Obstacles to the Implementation and Future of the Independent Curriculum (Kurikulum Merdeka) Management System in Indonesian Elementary Schools in the Era of Digital Technology

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Abstract. This study aims to determine the implementation of the independent curriculum held in elementary schools and the obstacles or problems that occur along with the implementation of this curriculum. The research was conducted with a qualitative approach with a literature study method, namely taking several references and reviewing research results to obtain understanding and data results related to the problems experienced. The result of this study is that the principal has a major influence on the management system policies implemented in schools, especially in the implementation of the independent curriculum. In addition, teachers as educators are the most important element of implementing learning with an independent curriculum because teachers are required to be innovative in managing learning by utilizing technology. In the implementation of this independent curriculum, there are several obstacles, including that teachers do not fully understand policy changes in the preparation of all learning tools, besides that teachers still lack mastery of information and communication technology in the use of learning management, training and seminars provided regarding the Free Learning Curriculum (Kurikulum Merdeka Belajar), especially at the elementary school level, are less effective due to the demands of working hours from the teachers themselves, and there are still teachers who are less innovative in actualizing strategies or learning methods of learning activities.

Keywords: independent curriculum management system, implementation of independent curriculum in elementary schools, implementation barriers, digital technology era.

Introduction

The development of the curriculum system for educational units ranging from elementary to higher continues to experience significant development. The curriculum has an important role for the formation of learning tools that contain a series of learning activity processes including planning, implementing and evaluating and/or obtaining knowledge and experience [1]. The curriculum that is currently developed and applied to all educational units is the Independent Curriculum. The independent

curriculum that has been implemented today is a new reference for improving the quality of education with the spirit of developing competent human resources [2].

The arrangement of the elementary school curriculum is prepared based on the analysis of the competency provisions to be achieved in the form of a set of plans and knowledge of the content and learning materials as well as ways or guidelines in the implementation of learning activities so that elementary schools [3]. The Merdeka curriculum has several changes from the previous curriculum, namely K-13 (2013 Curriculum. One of the obvious changes is in the use of information and communication technology where the Independent Curriculum was held after the change of emergency curriculum issued by the government during the COVID-19 pandemic where the use of information and communication technology is the main tool in learning [4]. The Merdeka Curriculum or Independent Curriculum was launched as one of the alternatives used in aligning the goals of Indonesian education that is adapted to the demands of global development without leaving the characteristics of pancasila [5].

The Independent Curriculum (Kurikulum Merdeka), especially for basic education units, has been carried out for almost 1 school year which in its application must encounter several obstacles and/or differences that require adjustment. The readiness of the institution and its resources also greatly determines the implementation of this Independent Curriculum for the development of knowledge and learning of students. Over time, the implementation of the independent curriculum is one of the results of the curriculum overhaul that has previously been implemented, there are still several obstacles that occur in the field both substantially and technically, especially for teachers because they have an important role in the implementation of the school's operational curriculum, who understand the monitoring and conditions in the learning environment. Gradual socialization is needed to implement this independent curriculum [6].

Therefore, this study aims to find out how the implementation of the independent curriculum, especially those held in basic education units, namely elementary schools, and the obstacles that arise and occur during the independent curriculum is carried out so that all education actors can know and understand and become a reference and reflection in improving the quality of education implementation.

Method

This research uses qualitative approach research methods with data collection techniques in the form of case studies from research journals, books and articles that discuss the topics raised by the author commonly called literature studies. This is done in order to obtain concrete information and data related to the Independent Curriculum and how obstacles to the implementation of this curriculum arrangement [7]. Literature study is a method carried out by reading and understanding various reference books through reliable information technology sources in the form of journals, articles, and various other media related to working on scientific paper data in general to support, strengthen and reinforce existing theories and to provide a variety of accurate and adequate information in the process of completing and working on this scientific work [8].

Data collection techniques are carried out by reading and collecting various kinds of literacy related to the research topic. By conducting research with the literature study method, it will know various previous studies and scientific works that are relevant to the research topic so that researchers are able to understand well the research topic that has been formulated then researchers are able to examine and review the implementation of an activity, namely how the implementation of the independent curriculum so far related to obstacles and curriculum management arrangements in the perspective of elementary school teachers.

Results

A. Independent Curriculum Management System in Elementary Schools

The independent curriculum is a prototype curriculum which is a way to answer the challenges of education that occur due to the post-pandemic education crisis. The independent curriculum was created to overcome education problems in the post-pandemic period, formulating several new policies that conceptually provide freedom for both institutions and students in implementing the learning process by utilizing technology to align the needs of society in this era [9].

Independent learning curriculum management includes planning, organizing, actuating, and supervision activities through evaluation in completing all affairs by utilizing all existing resources through others in order to achieve predetermined goals [10]. In this independent learning curriculum program, education management has an important role where educators must be able to create learning that is not boring as one of the characteristics of independent learning in order to meet the challenges of civilization in the 5.0 era and the future [11].

One of the important elements in schools that organize an independent curriculum and the so-called driving schools is the principal who has a high fighting value to advance the school. Supervision and discussion and mentoring are carried out regularly to monitor the progress of the learning process if there are obstacles in its implementation [12]. Teachers in driving schools are also an important factor in the success of implementing an independent curriculum in driving schools teachers must be able to become tutors, facilitators, and inspirations for their students so that they can motivate students to become active, creative and innovative students [13].

The process of implementing Elementary School has a curriculum that guides the implementation of education. In the Independent Curriculum, elementary schools must create a School Operational Curriculum. The Independent Curriculum is made by elementary schools that pass the selection in the Mobilizer School Program. In addition, there are several other schools outside the Mover School that implement the Independent Curriculum independently as well. In essence, elementary schools will implement the Independent Curriculum depending on the readiness and conditions of each school. However, in the end all elementary schools will implement this Independent Curriculum as an implementation of this Independent Learning Program [14].

B. Implementation of the Independent Curriculum in the Digital Technology Era

The concept of independent learning is also part of Society 5.0 where in this concept that Society 5.0 combines the development of technological advances with community problems, which is proven by that technology has become part of the social needs of individual life [15]. The independent curriculum emphasizes that students must be free to develop naturally according to their learning needs. While teachers must be able to guide and become facilitators for students in learning and learning [16].

The principal has an important role and position in realizing independent learning in schools. The principal is a milestone in the creation of a learning or education process that gives birth to superior generations and is able to answer the challenges of the 21st century now [14]. School principals have innovations that are in accordance with technological developments, namely in school administration management, namely providing a special dashboard in the form of digital administrative storage for teachers [17].

C. Obstacles to the Implementation of the Independent Curriculum in Elementary Schools

The main obstacle to curriculum implementation is teachers' understanding of the independent curriculum. In addition, there are also obstacles, namely the implementation of the independent curriculum, one of which is due to the vacancy of the principal from April-September 2022. The definitive principal is only in October 2022. This has led to unclear school programs, including the implementation of the independent curriculum. The principal was instrumental in the success of the implementation of the independent curriculum [5].

Another obstacle related to the implementation of this curriculum is that there are still several problems that occur in the field related to teacher readiness in the implementation of the independent learning curriculum, including not all teachers have understood about the independent learning curriculum, there is still only mastery of information technology, the lack of seminars that discuss the Independent Learning Curriculum, especially at the elementary school level and there are still teachers who use strategies or methods Learning that does not vary for learning activities [18].

Furthermore, there are also obstacles experienced based on the results of the study, namely teachers experiencing obstacles in implementing the Independent Curriculum in learning. Obstacles experienced by teachers in planning, implementing, and evaluating learning [19]. Another obstacle experienced is that there are still many discussions that have not been understood by both grade 1 teachers and grade 4 teachers. These problems are related to the preparation of teaching modules, how to make summative assessments, and diagnostic assessments [9].

Other findings related to obstacles in the implementation of the independent curriculum are in planning, implementation, and assessment of learning. The problems faced start from analyzing Learning Outcomes into Learning Objectives, compiling Learning Objectives Flow and making it in the form of Teaching Modules, difficulties in determining the right learning methods and strategies and the lack of teacher ability in the use of technology in learning. In addition, the limited handbook for

students and the lack of ability and readiness of teachers in using a variety of learning methods and media, teaching materials that are too broad, and in the implementation of project-based learning teachers have difficulty in determining class projects in grades I and IV and lack of time allocation for project-based learning, determining the form of assessment in accordance with the learning objectives to be achieved, and determine the form of assessment during project-based learning [20]

Conclusion

The independent curriculum is a curriculum launched by the government in the post-pandemic period in aligning Indonesia's educational goals that are adapted to the demands of global development without leaving behind the characteristics of pancasila. The independent curriculum management system is organized as a series of activities ranging from planning, organizing, implementing and evaluating. The principal has a great influence on the management system policies implemented in schools, especially in the implementation of the independent curriculum. In addition, teachers as educators are the most important element of implementing learning with an independent curriculum because teachers are required to be innovative in managing learning by utilizing technology. In the implementation of the independent curriculum for one school year, there are several obstacles and/or problems, including the lack of maximum readiness of teachers and schools in the implementation of the independent learning curriculum because teachers do not fully understand policy changes in the preparation of all learning tools, besides that teachers still lack mastery of information and communication technology in the use of learning management, Training and seminars provided by the government to discuss the Free Learning Curriculum, especially at the elementary school level, are less effective due to the demands of working hours from the teachers themselves, and there are still teachers who are less innovative in actualizing learning strategies or methods of learning activities

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