



Research Article

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The Role and Challenges of Teachers in the Implementation of the Independent Curriculum

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ABSTRACT:

This study analyzes the role and challenges of teachers in the implementation of the Independent Curriculum in elementary schools and identifies strategic steps to support the success of this curriculum. Qualitative research methods with the type of literature study are used to collect and analyze data from relevant literature through content analysis methods. The findings of the study show that although the Independent Curriculum offers a more flexible and student-centered approach, its implementation faces significant challenges. These challenges include a lack of in-depth understanding of curriculum concepts, limited resources and facilities, high administrative burdens, cultural challenges, and the need for ongoing support and training. Teachers play the role of facilitators, curriculum developers, evaluators, and agents of change in education. To address these challenges, systematic support from the government and stakeholders and ongoing training for teachers are needed. This study emphasizes the importance of teacher competence in the successful implementation of the Independent Curriculum and provides recommendations to improve the quality of education in Indonesia.

Keywords: the role of teachers, implementation challenges, independent curriculum

ABSTRAK:

Penelitian ini menganalisis peran dan tantangan guru dalam implementasi Kurikulum Merdeka di sekolah dasar serta mengidentifikasi langkah-langkah strategis untuk mendukung keberhasilan kurikulum ini. Metode penelitian kualitatif dengan jenis studi pustaka digunakan untuk mengumpulkan dan menganalisis data dari literatur relevan melalui metode analisis konten. Temuan penelitian menunjukkan bahwa meskipun Kurikulum Merdeka menawarkan pendekatan yang lebih fleksibel dan berpusat pada siswa, implementasinya menghadapi tantangan signifikan. Tantangan tersebut meliputi kurangnya pemahaman mendalam tentang konsep kurikulum, keterbatasan sumber daya dan fasilitas, beban administratif tinggi, tantangan kultural, serta kebutuhan akan dukungan dan pelatihan berkelanjutan. Guru berperan sebagai fasilitator, pengembang kurikulum, evaluator, dan agen perubahan dalam pendidikan. Untuk mengatasi tantangan ini, diperlukan dukungan sistematis dari pemerintah dan pemangku kepentingan serta pelatihan berkelanjutan bagi guru. Penelitian ini menekankan pentingnya kompetensi guru dalam suksesnya implementasi Kurikulum Merdeka dan memberikan rekomendasi untuk meningkatkan kualitas pendidikan di Indonesia.

Kata Kunci : peran guru, tantangan implementasi, kurikulum merdeka

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INTRODUCTION

The Independent Curriculum, launched by the Ministry of Education, Culture, Research, and Technology of Indonesia, is an innovative step in education reform that aims to provide space for schools and teachers to design a learning process that is more relevant, contextual, and adaptive to the needs of students.¹ This curriculum was designed in response to the dynamics of globalization and the industrial revolution 4.0, with the hope of improving the quality of national education and preparing the young generation who are able to think critically, creatively, and respond to the changing times.² More specifically, the Independent Curriculum gives autonomy to educational units in choosing a learning approach that is in accordance with the characteristics and potential of students.³

However, although the Independent Curriculum offers various conceptual advantages, there are significant gaps in its implementation, especially related to teacher readiness and competence. Many teachers experience challenges in crafting fully student-centred lesson plans, integrating technology effectively, and adopting an open attitude to the changes expected by this curriculum. This gap raises concerns that without adequate support and training, the noble goals of the Independent Curriculum may not be optimally achieved in the field.⁴

Indriyani & Jannah said that the implementation of the independent curriculum needs to be provided properly, starting from human resources and infrastructure facilities in schools. The

¹ Dinn Wahyudin et al., "Kajian Akademik Kurikulum Merdeka," *Kemendikbud*, 2024, 1–143.

² Sabaruddin, "Pendidikan Indonesia dalam menghadapi era 4.0," *Jurnal Pembangunan Pendidikan: Fondasi dan Aplikasi* 10, no. 1 (2022): 43–49, <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.21831/jppfa.v10i1.29347>.

³ Biro Kerja Sama dan Hubungan Masyarakat, "Kurikulum Merdeka Jadi Jawaban untuk Atasi Krisis Pembelajaran," Kementerian Pendidikan, Kebudayaan, Riset, dan Teknologi, 2022.

⁴ Wahyudin et al., "Kajian Akademik Kurikulum Merdeka."

human resources in question include qualified teachers. In addition, it is necessary to socialize about this new curriculum to teachers, parents of students, school committees and community leaders. This is so that each party can understand their role in improving the quality of learning or education in schools.⁵

In addition, the results of community service carried out by Nurul et al, namely providing knowledge and skills in developing an independent curriculum for teachers of Muhamadiyah 04 Binjai Private Elementary School. The training material is carried out in 2 stages, where the first stage is more focused on providing information about the post-covid 19 learning crisis and the 2nd stage focuses on the goals of the independent curriculum for elementary schools. The conclusion of this activity is that there is a change in the learning process after the Covid 19 pandemic, therefore there is a need for an emergency curriculum, namely an independent curriculum.⁶ In line with the latest news by the Ministry of Education, Culture, Research, and Technology through the Centre for Curriculum and Learning, the Educational Standards, Curriculum, and Assessment Agency, held an Education Workshop: Socialization of the Independent Curriculum, on Wednesday, August 31, 2024. The activity aims to convey curriculum policies to the entire education ecosystem and local governments so that they can be implemented properly.⁷

Teachers' readiness in designing learning is the main key to the success of the learning process in the classroom. Through well-designed learning, students are facilitated to interact not only with teachers, but also with their learning resources and fellow

⁵ Ina Indriyani dan Raudhatul Jannah, "Persiapan Implementasi Kurikulum Merdeka," *Prospek 2*, no. 2 (2023): 98–103.

⁶ Nurul Hasanah et al., "Socialization of the Independent Learning Curriculum to Improve the Knowledge of Teachers at Muhamaddiyah 04 Binjai Private Elementary School," *RUANG CENDEKIA: Journal of Community Service 1*, no. 3 (2022): 236.

⁷ Biro Kerja Sama dan Hubungan Masyarakat, "Sosialisasi Kurikulum Merdeka Digelar, Kemendikbudristek Dorong Implementasi di Seluruh Indonesia," Kementerian Pendidikan, Kebudayaan, Riset, dan Teknologi, 2024.

students. In order for this goal to be achieved properly, a comprehensive educational planning is needed. The plan is outlined in the form of a curriculum, which serves as a guideline in the implementation of learning. Thus, a well-designed curriculum is an important foundation for the creation of an effective and meaningful teaching and learning process for students.⁸

Research on teacher competence in the implementation of the Independent Curriculum has become the main focus in efforts to improve the quality of education in Indonesia. The results of Eva et al.'s research provide the fact that grade 1 teachers and grade 4 teachers have low professional competence. This is seen from the many criteria for teacher competence that are not in accordance with the criteria of the independent curriculum. This results in the implementation of the independent curriculum at SD Negeri 1 Jantuk has not been maximized. So that the need for improvement from the relevant teachers and the attention of the principal in controlling teachers in the implementation of the independent curriculum so that the implementation of the independent curriculum becomes more optimal. But if you review the results of documentation related to the design of the teacher's lesson plan. The RPP developed is in accordance with the format of the RPP from the independent curriculum.⁹

Strengthening these findings, Kartini et al. research found that there are significant challenges in terms of teachers' readiness and understanding of this new curriculum. Many teachers still need further training and intensive mentoring to be able to implement the curriculum effectively. Second, limited resources are also an obstacle, such as access to adequate teaching materials

⁸ Evy Ramadina, "The Role of Headmaster in the Development of the Self Regulated Learning Curriculum," *Mozaic: Islam Nusantara* 7, no. 2 (2021): 131–42, <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.47776/mozaic.v7i2.252>.

⁹ Eva Fahriani Aryzona, Asrin Asrin, dan Muhammad Syazali, "Analisis Kompetensi Guru dan Desain Pembelajaran dalam Melaksanakan Kegiatan Pembelajaran Sesuai Kurikulum Merdeka SD Negeri 1 Jantuk Tahun Pelajaran 2022-2023," *Jurnal Ilmiah Profesi Pendidikan* 8, no. 1 (2023): 424–32, <https://doi.org/10.29303/jipp.v8i1.1156>.

and technology. Support from continuous training and the use of digital learning resources can increase the effectiveness of curriculum implementation. Research recommendations include strengthening mentoring by experienced facilitators and developing learning communities.¹⁰

Furthermore, the results of Putri et al. research found that the pedagogic competence of teachers in the implementation of the independent curriculum at 211 Gresik State Elementary School is still not good. Teachers still lack understanding in making learning tools and teaching modules used in the independent curriculum. In addition, it is constrained by the cost of making learning media, the lack of teacher experience related to independent learning and the unstable internet network. School infrastructure is also inadequate to support learning activities. The solution is to hold training related to the implementation of the independent curriculum in order to improve the competence of teachers' knowledge and skills in their fields. In addition, they can also master and apply basic skills in accordance with the digital era.¹¹

In addition, the results of Predi et al. research found that the use of technology in PAI learning allows the delivery of more interactive and interesting religious materials, increasing student interest and engagement. However, challenges such as limited technology infrastructure and teachers' digital competencies must be overcome through intensive training and improvement of technology facilities. With the right strategy, PAI teachers can take advantage of the Independent Curriculum to form the character of students who are not only intellectually intelligent, but also have

¹⁰ Kartini Indah Sari Siregar, "Evaluasi Implementasi Kurikulum Merdeka di Sekolah MIN 12 Medan," *Jurnal Ilmu Pendidikan (JIP)* 2, no. 8 (2024): 1112–18.

¹¹ Putri Dwi Jayanti Pramesti Lestari, Imam Bahrozi, dan Ivo Yuliana, "Kompetensi Pedagogik Guru dalam Pelaksanaan Kurikulum Merdeka," *Jurnal Review Pendidikan Dasar: Jurnal Kajian Pendidikan dan Hasil Penelitian* 9, no. 3 (2023): 153–60, <https://doi.org/10.26740/jrpd.v9n3.p153-160>.

strong morals and ethics. This is important to prepare a generation that is ready to face challenges and changes in the digital era.¹²

Finally, the results of Erwin's research show that teachers face significant challenges and obstacles in implementing the Independent Curriculum in the planning, implementation in the classroom and evaluation. These obstacles are related to teachers' understanding and skills in applying creative and innovative learning methods, school environment conditions, facilities and infrastructure, and available human resources. However, there are efforts to deal with these obstacles, namely, training and developing the competencies of teachers and education staff, increasing support from parents and the community, improving facilities and infrastructure, increasing supervision and monitoring, developing cooperation between education stakeholders, and encouraging to participate in the driving teacher program.¹³

Overall, these five studies complement each other in identifying challenges and solutions related to the role and challenges of teachers in the implementation of the Independent Curriculum, and show that investment in teacher training and competency development is essential to achieve higher education goals in Indonesia. Various previous studies have identified a number of difficulties faced by educators in implementing new curricula, such as difficulties in developing learning plans based on student freedom and independence, limitations in the use of learning technology, and resistance to change.

Understanding these challenges is a crucial first step to explore the role of teachers in the implementation process of the Independent Curriculum. Teachers must not only master the technical aspects of the curriculum, but also need to have strong

¹² Predi Ari Repi, Radhinal Abdullah, dan Siti Halimah, "Kurikulum Merdeka: Peran Guru PAI dalam Membentuk Karakter Siswa di Era Digital," *Jurnal Reflektika* 9, no. 1 (2024): 171–88.

¹³ Erwin Simon Paulus Olak Wuwur, "Problematika Implementasi Kurikulum Merdeka Di Sekolah Dasar," *SOKO GURU: Jurnal Ilmu Pendidikan* 3, no. 1 (2023): 1–9, <https://doi.org/10.55606/sokoguru.v3i1.1417>.

pedagogic competencies to support students in developing learning independence. Thus, the researcher sees the importance of conducting a more in-depth analysis of teacher competencies, to find the most effective approach in addressing these challenges.

This study aims to analyse the role and challenges of teachers in the implementation of the Independent Curriculum. Through careful analysis, it is hoped that patterns or strategies will be found that can help teachers adapt to this curriculum. The results of this research are not only relevant to the teachers themselves, but are also expected to provide valuable input for the government, educational institutions, and teacher associations in developing professional development programs that support the implementation of the Independent Curriculum.

By understanding the results of previous research and identifying existing challenges, this research is expected to make a real contribution in supporting efforts to improve the quality of education in Indonesia through strengthening teacher competence. In addition, the findings of this research can also be used as a basis for making more appropriate decisions in designing teacher training policies and programs that are in accordance with the needs in the field.

METHODS

This study uses a qualitative method with the type of library research. Qualitative research aims to understand the phenomenon in depth, especially in the context of the role and challenges of teachers in the implementation of the Independent Curriculum. The literature study approach was chosen because it allows for a thorough exploration of the literature that includes theory, practice, and challenges in the application of the curriculum.¹⁴ Berg also underscores the importance of a qualitative approach in

¹⁴ Hennie Boeije, *Analysis in qualitative research* (London: Sage Publications, 2010).

understanding the complex context and dynamics of educational research.¹⁵

Furthermore, the research subjects in this study include relevant literature which includes books, journal articles, and research reports related to the Independent Curriculum as well as the role and challenges of teachers. The object of this study includes concepts and information about the implementation of the Independent Curriculum in education as well as the roles and challenges faced by teachers for effective implementation. The careful selection of research subjects and objects ensures that the data collected provides a thorough and holistic picture of the topic being researched.¹⁶ In this regard, Flick emphasizes the importance of setting a clear focus to produce relevant and useful data.¹⁷

Data collection is carried out by identifying and collecting relevant literature from academic databases, libraries, and official publications. These literature sources are selected based on the criteria of relevance, accuracy, and contribution to understanding the role and challenges of teachers in the implementation of the Independent Curriculum.¹⁸ This selection process is in line with the guidance of Gough, Oliver, and Thomas who emphasizes the quality and relevance of data in literature research.¹⁹

The data analysis technique used is content analysis. Content analysis is carried out by identifying the main themes, patterns, and relationships between concepts in the collected literature.²⁰

¹⁵ Howard Lune dan Bruce Lawrence Berg, *Qualitative research methods for the social sciences*, 9 ed. (Boston: Pearson, 2017).

¹⁶ Michael Quinn Patton, *Qualitative research & evaluation methods*, 4 ed. (Sage Publications, 2015).

¹⁷ Uwe Flick, *An introduction to qualitative research*, 6 ed. (Sage Publications, 2018).

¹⁸ Glen A Bowen, "Document analysis as a qualitative research method," *Qualitative Research Journal* 9, no. 2 (2009): 27–40, <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.3316/QRJ0902027>.

¹⁹ David Gough, Sandra Oliver, dan James Thomas, *An introduction to systematic reviews*, 2 ed. (Sage Publications, 2017).

²⁰ Klaus Krippendorff, *Content analysis: An introduction to its methodology*, 4 ed. (Sage Publications, 2018).

Fraenkel & Wallen stated content analysis is a research tool that focuses on actual content and internal features of the media. This technique can be used by researchers to study human behaviour indirectly through the analysis of their communication such as: textbooks, essays, newspapers, novels, magazine articles, songs, advertising images and all types of communication that can be analysed.²¹ This technique is also supported Content analysis is used to obtain valid and re-examinable inferences based on the context. In this analysis, the process of selecting, comparing, combining and sorting various meanings is carried out until relevant data is found.²²

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

3.1 Definition of Independent Curriculum

A school is a facility that functions as a location or place for teaching and learning activities to take place in an educational institution. This is where the learning process occurs and the expected result of learning is a change in behaviour in students. With this, schools play an important role as a forum for students to develop their abilities and knowledge actively and meaningfully.²³ Each student has a variety of backgrounds, which can result in an educator being able to adjust his learning. These differences are one of the factors that encourage the development and birth of a new curriculum that is in accordance with today's needs.²⁴

²¹ R Fraenkel, Norman E Wallen, dan Helen H Hyun, *How to Design and Evaluate Research in Education*, 10 ed. (McGraw-Hill Education, 2019).

²² Milya Sari dan Asmendri Asmendri, "Penelitian Kepustakaan (Library Research) dalam Penelitian Pendidikan IPA," *Natural Science* 6, no. 1 (2020): 41–53, <https://doi.org/10.15548/nsc.v6i1.1555>.

²³ Raudhatul Jannah et al., "Banua Anyar Culinary Tourism Area as a Tourism Attraction in Banjarmasin," *The Innovation of Social Studies Journal* 3, no. 2 (2022): 157, <https://doi.org/10.20527/iis.v3i2.4943>.

²⁴ Jumriani Jumriani et al., "The Contribution of Social Studies Subjects to Strengthening Social Attitudes in Children with Disabilities," *Educative: Journal of Education* 3, no. 6 (2021): 4651–58, <https://doi.org/10.31004/edukatif.v3i6.1536>.

The curriculum is a set of goals, content, plans, and arrangements that are interrelated. The curriculum functions as a guideline in the selection of materials and procedures used to direct the implementation of learning activities to achieve educational goals.²⁵ With the curriculum that has been continued, it will make it easier for teachers to implement the learning carried out in the classroom. This allows for a slight error in the delivery of learning.

The curriculum consists of key and supporting components that are interconnected to realize the educational goals. The components of the curriculum are an interconnected and inseparable system, which reflects a whole. In other words, the curriculum as a system must be viewed holistically, where each component complements each other and supports the achievement of educational goals effectively.²⁶

The Independent Curriculum, as a recent innovation, offers diversity in intra-curricular learning, giving students enough time to delve into concepts and strengthen their abilities. Teachers are given the flexibility to choose a learning method that is tailored to the needs and interests of students. In addition, the Independent Curriculum also introduces thematic projects designed to improve the profile of Pancasila students, without pressure to achieve learning targets in certain subjects. This flexibility is expected to provide more space for the development of students' skills and character, in accordance with the demands of the times.²⁷

²⁵ Susetyo Susetyo, "Problems in the Implementation of the Independent Learning Curriculum of the Indonesian Language Education Study Program FKIP University of Bengkulu," *National Seminar on Language and Literature Education* 1, no. 1 (2020): 29–43.

²⁶ Jumriani Jumriani et al., "Pattern Of Religious Character Development at The Aisiyah Orphanage In Banua Anyar Village Banjarmasin City," *AL-ISHLAH: Jurnal Pendidikan* 14, no. 2 (2022): 2251–60, <https://doi.org/10.35445/alishlah.v14i2.1735>.

²⁷ Erlinda Nur Rahma Gita, "Kurikulum Merdeka: Mendorong Pendidikan Inovatif dan Mandiri untuk Masa Depan Bagi Peserta Didik," *Seminar Nasional Hasil Riset dan Pengabdian*, 2023, 1176–86.

The urgency of implementing the Independent Curriculum is driven by the learning crisis that Indonesia has faced in recent times. Various studies, both national and international, have shown that Indonesia is experiencing serious challenges in the quality of education. A report from one of the World Bank staff in 2019 stated that Indonesia has made a lot of progress in terms of education but still needs to improve learning.²⁸ This is reinforced by Barus et al. who found that many students in Indonesia still struggle in basic skills such as reading and arithmetic, pointing to an urgent need for curriculum reform that is more responsive to the needs of students in the modern era.²⁹

In Law of the Republic of Indonesia number 20 of 2003 article 35 paragraph 1 concerning the National Education System, it is stated that national education standards include content, process, management, assessment, and financing, which must be improved periodically and planned.³⁰ In addition, according to Law number 14 of 2005 concerning Teachers and Lecturers, teachers are professional educators with the main task of educating, guiding, teaching, assessing, training, and evaluating students from early childhood education to secondary and formal education.³¹ As learning agents, teachers also play an important role as facilitators, motivators, sources of inspiration, and innovators in the educational process. Teacher competence, as stipulated in article 8 of the same law, includes personality, pedagogic, social, and professional aspects, all of which must be possessed by teachers in order to carry out their roles effectively.³²

²⁸ Noah Yarrow, *Janji Pendidikan Indonesia*, ed. oleh Bruce Ross Larson (Australian Government, Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, 2019).

²⁹ Carolina Sri Athena Barus et al., *Karakteristik Peserta Didik Abad 21, Guru Sumedang*, 2021.

³⁰ President of the Republic of Indonesia, "Law of the Republic of Indonesia Number 20 of 2003 concerning the National Education System," *Legal Products* (Indonesia: Center for Educational Data and Information, Balitbang - Ministry of Education, 2003).

³¹ President of the Republic of Indonesia, "Law 14-2005 on Teachers and Lecturers.pdf," *Legal Products*, 2005, <https://jdih.usu.ac.id>.

³² Republik Indonesia.

Therefore, the development of the Independent Curriculum by the Ministry of Education, Culture, Research, and Technology is a strategic step in overcoming the long-standing learning crisis. This curriculum reform is expected to be a systematic solution that can improve the quality of education in Indonesia, as well as prepare the young generation to be better prepared to face global challenges. Through the Independent Curriculum, it is hoped that Indonesia can turn the situation around and get out of the learning crisis, so that students can reach their maximum potential.³³

3.2 The Role and Challenges of Teachers in the Implementation of the Independent Curriculum

a. The Role of Teachers in the Implementation of the Independent Curriculum

In the context of education that continues to develop, the role of teachers has become increasingly crucial in the implementation of education policies, including in the implementation of the Independent Curriculum launched by the Ministry of Education, Culture, Research, and Technology of the Republic of Indonesia.³⁴ This curriculum aims to give teachers and students more freedom in the learning process, so that students can develop their potential optimally according to their respective interests and talents.³⁵ However, to achieve this goal, teachers are required to play a more complex and multifaceted role. The role of teachers in the implementation of the Independent Curriculum includes aspects such as the role of

³³ Biro Kerja Sama dan Hubungan Masyarakat, "Kurikulum Merdeka, Membangun Potensi Siswa sesuai Fitrahnya," Kementerian Pendidikan, Kebudayaan, Riset, dan Teknologi, 2022.

³⁴ Romanti, "Memahami Lebih Lanjut tentang Peran Guru dalam Kurikulum Merdeka," Inspektorat Jenderal Kementerian Pendidikan, Kebudayaan, Riset, dan Teknologi, 2024.

³⁵ Fadli Ramdhani, "Kurikulum Merdeka sebagai Sistem Pendidikan guna Mengembangkan Potensi Peserta Didik di Era Disrupsi," *Prosiding Seminar Nasional Hasil Riset dan Pengabdian*, no. 2022 (2023): 1187–93.

learning facilitators, curriculum developers, evaluators, as well as as agents of change that encourage innovation in education.³⁶

1) Teachers as Learning Facilitators

One of the main roles of teachers in the Independent Curriculum is as a learning facilitator. In this role, teachers no longer only function as transmitters of knowledge, but also as guides who assist students in the active and independent learning process. This is in line with the constructivist pedagogical approach, where students are considered active subjects who build their own knowledge through interaction with the environment and learning experiences.³⁷ According to research conducted by Anwar et al., the role of teachers as facilitators is very important in helping students develop critical thinking skills, creativity, and problem-solving skills which are the main focus in the Independent Curriculum.³⁸

Teachers as facilitators are responsible for creating a conducive learning environment, where students feel free to explore and put forward their ideas.³⁹ In this context, teachers must be able to manage the classroom well, provide appropriate guidance, and encourage active participation from all students. The challenge teachers face in this role is to ensure that all students, including those who may have learning difficulties or different backgrounds, can be fully involved in the learning process. Therefore, teachers need to have good interpersonal

³⁶ Romanti, "Memahami Lebih Lanjut tentang Peran Guru dalam Kurikulum Merdeka."

³⁷ Nurfatimah Ugha Sugrah, "Implementasi teori belajar konstruktivisme dalam pembelajaran sains," *Humanika* 19, no. 2 (2020): 121–38, <https://doi.org/10.21831/hum.v19i2.29274>.

³⁸ Niptahul Anwar et al., "Peran Guru sebagai Fasilitator Pembelajaran dalam Mendorong Kreativitas Siswa," *JURNAL SYNTAX IMPERATIF: Jurnal Ilmu Sosial dan Pendidikan* 4, no. 3 (2023): 208–14, <https://doi.org/10.36418/syntax-imperatif.v4i3.240>.

³⁹ Agustinus Tanggu Daga, "Makna Merdeka Belajar dan Penguatan Peran Guru di Sekolah Dasar," *Jurnal Educatio FKIP UNMA* 7, no. 3 (2021): 1075–90, <https://doi.org/10.31949/educatio.v7i3.1279>.

skills, sensitivity to student needs, and the ability to adapt teaching methods to the individual characteristics and needs of students.⁴⁰

2) *Teachers as Curriculum Developers*

Apart from being a facilitator, teachers also play a role as curriculum developers at the grade level. The Independent Curriculum provides flexibility for teachers to adapt the existing curriculum according to the local context and student needs. In this role, teachers are required to have competence in designing and developing learning programs that are relevant and meaningful for students. Research by Abdullah et al. shows that teachers who are actively involved in curriculum development are able to create learning materials that are more in line with the conditions and needs of students in the field, so that learning becomes more effective and meaningful.⁴¹

Curriculum development by teachers also includes the preparation of learning implementation plans that accommodate various innovative learning approaches and methods. Teachers are expected to be able to integrate various disciplines, utilize information technology, and implement project-based learning and problem-based learning which are the hallmarks of the Independent Curriculum.⁴² However, to carry out this role well, teachers need support in the form of ongoing training and access to adequate resources. Siregar emphasized the importance of continuous training for teachers

⁴⁰ Nabilaa Faizatul Zuhriyah et al., "Peran Keterampilan Komunikasi Interpersonal Guru BK Terhadap Layanan Konseling Profesional," *Jurnal Pendidikan Indonesia* 5, no. 6 (2024): 213–21, <https://doi.org/10.59141/japendi.v5i6.2903>.

⁴¹ Ahmad Afif Abdullah et al., "Peran Guru dalam Pengembangan Kurikulum Pembelajaran," *Tsaqofah* 3, no. 1 (2023): 23–38, <https://doi.org/10.58578/tsaqofah.v3i1.732>.

⁴² Gita, "Kurikulum Merdeka: Mendorong Pendidikan Inovatif dan Mandiri untuk Masa Depan Bagi Peserta Didik."

to improve their ability to develop a curriculum in accordance with the principles of the Independent Curriculum.⁴³

3) *Teachers as Learning Evaluators*

Evaluation is an important component in the learning process, and in the Independent Curriculum, the role of teachers as evaluators becomes more prominent. Teachers are not only responsible for assessing student learning outcomes, but also for evaluating the learning process itself. In this case, teachers must be able to use a variety of evaluation tools and techniques that focus not only on cognitive assessment, but also on the affective and psychomotor aspects of student development.⁴⁴ Comprehensive and balanced assessment is needed in the Independent Curriculum to provide a complete picture of student learning progress.⁴⁵

Teachers as evaluators also play a role in providing constructive feedback to students, which can help them to continue to improve and improve themselves. This feedback should be given continuously throughout the learning process, not just at the end of the evaluation period. In addition, teachers must also be able to reflect on the learning practices that have been implemented, to then make the necessary adjustments to increase the effectiveness of learning.⁴⁶ Reflective ability is very important for teachers in the Independent Curriculum, because this curriculum requires continuous improvement and innovation in the learning process.⁴⁷

⁴³ Siregar, "Evaluasi Implementasi Kurikulum Merdeka di Sekolah MIN 12 Medan."

⁴⁴ Yadi Sutikno, "Peran Guru dalam Evaluasi Pembelajaran di Kelas," *Jurnal Maitreyawira* 4, no. 1 (2023): 36–41, <https://doi.org/10.69607/jm.v4i1.73>.

⁴⁵ Wahyudin et al., "Kajian Akademik Kurikulum Merdeka."

⁴⁶ Astrid Novita Suhartina, "SENTRI: Jurnal Riset Ilmiah," *SENTRI: Jurnal Riset Ilmiah* 2, no. 10 (2023): 1275--1289.

⁴⁷ Gita, "Kurikulum Merdeka: Mendorong Pendidikan Inovatif dan Mandiri untuk Masa Depan Bagi Peserta Didik."

b. Challenges in the Implementation of the Independent Curriculum

The implementation of the Independent Curriculum in Indonesia faces various challenges that require serious attention, especially from the perspective of teachers as the spearhead of implementation in the field.⁴⁸ Although the Independent Curriculum is designed to provide greater freedom and flexibility to teachers and students in the teaching and learning process, the implementation of this curriculum is not without obstacles. These challenges are not only technical, but also include cultural and structural aspects of the education system in Indonesia. The following is a more in-depth discussion of the various challenges faced by teachers in implementing the Independent Curriculum.

1) Lack of Deep Understanding of the Concept and Philosophy of the Independent Curriculum

One of the biggest challenges in the implementation of the Independent Curriculum is the lack of deep understanding among teachers regarding the concepts and philosophy behind this curriculum.⁴⁹ The Independent Curriculum demands a paradigm shift from a traditional approach that focuses on teaching to a more learning-focused approach. This means that the role of teachers must transform from just conveying information to being a facilitator who encourages students to be more active in the learning process.⁵⁰ According to Siregar, although various trainings and socialization have been carried out to introduce the Independent Curriculum, many teachers still have difficulty in understanding the essence of this curriculum and applying it in practice in the classroom. This difficulty is largely due to

⁴⁸ Muqorobin, "Tantangan Dalam Penerapan Kurikulum Merdeka," Direktorat Kepala Sekolah, Pengawas Sekolah, dan Tenaga Kependidikan, 2024.

⁴⁹ Siregar, "Evaluasi Implementasi Kurikulum Merdeka di Sekolah MIN 12 Medan."

⁵⁰ Republik Indonesia, "UU 14-2005 Guru dan Dosen.pdf."

the fairly fundamental difference between the old more structured and centralized approach, and the new, more flexible and student-centred approach.⁵¹

This more flexible approach requires teachers to have high adaptability and skills in managing more dynamic classrooms. However, the facts on the ground show that not all teachers have enough readiness to adapt to these changes. The long experience with a more rigid and structured curriculum makes most teachers feel comfortable with the existing teaching routine. Therefore, when faced with the Independent Curriculum that provides more freedom and responsibility, some teachers experience confusion and even resistance. They feel burdened with these new demands and need more time and support to truly understand and internalize the changes desired by the Independent Curriculum.⁵²

2) Limited Resources and Supporting Facilities

Another significant challenge in the implementation of the Independent Curriculum is the limited resources and adequate facilities in many schools in Indonesia. The Independent Curriculum encourages project-based learning, where students are given the opportunity to learn through more practical and contextual activities. This project-based learning requires sufficient facilities and supporting tools to run effectively. However, many schools, especially those located in remote areas or those with budget constraints, do

⁵¹ Siregar, "Evaluasi Implementasi Kurikulum Merdeka di Sekolah MIN 12 Medan."

⁵² Via Anggraeni et al., "Apakah Guru PAUD Mampu Beradaptasi Pada Setiap Perubahan Kurikulum Yang Terjadi?," *PAUDIA: Jurnal Penelitian dalam Bidang Pendidikan Anak Usia Dini* 13, no. 1 (2024): 115–26, <https://doi.org/10.26877/paudia.v13i1.17459>.

not have the necessary infrastructure to carry out this type of learning.⁵³

Soni et al., in their research show that the lack of adequate facilities and infrastructure is one of the main obstacles in the implementation of project-based learning in schools in Indonesia. In many schools, narrow classrooms and inadequate learning tools make it difficult for teachers to apply this approach optimally. In addition, limited access to technology, such as computers and the internet, in a number of regions is also a major obstacle in the implementation of project-based learning which often requires technological support. These limitations ultimately forced teachers to return to traditional teaching methods that were simpler and could be done with existing resources, although the method was not fully in line with the philosophy of the Independent Curriculum.⁵⁴

3) Administrative Burden and Time Limitations

According to Amrina et al., the high administrative burden is one of the inhibiting factors in the implementation of the Independent Curriculum. Teachers spend more time meeting administrative demands such as preparing reports, evaluations, and various other documents, rather than designing effective learning. This administrative burden makes it difficult for teachers to focus on innovation in teaching and ultimately has an impact on the quality of learning provided to students. Time constraints also affect teachers' ability to develop learning methods that are more in

⁵³ Safiq Maulido, Popi Karmijah, dan Vinanda Rahmi, "Upaya Meningkatkan Pendidikan Masyarakat Di Daerah Terpencil," *Jurnal Sadewa: Pembelajaran dan Ilmu Sosial* 2, no. 1 (2024): 3021–7377.

⁵⁴ Soni Prayudi dan M Taqiyuddin, "Evaluasi Kurikulum Merdeka Pada Pendidikan Agama Islam di SDN 008 Labuhan Papan," *Cendekia Pendidikan* 4, no. 4 (2024): 50–54, <https://doi.org/10.9644/sindoro.v3i9.252>.

line with the individual needs of students, which should be one of the advantages of the Independent Curriculum.⁵⁵

4) Lack of Ongoing Support and Training

The last challenge that needs to be considered is the lack of continuous support and training for teachers in implementing the Independent Curriculum. Although initial training has been provided, many teachers feel that the training has not been enough to provide them with the in-depth understanding and skills necessary to implement this new curriculum effectively. More in-depth and ongoing training is urgently needed to help teachers overcome the challenges they face in the learning process.⁵⁶

Continuous training involving hands-on practice and on-the-job coaching is essential to ensure that teachers not only understand the theory but can also apply it in real-life situations in the classroom. As stated by Nurul et al., without continuous training and adequate support, teachers tend to revert to old practices that they are more proficient in, which ultimately hinders the innovation and change expected from the implementation of the Independent Curriculum.⁵⁷

These challenges show that the implementation of the Independent Curriculum cannot run optimally without strong and systematic support from various parties. Deep understanding, adequate facilities, reduced administrative burden, mentality change, and continuous training are the keys to success in overcoming these obstacles. Therefore, synergy between teachers, the government, and other stakeholders is urgently needed to create an environment that supports the successful implementation of the

⁵⁵ Amrina Rosyada, Putri Syahada, dan Chanifudin, "Kurikulum Merdeka : Dampak Peningkatan Beban Administrasi Guru terhadap Efektivitas Pembelajaran" 4 (2024): 238–44.

⁵⁶ Wahyudin et al., "Kajian Akademik Kurikulum Merdeka."

⁵⁷ Hasanah et al., "Sosialisasi kurikulum merdeka merdeka belajar untuk meningkatkan pengetahuan para guru di SD Swasta Muhammadiyah 04 Binjai."

Independent Curriculum, so that the main goal of this curriculum, which is to produce graduates who are creative, critical, and ready to face future challenges, can be achieved.⁵⁸

The Independent Curriculum is an educational innovation in Indonesia that is designed to provide freedom and flexibility to teachers and students, with the aim of improving the quality of learning and overcoming the existing education crisis. This curriculum focuses on a more adaptive and student-centred learning approach, as well as integrating thematic projects to develop the Pancasila student profile. However, the implementation of the Independent Curriculum faces various challenges, including a lack of in-depth understanding of the curriculum philosophy from teachers, limited resources and facilities, high administrative burden, and cultural challenges. In its implementation, teachers are expected to play the role of facilitators, curriculum developers, evaluators, and agents of innovative change.

Research shows that the successful implementation of the Independent Curriculum is highly dependent on the in-depth understanding and effective adaptation of teachers to this curriculum. The Independent Curriculum offers a more flexible and student-focused approach, but the transition from traditional teaching methods to this new approach is not easy. Teachers who act as facilitators and curriculum developers have to face significant challenges such as lack of facility support and high administrative burdens. Therefore, systematic support in the form of ongoing training and reduction of administrative burden is essential to ensure that teachers can carry out their roles effectively. This support will enable teachers to take advantage of the freedom provided by the Independent Curriculum to develop more innovative learning strategies that are in line with the needs of students,

⁵⁸ Masyarakat, "Kurikulum Merdeka Jadi Jawaban untuk Atasi Krisis Pembelajaran."

so that the main goal of this curriculum, which is to create a generation that is creative and ready to face future challenges, can be achieved.

3.3 Teacher's Tips in Implementing the Independent Curriculum

According to the Great Dictionary of the Indonesian Language, "A teacher is a person who has a job (his livelihood, profession) is teaching".⁵⁹ Teachers are professional educators with the main task of educating, teaching, guiding, directing, training, assessing, and evaluating students in early childhood education in formal education, primary education, and secondary education.⁶⁰ In the educational process, teachers have an important role in the success of students. The teacher instructs what is not known or deepens what the students already know. Teachers are also responsible for the understanding of learning obtained by students. This can be seen through the assessment as an evaluation of students. The learning method used in the classroom is one of the teaching arts that must be possessed by an educator in transferring knowledge. If an educator lacks the ability to deliver material, it will greatly hinder students in receiving the knowledge conveyed.

Some tips for teachers to be able to implement the Independent Curriculum are as follows:⁶¹

- a. Considering the indicators of each student's achievement as seen from the test scores obtained using the Benchmark Reference Assessment and the teacher compares students who have completed and those who have not yet to find out the achievement of each student.
- b. Teachers determine the weight of grades in each subject based on the understanding of the material that must be mastered.

⁵⁹ "KBBI VI Daring," n.d.

⁶⁰ Republic of Indonesia, "Law 14-2005 on Teachers and Lecturers.pdf."

⁶¹ Cholifah Tur Rosidah, Pana Pramulia, and Wahyu Susiloningsih, "Analysis of Teachers' Readiness to Implement Assessments," *Journal of Basic Education* Vol 12 No, no. 1 (2021): 87-103, <https://doi.org/doi.org/10.21009/JPD.012.08>.

- c. Determining benchmark values in conducting assessments to facilitate future learning evaluations.
- d. An educator must identify the student's ability until the evaluation results show completeness and the student cannot proceed to the next subject of discussion before conceptually understanding the previous material.

CONCLUSION

Based on the results and discussions that have been presented, it can be concluded that the Independent Curriculum is an innovative step taken to improve and adjust the learning process in Indonesia to the demands of the times and the needs of students. As part of efforts to recover from the learning crisis, the Independent Curriculum offers greater flexibility in the delivery of materials and the development of Pancasila student profiles, by giving teachers the freedom to adjust learning methods according to the needs and interests of students.

Teachers, as the spearhead of curriculum implementation, play an important role in ensuring the successful implementation of the Independent Curriculum. They are not only responsible for delivering the subject matter, but also in creating a learning atmosphere that supports the development of student independence. For this reason, it is important for teachers to implement a variety of relevant strategies, such as considering student achievement indicators, setting appropriate grade weights, and ensuring an in-depth understanding of the material before moving on to the next topic.

However, the implementation of the Independent Curriculum faces various significant challenges. Although this curriculum is not too different from the 2013 Curriculum in terms of basic structure, the changes made require deep adaptation on the part of schools and teachers. These challenges include the need to develop an independent-based learning approach, limitations in the use of technology, and resistance to change on the part of teachers and

students. Adequate readiness and support from the government and educational institutions are crucial to overcome this challenge.

Overall, the Independent Curriculum is expected to be a systematic solution to overcome existing learning problems and improve the quality of education in Indonesia. Its effective implementation is highly dependent on the readiness and support of all relevant parties, as well as the commitment of teachers in adapting learning approaches that are in accordance with the philosophy of independent learning. With the right steps and careful preparation, it is hoped that the Independent Curriculum can create a significant positive impact on education in the country.

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