



Urgency of Implementation of the Independent Curriculum in Elementary School

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Abstract. The curriculum is one of the important elements in the learning process. Although the curriculum was initially considered to have met the targets and expectations, along with the development of the times, various shortcomings and obstacles emerged that demanded the government to make curriculum improvements and innovations. To answer these problems, the Ministry of Education and Culture, Research and Technology of the Republic of Indonesia launched a brand-new curriculum, namely the Independent Curriculum. The emergence of the Independent Curriculum is not entirely a new curriculum, but a form of improvement from the previous curriculum. The Independent Curriculum is an important form of learning modification, not only to deal with post-pandemic education but also to face the global situation that continues to change from time to time. This study employs the literature review method to collect data from various sources and references such as books, journals, articles, and so on. The results show that the implementation of the Independent Curriculum in elementary schools is important and will be very useful to help teachers create a happy learning atmosphere with various creative and innovative learning techniques without being burdened with achieving certain scores or grades so that learning for students is not monotonous which is very helpful for students. Especially in elementary schools, to be active in learning and develop their abilities to have competence and competitiveness.

Keywords: Urgency · Independent Curriculum · Free Learning · Basic Education

1 Introduction

Education has a big role in human life. Every human being has their own talents and potentials that can be developed through educational activities to be skilled and competitive. Education is also important for human life as a provision for careers and jobs in accordance with the expertise possessed. Education can erase the wrong beliefs in our minds. It can also help in creating a clear picture of things around us, it can also clear up all confusion. People with high education usually will be wiser in solving a problem, this is because they have studied the science of education in life.

As stated in the Preamble to the 1945 Constitution, education is critical for every human being, specifically to educate the nation's life. Through education, it is hoped

that it can improve people's welfare, build national civilization, preserve culture, and so on. The government places a high value on education because the advancement of a country begins with education. The education budget is being increased, policies for improving educational quality are being implemented, and various educational problems at the primary, secondary, and higher levels are being addressed. This is undoubtedly aimed at improving education quality in order to compete with other countries, as well as other initiatives that support improving education quality in Indonesia [1].

Education cannot be carried out without a curriculum when it is implemented. Simply put, the curriculum serves as a guideline for educational implementation. The learning process cannot exist apart from the curriculum, which plays an important role in the world of education at all levels. A curriculum is designed with the hope of producing a generation that can quickly grasp the material or knowledge provided by the teacher, not just be good at remembering the teaching material provided by the teacher. Curriculum design is very important because it contains objectives, content, teaching materials, and how to apply them to achieve a learning goal.

With the passage of time and the advancement of technology, the curriculum is constantly changing and improving in an effort to improve the quality and quality of education in order to achieve the expected educational goals. Meanwhile, the purpose of education itself is expected to be in accordance with the needs of society and the state [2]. Therefore, to create and produce students who are superior and useful in society, it is necessary to create a curriculum that is tailored to the community's needs and circumstances.

As a form of meeting the needs and conditions of society to keep pace with the rapid and massive progress of science and technology, the curriculum is often updated as a form of improvement and adjustment to the current era and to answer and solve various learning problems and crises that occur in a country, including in the country. Indonesia. Not only in Indonesia, but many other countries have also carried out various curriculum updates and developments to adapt to the times. Although a curriculum was initially considered ideal, as the times progressed, various shortcomings and obstacles in the implementation of the curriculum would emerge which required the government to make improvements and curriculum innovations. Every problem that occurs in the curriculum development process needs an in-depth review and careful analysis. [3].

The learning crisis in Indonesia has been going on for a long time and has not improved from year to year. National and international studies, including PISA, show that many of our students are unable to understand simple reading or apply basic mathematical concepts. PISA scores have not increased significantly in the last 10 to 15 years. Approximately 70% of students aged 15 years are below the minimum competence in reading and mathematics. The study shows that there are large disparities between regions and between socio-economic groups in terms of quality of learning. The learning crisis is exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic with learning loss and increasing learning gaps [4] (Fig. 1).

Meanwhile, over the past few years, people around the world have been faced with the COVID-19 pandemic, which has created problems and crises in various public sectors such as the industrial, tourism, financial, and education sector. The spread of the COVID-19 pandemic has made it difficult for the whole world and forced us to start learning

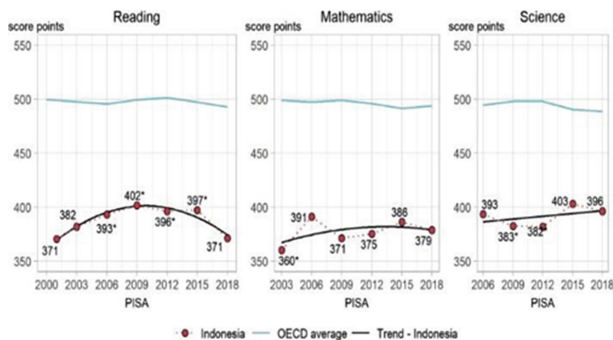


Fig. 1. Trends in performance in reading, mathematics and science in Indonesia.

with modifications through technology, by distance learning methods, or in a network or online system. These situations and conditions become the urgency of the birth of the Independent Curriculum, which is to restore learning from the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic in Indonesia. The Independent Curriculum is a new generation as an answer to the challenges of education in the current era. The Independent Curriculum initiated by the Minister of Education and Culture, Research and Technology of the Republic of Indonesia, Nadiem Anwar Makarim, formulated several new policies. This Independent Curriculum provides freedom for institutions and students in carrying out their learning process [5].

The Independent Curriculum is an important form of learning modification, not only to deal with post- pandemic education but also to face the global situation that continues to change from time to time. Independent curriculum has basically considered the impact of any previous developments in society. The Ministry of Education and Culture, Research and Technology of the Republic of Indonesia have made efforts to improve the quality of education, such as what should be done to improve human resources who have great creativity in applying the knowledge learned. The curriculum is designed to realize the goals of national education, but still pay attention to the level of development of students and their suitability for the development of science and the surrounding environment [6].

The programs launched from the Independent Curriculum are very diverse. Starting from KIP (Smart Indonesia Card), school digitization, achievement, and character strengthening, mover teachers, new curriculum, vocational education Revitalization, Independent Campuses/Schools, and the advancement of culture and language. The program from the Independent Curriculum will greatly support the improvement of the quality of education in Indonesia as well as improve human resources if it can be implemented properly. The role of the teacher is the most decisive in this case. Teachers as the center of education need to manage learning activities well so that the implementation of the Independent Curriculum is as expected [7].

Based on the background described above, this study discusses the urgency of implementing the Independent Curriculum in Elementary Schools.

2 Literature Review

Curriculum comes from the Greek “*curere*” and has the meaning of running mileage, which is the distance that must be covered in running activities from beginning to end, then this understanding is applied in the field of education [3]. So far, the curriculum in Indonesia has undergone various developments and improvements. The existence of the development and improvement of the curriculum is an effort by the government to balance science and technology which are rapidly evolving and adapting education to the demands of the current era in the twenty-first century. Currently, the Independent Curriculum appears as an answer to overcome learning loss and increasing inequality. Lessons learned as a result of the impact of the covid-19 pandemic.

2.1 Understanding the Independent Curriculum

The curriculum is the main component in education so that the systematics that will be implemented can run well and produce outputs that are in accordance with the objectives to be achieved. The curriculum is in a strategic position where it has a role as a guide that contains material content, scope, objectives, and learning strategies. Every educational activity can be said to be good if the curriculum conditions are also good because the experiences that occur in the classroom will refer to the curriculum [3]. The Minister of Education, Culture, Research and Technology of the Republic of Indonesia Mr. Nadiem Makarim has the initiative to create an ideal, effective, fun, and happy learning climate so that it can improve the quality of education without burdening teachers and students with high minimum grades and completeness. Study. The Minister of Education and Culture of the Republic of Indonesia launched the Freedom to Learn policy program to restore the essence of the law in the national education system by allowing schools, teachers, and students to innovate and learn independently and creatively, where this freedom to innovate must begin with the teacher as the driver of national education [8].

The Ministry of Education, Culture, Research and Technology of the Republic of Indonesia directly initiated the “Independent Learning” curriculum with the aim of providing opportunities for students to develop their talents. Apart from requiring students to have skills in utilizing technology, monotonous or one-way learning is one of the reasons why this independent learning curriculum is also present. Because monotonous learning will be a barrier for students to show their abilities and competencies [3].

The independent curriculum is interesting to study and study more deeply. This curriculum is quite unique and different from other curricula, especially in terms of the implementation of learning. Interesting thing, this independent curriculum is set to be an option for educational institutions and teachers in carrying out independent learning activities or better known as independent learning [9]. The implementation of the Independent Curriculum cannot be separated from the role of the teacher. According to Danang Hidayatullah, the General Chair of the Indonesian Teachers Association, the Independent Curriculum is a part of teachers in schools and teachers must be able to harmonize changes. The Independent Curriculum is being implemented using a variety of teaching tools, as well as providing training and learning resources to teachers,

school principals, and the education office. In addition, the implementation of the independent Curriculum is also supported by the independent teacher Platform. The independent teaching Platform helps teachers get references, inspiration, and understanding to implement the independent Curriculum. [4].

2.2 Purpose of Independent Curriculum

The Independent Curriculum is here to perfect the implementation of the 2013 Curriculum. In the 2013 Curriculum, teachers face difficulties in their implementation related to the preparation of lesson plans, implementation of scientific learning, and learning assessment [10]. Meanwhile, the understanding of teachers in implementing the Independent Curriculum is still in the sufficient category, and development is needed [11]. Based on various evaluations of the implementation of the 2013 Curriculum and adjustments to the current conditions and times, the Independent Curriculum appears with various advantages to contribute to the improvement of education quality in Indonesia.

The superiority of the Independent Curriculum. For starters, because this curriculum will focus on essential material and the gradual development of student competencies, it is simpler and more comprehensive. Then, educators and students will be more self-sufficient because there is no specialization program in high school; instead, students choose subjects based on their interests, talents, and aspirations. Teachers will instruct students based on their levels of achievement and development. The school is then given the authority to develop and manage curriculum and learning in accordance with the characteristics of the education unit and students. Another advantage of implementing the Independent Curriculum is that it is more relevant and interactive, as students will have more opportunities to actively explore actual issues, such as environmental, health, and other issues to support Pancasila's student character and competency profiles of students as well (Table 1).

2.3 The Urgency of Independent Curriculum Implementation in Elementary Schools

The change in the curriculum in Indonesia from the independence period until the 2013 curriculum is based on the rapid changes in the world in several fields including education. Therefore, it is clear that curriculum changes are needed in accordance with world developments on a global scale. Giving teachers the freedom to design fun and meaningful learning is one of the concepts of independent learning. Teachers must be able to plan ahead of time, implement and evaluate their learning programs independently [12]. The Independent Curriculum will change the learning method that was previously implemented in the classroom into learning outside the classroom. The concept of learning outside the classroom can provide an opportunity for students to be able to discuss flexibly with the teacher. With this, students can form their character by daring to express opinions, and social skills, and become competent students. [3].

Education units can implement the Independent Curriculum in stages according to their respective readiness. The Head of the Curriculum and Learning Center, Kemendikbudristek, Zulfikri Anas in his presentation on the socialization of the Independent Curriculum in Elementary Schools explained that since the 2021/2022 academic year the

Table 1. Comparison of current curriculum implementation and direction of curriculum change

Current Curriculum Design and Implementation:	Curriculum Change Direction:
Less flexible curriculum structure, lesson hours are assigned weekly	The curriculum structure is more flexible and adaptive, and the lesson hours are expected to be completed in one year
The material is mostly dense, so there is not enough time for in-depth learning, and it does not correspond to students' developmental stages	Concentrate on the most important information. Learning outcomes are determined by phase rather than year
Teachers are less flexible in developing contextual learning because the available learning materials are less diverse	Allow teachers the freedom to use a variety of teaching tools based on the needs and characteristics of their students
Digital technology has not been used in a systematic manner to support teacher learning by sharing best practices	An application that provides various resources for teachers to continue developing their own teaching practices and sharing best practices

Independent Curriculum has been implemented in nearly 2,500 schools that participate in the Driving School Program (PSP) and 901 Vocational High Schools of Excellence (SMK). PK) as part of learning with a new paradigm. This curriculum is applied to start from kindergarten-B, elementary school & elementary school of excellence class I and IV, middle school & middle school of excellence class VII, high school & high school of excellence and vocational high school class X. Starting from the 2022/2023 Academic Year, educational units can choose to implement the curriculum based on the readiness of each starting from kindergarten B, class I, IV, VII, and X. The government creates a questionnaire to assist educational units in determining their readiness to implement the Independent Curriculum [13].

The implementation of curriculum development policies will greatly determine what education planning, implementation, and evaluation will look like. The curriculum provides a planned and clear direction for Education policy [14]. For the 2022/2023 Academic Year, education units have three options for implementing the Independent Curriculum. First, several components and principles of the Independent Curriculum are being implemented without altering the curriculum of the education unit being implemented. Second, implement the Independent Curriculum using the teaching tools provided. Third, they are putting the Independent Curriculum into action by developing their own teaching materials [4].

Teachers must be able to model and implement the learning process in order to select the appropriate learning model. Not only that, but teachers and students must be able to use technology in order to find learning resources. The learning produced by the independent learning curriculum will demonstrate students who can converse with their peers and teachers, learn outside the classroom, form independent and civilized self-character, and more importantly are students who are able to have competence in competing in the current era [3].

The independent curriculum frees teachers to create educational and fun learning. The current pedagogical competence also requires teachers to be able to model and implement the learning process. Teachers are also given the mandate as a driving force to plan, implement, evaluate and follow up on these evaluations [12]. Teachers have the freedom to independently translate the curriculum before it is explained to students so that teachers are able to answer each student's needs during the learning process. Freedom of learning also involves independent conditions in meeting the objectives, methods, materials, and evaluation of learning for both teachers and students. As a result, the learning process in the Independent Learning Curriculum is more tailored to the needs of students (student-center) whereas previously the concept of learning was still centered on the teacher or educator [15].

Learning activities in the Independent Curriculum are carried out in accordance with students' accomplishments. Learning activities are not generalized, but there is a need for student level adjustments. So that learning is carried out more flexibly according to the abilities of students [9]. The implications of the concept of independent learning on its implementation in elementary schools, several topics must be researched, including curriculum simplification, national exam implementation, lesson plan simplification, and the teaching profession [14]. The curriculum that has been the reference in the implementation of learning activities has been simplified. This simplification of the curriculum aims to make the curriculum more relevant so that the competencies possessed by students are in accordance with the needs and demands of the times. [16]. Geographical factors, the ability of educators, and the area of school administrators occur in the curriculum so that the planned curriculum is actually implemented in schools.

The implementation of the learning process cannot be separated from the competencies that students need to master. In the independent curriculum, the determination of the achievement of student competencies uses Learning Outcomes (CP). This CP is not a substitute for the Graduate Competency Standards (SKL). CP is a complete set of competencies, knowledge, and skills transformed into a subject. The 2013 curriculum CP is known as KI/KD (Core Competence/Basic Competence) [9].

The independent learning curriculum does not force achievement targets and learning innovation certainly takes time. Students want something that looks different from before, where the new thing is obtained from the role of a teacher. In relation to the competence of the students, what they get is not only learning in the classroom, but students also have the opportunity to find other learning environments [3]. Some of the impacts felt by teachers in implementing the Independent Curriculum, namely: (1) teachers must be creative and innovative in their methods, media, and learning techniques; and (2) the teacher's mindset must change in order to carry out learning. As for students, namely: (1) Students learn with fun; (2) Students are more enthusiastic when face to face; and (3) There is a Pancasila Student Profile Strengthening Project. Examples of Waste Management Projects; Projects are directly applied in everyday life. Learners are accustomed as effectively as possible to using waste, and this is suitable for character education [1].

3 Method

This study employs the literature review method, which consists of a series of activities for gathering, reading, and processing library data in order to create research material from which conclusions can be drawn. Reading results from various sources and references such as books, journals, and so on are used to collect data. The data for the literature study are obtained from the library in the form of books, encyclopedias, journals, dictionaries, documents, and magazines, among other things. In this study, data was gathered by reviewing various journals, books, and documents, as well as sources of data and or other information deemed relevant to the research.

4 Conclusion

Based on the various descriptions provided above, it is possible to conclude that the curriculum plays an important role in the progression of a learning process and serves as the primary component in education. The Independent Curriculum was launched by the Ministry of Education, Culture, Research, and Technology of the Republic of Indonesia as an improvement over the previous curriculum and in response to the current conditions and situation of education in Indonesia, specifically when learning loss and increasing learning gaps occur as a result of the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Teachers can benefit from the implementation of the Independent Curriculum in elementary schools to create a happy learning atmosphere with a variety of creative and innovative learning techniques without being burdened with achieving certain scores or grades. The learning produced in the Independent Curriculum will be more comfortable and efficient by giving freedom to schools and students in carrying out the learning process. The connection here is that teachers are given the freedom to innovate in planning fun and meaningful learning so that learning for students is not monotonous which will greatly help students, especially in elementary schools to be active in learning and develop their abilities to have competence and competitiveness in the current era.

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