all lecturers had tried to get to know the students, 67% of respondents said that most lecturers had tried to get to know the students. Additionally, 17.3% stated that most lecturers did not know them yet, and only 1.1% said that all lecturers did not know students yet.

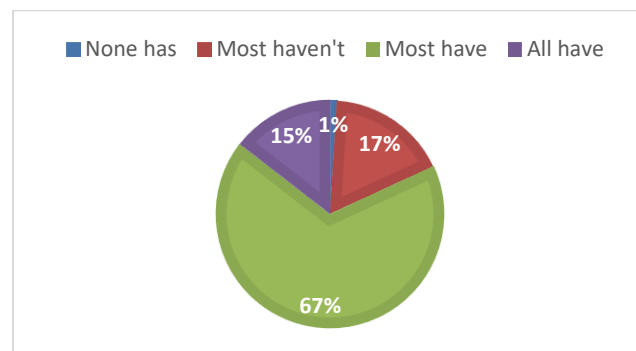


Figure 1. Lecturer effort to know students

The way the lecturers tried to know and be familiar with their students was quite diverse. According to respondents, the most widely used method for lecturers to get to know students was by reading attendance (25.2%). Then, the lecturer also mentioned the names of students when communicating (22.9%) and allowed students to introduce themselves (18%). Furthermore,

another method of introduction was done by asking about students' background (11.4%), having conversation outside the class (9.06%), making friends on social media (8.8%), asking students to use name tags at the beginning of lectures (3.62%), and others (0.7%) (See Figure 2).

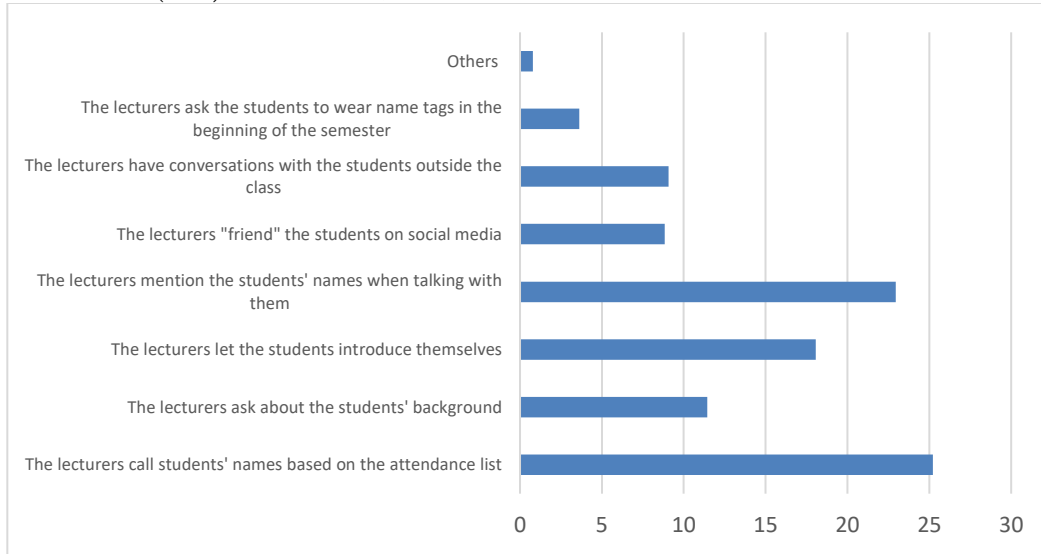


Figure 2. How the Lecturer Tried to Know Their Students

Experience

From the survey results, it was found that the most frequently used method by the lecturers was student presentation (15%), group discussions

(14.2%), assignment (13.9%), lectures (11.6%), and question and answer session (11.5%), followed by watching videos, giving cases, sharing by students, giving projects, and others (See Figure 3).

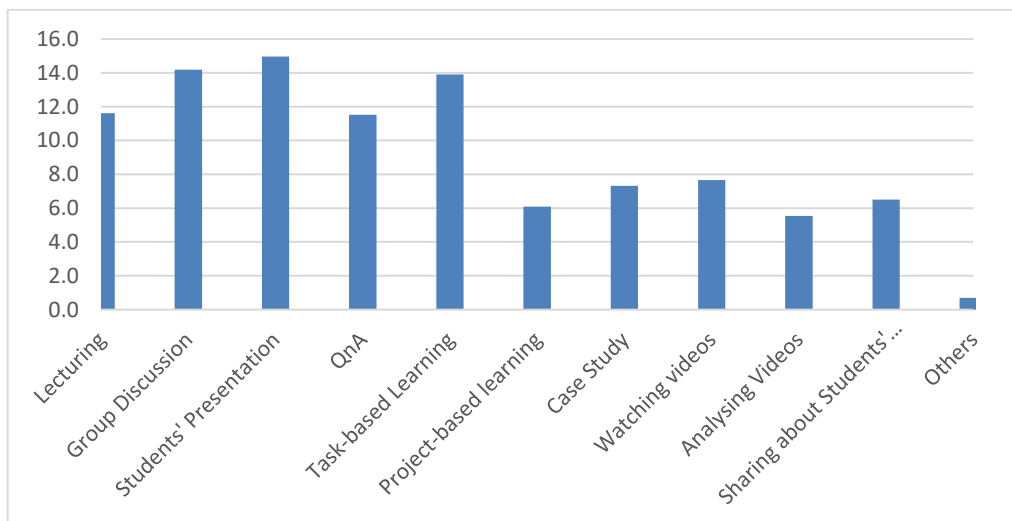


Figure 3. The Most Frequently Used Method of Experience

When asked about the method that was most preferred by the students, the participants stated that they most liked group discussions (30%). Other methods that students liked were watching videos (14%), student presentations (12%),

lectures (12%), question and answer session (10%), giving cases (6%), giving projects (5%), sharing experiences by students (5%), and assignments (4%) (See Figure 4).

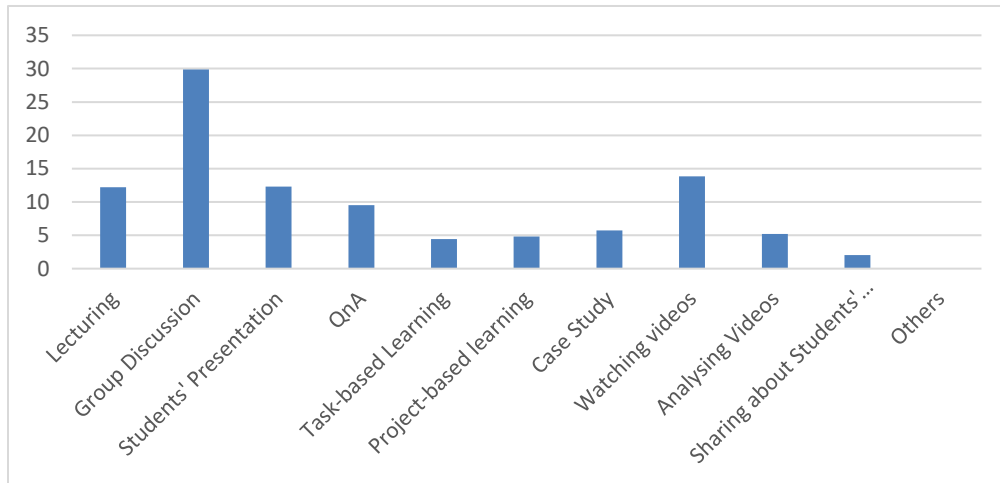


Figure 4. The Most Preferred Method of Experience

On the other hand, when asked to identify the method that was most disliked by students, 36.9% of respondents stated that they least liked the lecture, followed by students' presentation

(17.4%), assigning assignments (15.4%), giving projects (7.6 %), group discussions (5.1%), giving cases (4.6%), watching videos (3.2%), and sharing experiences by students (1%) (See Figure 5).

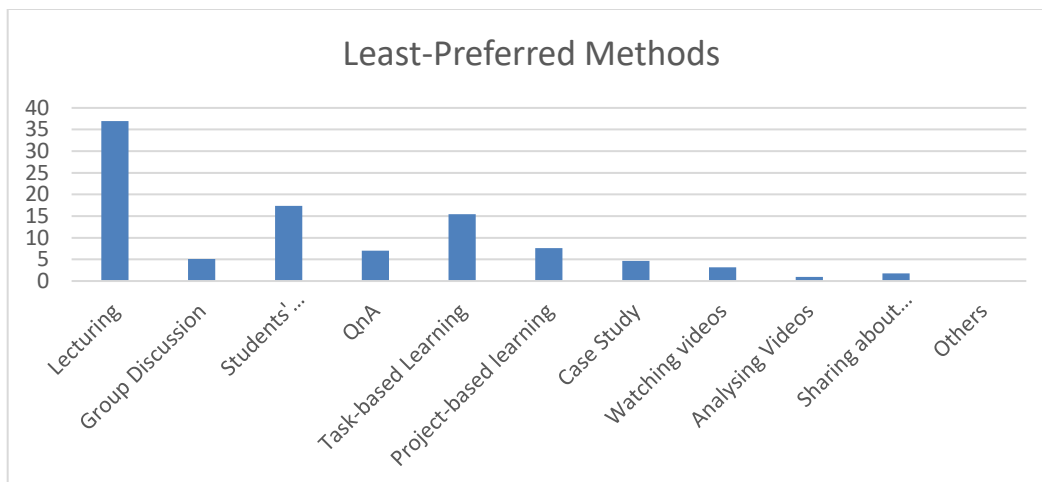


Figure 5. Least-preferred Methods of Experience

Reflection

From the result, it was shown that 11% of students thought that all lecturers had encouraged and invited them to do reflection, and 56% thought that most lecturers have done so. Also, when asked to identify how the lecturer invited

students to reflect, the majority stated that the lecturer invited students to reflect in writing with a question guide from the lecturer (39%). Others stated that reflection was carried out verbally with question guidance (27%), written without question guidance (18%), and oral without question guidance (16%) (See Figure 6).

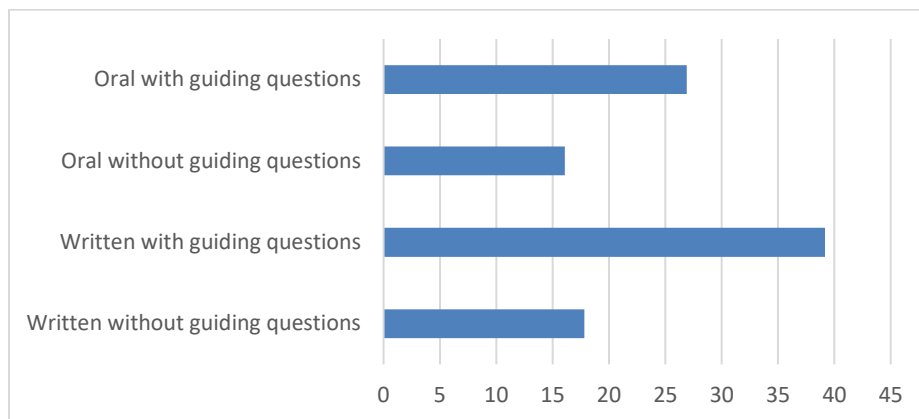


Figure 6. Reflection Methods

Action

As many as 88% of respondents stated that there was a follow-up carried out after the reflection, and 12% stated that no follow-up was formulated or carried out. The following are the results of

student responses related to the form of follow-up carried out in learning. As many as 36% stated that the form of follow-up was to plan activities. They also follow up by doing positive things (35%) and formulating personal intentions (28%) (See Figure 7).

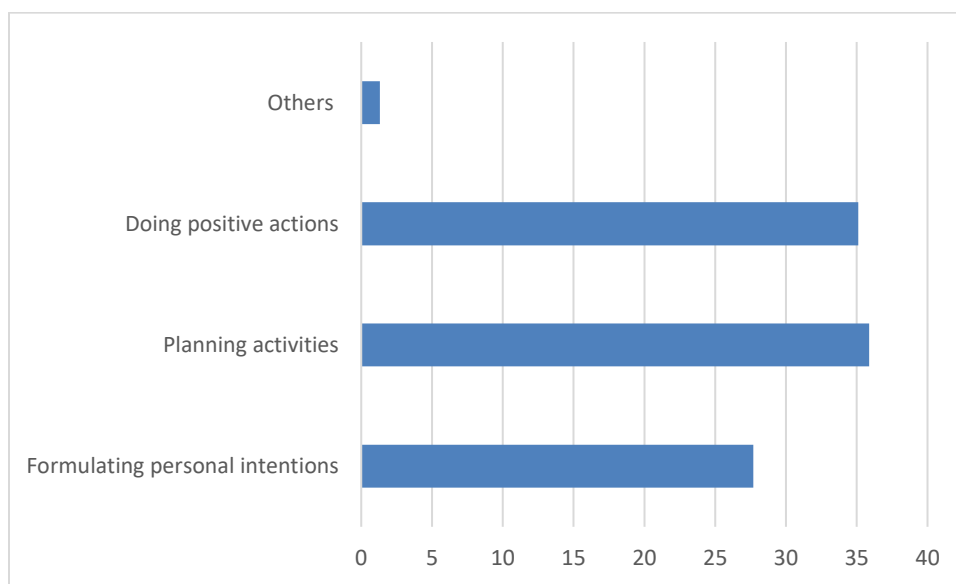


Figure 7. Types of Action

Evaluation

In order to evaluate the teaching and learning process, the lecturers conducted some types of assignments. The types were quite varied, ranging from traditional assessments such as tests and quizzes to more authentic assessments, such as journals and individual or group projects. This fact depicts that the lecturers have tried to conduct

assessments which not only dealt with students' cognitive development but also accommodated evaluation of psychomotor and affective aspects.

Discussion

From the findings, there are some highlights that are interesting to be discussed. First, in terms of the application of IP, it seems that the characteristics of education outlined by the

Indonesian government have been appropriately addressed. The Minister of Education and Culture Regulation No. 49, 2014 states that higher education should be interactive, holistic, scientific, contextual, thematic, effective, collaborative and student-centered.¹³ The main three characteristics reflected through the IP practice are holistic, collaborative and contextual. Those were the outcomes of the provision of various teaching and learning methods experienced by the students.

Moreover, the results also resonate with the principles and characteristics of Jesuit education in general and IP in particular. First, the findings suggest that personal care and concern for the individual continues as a hallmark of Jesuit education.¹⁴ The lecturers have made some efforts to have a good understanding of the students that they serve through interactions, both in and outside the class. Secondly, the results also indicate that the teaching and learning process put heavy emphasis on 3Cs, which stand for Competence, Conscience, and Compassion. As a result, the assessment done by the lecturers has also covered those three aspects. This result corroborates with what Pennington et al. state, that IP seeks to develop men and women of compassion, competence, and conscience. The assessment has covered not only cognitive, but also affective and psychomotor one.¹⁵

Some other notable findings which denote the particularity of IP in the Indonesian context include the shift of student-teacher interaction and challenges in realizing *cura personalis*. It can be seen from the findings that the advancement of technology has made some changes in student-teacher interaction. Students today can reach their lecturers via social media, such as Instagram, Facebook, Twitter, and WhatsApp. This fact is a contrast to the situation in the past where students could only meet their lecturers personally or made

an appointment via email or short messages. It has also influenced the nature of their relationship to be closer and more informal. Another implication of this phenomenon is the social distance between the students and the lecturers which has become warmer and friendlier.

Although the findings suggest that each element of IP has been well implemented, implementing *cura personalis* can be somewhat challenging in Indonesian context, mainly because of the number of students. Some classes which include practicum component may consist of less than twenty students. However, in most classes, the number of students is much bigger; up to fifty or more students. In addition to the number of students, lecturers' teaching load may also hinder them in giving personal attention to students. In one semester, the lecturers should teach a minimum of twelve credits and the courses can be varied. Those complexities have posed some challenges in practicing *cura personalis*.

Conclusion

This study has attempted to see how Ignatian Pedagogy is implemented in a Jesuit university in Indonesia. The findings suggested that the lecturers have made some efforts to realize the elements of Ignatian Pedagogy. Furthermore, suggesting holistic collaborative and contextual education, the findings also reflect the characteristics of education as outlined in the Regulation from the Minister of Education and Culture of Indonesia. This fact strengthens the view that Ignatian Pedagogy contains universal values that can be adapted to different contexts, including the education context in Indonesia. Nonetheless, *cura personalis* seems to be challenging to implement in Indonesia, mainly because of the nature of the class and the lecturers' workload. HJE

Notes

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[content/uploads/2014/06/permen_tahun2014_nomor049.pdf](http://www.kopertis12.or.id/wp-content/uploads/2014/06/permen_tahun2014_nomor049.pdf)

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