

## IMPLEMENTATION OF THE CONCEPT AND DESIGN OF INDEPENDENT CURRICULUM MANAGEMENT IN IMPROVING THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION

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**Abstract :**

*The focus of this research is to challenge the Implementation of the concept and design of Independent Curriculum Management in improving the Quality of Education at the junior high school level. The methodology or approach used in this paper uses a library research method or procedure. At the same time, data collection is carried out by studying and exploring several journals, books, and documents (both printed and electronic) as well as other sources of data and or information that are considered relevant to the study; the purpose of this study is to find out the Implementation of the concept and design of Independent Curriculum Management in improving the Quality of Education, The results of this study concluded that the Implementation of the idea of independent curriculum education in improving the quality of education integrates literacy skills, knowledge skills, skills and attitudes as well as mastery of technology. The independent curriculum is a program expected to restore learning, which offers three characteristics, including project-based learning for developing soft skills and attributes following the profile of Pancasila students, learning on essential materials, and a more flexible curriculum structure.*

**Abstrak:**

*Fokus Penelitian ini adalah adalah tantang Implementasi konsep dan rancangan Manajemen Kurikulum Merdeka dalam meningkatkan Mutu Pendidikan di tingkat sekolah menengah pertama. Metodologi atau Pendekatan yang digunakan dalam tulisan ini menggunakan metode atau pendekatan kepustakaan (library research), sedangkan pengumpulan data dilakukan dengan menelaah dan/atau mengeksplorasi beberapa Jurnal, buku, dan dokumen-dokumen (baik yang berbentuk cetak maupun elektronik) serta sumber-sumber data dan atau informasi lainnya yang dianggap relevan dengan kajian, Tujuan penelitian ini adalah untuk mengetahui Implementasi konsep dan rancangan Manajemen Kurikulum Merdeka dalam meningkatkan Mutu Pendidikan, Hasil penelitian ini menyimpulkan bahwa Implemenatsi Konsep pendidikan kurikulum merdeka belajar dalam meningkat mutu Pendidikan mengintegrasikan kemampuan literasi, kecakapan pengetahuan,*

*keterampilan dan sikap serta penguasaan teknologi. Kurikulum merdeka menjadi program yang diharapkan dapat melakukan pemulihan dalam pembelajaran, dimana menawarkan tiga karakteristik diantaranya pembelajaran berbasis proyek pengembangan soft skill dan karakter sesuai dengan profil pelajar pancasila, pembelajaran pada materi esensial dan struktur kurikulum yang lebih fleksibel.*

## INTRODUCTION

One of the learning tools that educational institutions must complete is the curriculum (Zulwisli et al., 2022). The curriculum is a lesson design, teaching materials, and learning experience programmed in advance. The curriculum is a reference for every educator in implementing the teaching and learning process. Indonesia is a country that has made several changes/revisions to the curriculum (Fauzi, 2022).

For example, the graduation of students to continue to the next level of education is measured by the final score of the National Examination, which must reach a predetermined standard even though we know that each student has the ability and expertise in their respective fields in the learning process. In addition, teachers are also required to prepare an extensive syllabus or lesson plan and take a long time to prepare so that the teacher's learning process for students could be more optimal. The curriculum system is too monotonous and does not provide independence for students or teachers. Therefore, the latest ideas emerge in the development of the curriculum in Indonesia (Marisa, 2021).

The presence of the Minister of Education and Culture of the Republic of Indonesia, Nadiem Makarim, sparked one idea of curriculum changes, namely the independent learning curriculum. The independent learning curriculum is one of the curriculum concepts that demands independence from students (Maulinda, 2022). Independence means that every student can access knowledge from formal and non-formal education. This curriculum does not limit the concept of learning that takes place in and outside of school and demands creativity in the presence of teachers and students (Yasmansyah & Sesmiarni, 2022).

This independent learning curriculum also aims to answer educational challenges in the era of the industrial revolution 4.0, where in its embodiment, it must support skills in critical thinking and problem solving, creativity and innovation, as well as skill in communicating and collaborating for students (Yasmansyah & Sesmiarni, 2022). Indonesia is a country whose distribution is extensive, namely from Sabang Marauke. This spread triggers many remote areas that are difficult to get educated equally (Arviansyah & Shagena, 2022).

If there are demands or limits on success in education, it becomes a problem for some students who live in remote areas (Mariati, 2021). The government's policy on this will determine the success of the nation's generation in completing their education in the future (Susetyo, 2020). The independent learning curriculum initiated by the minister of education and culture, Nadiem Makarim, is a solution to answering problems in education today (Yasmansyah

& Sesmiarni, 2022). On the other hand, the curriculum is an educational "spirit" that must be evaluated innovatively, dynamically, and periodically following the times and science and technology competencies needed by the community and graduate users. Curriculum changes – thus – became a necessity. The rapid development of science and technology no longer allows the world of education to linger within the "comfort zone" of the applicable curriculum.

According to Sabriadi & Wakia (2021) as quoted Suryaman (2020), The curriculum is viewed as a goal, context, and strategy in learning through a program of systematically developing instruments or learning materials, social interactions, and learning techniques within an educational institution. Thus the role of the curriculum is significant so that students can achieve educational goals in a structured and sustainable manner. Based on this understanding, curriculum management can be interpreted as management in the curriculum field so that the learning process runs well effectively and efficiently, as well as feedback and interrelationships with each other (Indarta et al., 2022). Since Indonesia's independence on August 17, 1945, there have been various changes, including policies in curriculum changes. Currently, curriculum changes have been made from the 2006 Education Unit Level Curriculum (KTSP) to the 2013 Curriculum (Suryaman, 2020).

This change is intended to ensure that the learning process in schools/madrasahs is getting better. The 2013 curriculum change is a continuation of the 2006 curriculum, so the components in the 2013 curriculum are a development of the previous curriculum. To improve the quality of education in 2005, the government issued Indonesian Regulation 19 of 2005 concerning National Education Standards, which is the government's effort to improve the quality of education in Indonesia (Kholik et al., 2022).

In the pre-pandemic period, the Ministry of Education and Technology issued a policy on using the 2013 Curriculum. Then, the 2013 Curriculum was simplified into an emergent curriculum that made it easier for academic units to learn more easily with the substance of the essential material. The Merdeka Curriculum at SP/SMK-PK is a breath of fresh air in efforts to improve and restore learning which was launched for the first time in 2021 (Marisa, 2021).

The year 2024 will determine the national curriculum policy based on the evaluation of the curriculum during the learning recovery period (Suryaman, 2020). This evaluation is a reference for the Ministry of Education and Technology in taking different policies after the restoration of learning. The Independent Curriculum was developed as a more flexible curriculum framework, focusing on essential materials and developing the character and competence of students. The main characteristics of this curriculum that support learning recovery are (1) Project-based learning for the development of soft skills and characters according to the profile of Pancasila learners, (2) Focus on essential materials so that there is sufficient time for deep learning for essential competencies such as literacy and numeracy (Marisa, 2021).

Flexibility for teachers to carry out differentiated learning according to the abilities of learners and make adjustments to local contexts and content. With this, researchers are interested in researching the implementation of concepts and curriculum designs to improve the quality of education in junior high schools.

## RESEARCH METHODS

This writing uses literature studies, and the report is carried out to know the source of data in this writing using secondary data sources, namely Articles, Journals, and Books. In this writing, written citations are based on existing documents in the form of documents or data related to the Merdeka Belajar Curriculum. In this study, it uses data analysis techniques in the form of article analysis entitled: Development of Independent Learning Curriculum Learning Tools, Curriculum Management in Efforts to Improve the Quality of Education, The Role and Duties of Teachers in Curriculum Management, Orientation for Independent Learning Curriculum Development, Curriculum Management in Schools, Concept and Implementation of the MBKM Curriculum (Merdeka Belajar Kampus Merdeka), Implementation of Curriculum Management in Improving the Quality of Education, Integration of Curriculum Management as an Effort to Improve the Quality of Learning in Schools, Curriculum Management: A Theoretical Study, Development of Learning Tools for Independent Learning Curriculum, Curriculum Management and Learning in the National Education System, Analysis of Independent Curriculum in Overcoming Learning Loss during the Covid-19 Pandemic (Analysis of Education Policy Case Studies), Application of the Independent Learning Curriculum Universities During the Covid-19 Pandemic, and Islamic Education Curriculum Management.

## FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Etymologically, the curriculum comes from the Greek word *curir*, which means runner, and *curare* which means a place to race. So the term curriculum originated in the world of sports in Ancient Rome in Greece, which means the distance that a runner must travel from the starting line to the finish (Sirojuddin et al., 2022). It can be understood that the distance that must be traveled here means a curriculum with content and subject matter used as a period that students must travel to obtain a diploma. According to S. Nasution (1989), the curriculum is a plan prepared to streamline the teaching and learning process under the guidance and responsibility of schools, educational institutions, and teaching staff. Furthermore, Nasution explained that several curriculum theorists argue that the curriculum includes not only all planned activities but events that occur under the supervision of the school. So, in addition to formal curriculum activities, which are often called co-curricular or extra-curricular activities (co-curriculum or extra curriculum).

Menu Hasbulloh's (2007) curriculum is an educational or training institution's entire program, facilities, and activities to realize its vision, mission, and institution. Therefore, implementing the curriculum to support the success of an educational institution must be supported by the following—first, the

existence of competent personnel. Second, there are adequate facilities. Third, there are auxiliary facilities as support. Fourth, there is educational support personnel such as administrative personnel, guides, librarians, and laboratories. Fifth, There are adequate funds, sixth, There is good management. Seventh, The preservation of supporting culture, religion, morals, and national, and others; eighth, Visionary leadership is transparent and accountable.

### **Merdeka Curriculum**

Merdeka Curriculum is a curriculum with diverse extracurricular learning where the content will be more optimal so that students have enough time to explore concepts and strengthen competencies. (Ayundasari, 2021). Teachers can choose various teaching tools to tailor learning to students' learning needs and interests. The project to strengthen the achievement of the Pancasila student profile was developed based on specific themes set by the government. The project is not directed to achieve a particular learning achievement target, so it is not tied to the subject's content. (Fitriyah & Wardani, 2022) The Merdeka Curriculum is an elective (option) that can be applied by academic units starting from the 2022/2023 school year (FY). The Merdeka Curriculum continues the direction of developing the previous curriculum (kurtilas) (Indarta et al., 2022).

Suppose you look at the policies that will be taken by policymakers later before the national curriculum is evaluated in 2024. In that case, education units are given several curriculum options to be applied in schools. The Merdeka curriculum is provided as an additional option for education units to restore learning during 2022-2024(Suryaman, 2020). The national curriculum policy will be reviewed in 2024 based on evaluations during the learning recovery period. This new paradigm curriculum will be implemented in a limited and gradual manner through the driving school program and will eventually be applied to every academic unit in Indonesia. Before using it for each academic department, let's get to know the 7 (seven) new things in the Merdeka Curriculum (Yasmansyah & Sesmiarni, 2022).

First, the Curriculum Structure, Pancasila Student Profile (PPP), is a reference in the development of Content Standards, Process Standards, and Assessment Standards, or Curriculum Structure, Learning Outcomes (CP), Learning Principles, and Learning Assessments (Suryaman, 2020). The New Paradigm Curriculum Structure generally consists of extracurricular activities like face-to-face learning with teachers and project activities. In addition, each school is also given the flexibility to develop additional work programs that can create the competencies of its students. The program can be adjusted to the vision, mission, and school resources.

Second, the interesting thing about the New Paradigm Curriculum is that if in KTSP 2013, we know the terms KI and KD, namely the competencies that students must achieve after going through the learning process, then in the New Paradigm Curriculum, we will get acquainted with a new term, namely Learning Outcomes (CP) which is a series of knowledge, skills, and attitudes as a unified continuous process to build complete competence. Therefore, every learning assessment developed by the teacher must refer to the learning outcomes set.

Third, the implementation of the learning process with a thematic approach which has only been carried out at the elementary level, in the new curriculum is allowed to be carried out at other levels of education. Thus, at the elementary level, grades IV, V, and VI do not have to use a thematic approach to learning; in other words, schools can organize subject-based knowledge.

Fourth, when viewed from the number of class hours, the New Paradigm Curriculum does not set the number of class hours per week as has been the case in the 2013 KTSP, but the number of class hours in the New Paradigm Curriculum is set per year (Yasmansyah & Sesmiarni, 2022). So that every school has the convenience of managing the implementation of its learning activities. A subject may not be taught in an odd semester but will be conducted in an even semester, or it can be vice versa; for example, science subjects in class VIII are only taught in odd semesters. As long as the annual class hours are met, it is not a problem and can be justified.

Fifth, schools are also allowed to apply collaborative learning models between subjects and make cross-subject assessments, for example, in the form of summative assessments in the state of projects or project-based assessments (Muslim, 2022). In the New Paradigm Curriculum, elementary school students can do at least two project assessments in one academic year. Meanwhile, junior high and high school / vocational school students can complete at least three project assessments in one academic year. This aims to strengthen the Pancasila Student Profile.

Sixth, For Information and Communication Technology (ICT) subjects, which in KTSP 2013 were eliminated, the New Paradigm Curriculum this subject will be returned with a new name, namely Informatics, and will be taught starting from the junior high school level. For schools that do not have informatics resources/teachers, there is no need to worry about applying this subject because this subject does not have to be taught by teachers with an ICT/Informatics background but can be taught by general teachers. This is because the government, through the Ministry of Education, Culture, Research, and Technology, has prepared Informatics learning books that are very easy to use and understand by educators and students.

Seventh, For science and social studies subjects at Grade IV, V, and VI elementary school levels which have been independent in the New Paradigm Curriculum, these two subjects will be taught simultaneously under the name Social Natural Science Subjects (IPAS). This aims to make students better prepared to participate in separate science and social studies learning at the junior high school level.

Meanwhile, at the high school level, specialization or majoring in science, social studies, and language will again be carried out in classes XI and XII. The Ministry of Education and Culture of Higher Education supports schools by implementing this New Paradigm Curriculum. The Ministry of Education and Culture of Higher Education provides Teacher's Books, teaching modules, various formative assessments, and examples of curriculum development of academic units to assist students in implementing learning. Modules are recommended to be prepared by the teachers of their respective subjects.

However, suppose in the early stages, the teacher needs to be more capable of compiling a learning module. In that case, they can use the module prepared by the Ministry of Cultural Education, Research and Technology.

### **Curriculum Planning Management**

The ability to "manage" in planning and organizing a curriculum is a management goal in curriculum planning. Who is in charge of planning the curriculum and how it is designed professionally are two considerations that must be made during the process (Alpisah, 2022). The first point concerns the gap between curriculum implementation efforts and strategic ideas and approaches. The issue of personal involvement in curriculum planning is the root cause of this gap. This personal involvement is significantly influenced by the methods used to plan the curriculum (Fauzi, 2022). Two conditions need to be analyzed for each curriculum planning:

1. Sociocultural conditions

Professional management training aims to help people learn or master various materials to produce resource persons. The education system is similar to the education system in that it involves multiple social interactions between the teacher and the student or the teacher and the environment (Fauzi, 2022).

2. Availability of facilities

One of the causes of the gap between curriculum planners and teachers as practitioners is if the curriculum is prepared without involving teachers. Moreover, planners need to pay more attention to the participation of teachers in the field. That is why J.G Owen mentioned the need for a "from the bottom up" approach, namely the development of a curriculum that comes from the bottom up (Faiz & Purwati, 2021). Learning opportunity planning intended to encourage students or students to make desired behavior changes and measure how much they change is known as curriculum planning. The curriculum consists of all the experiences students gain inside and outside the school. These experiences have been planned systematically and integrated to help students succeed in school (Zulwisli et al., 2022). The objectives of curriculum planning are developed as a theoretical framework and research on social forces, community development, needs, and students' learning styles. Some decisions must be made when planning the curriculum, and those decisions should lead to specifics based on criteria. Planning learning is an essential part of curriculum planning because learning has an influence on students rather than the curriculum itself (Muslim, 2022).

Discussing and coordinating curriculum planning necessitates using models to present critical aspects, although the presentation must simplify many elements and ignore others. Curriculum planning is a complex social process requiring different decision-making types and levels. The formulation of the planning model is based on the assumption of rationality, that is, the careful processing of information regarding subjects, students, the environment, and learning outcomes, among other topics (Fitriyah & Wardani, 2022).

Several planning models, namely:

1. Tyler's deductive or rational planning model Focuses on logic in curriculum program design and starts with goals and objectives but tends to ignore problems in the work environment. This model can justify teacher development projects or establish planning policies based on dreams in departmental settings at any level of decision-making (Alpifah, 2022).
2. The rational interactive model Believes that rationality requires agreement between opposing points of view that do not follow a logical sequence. Planning a curriculum is seen more as "planning with" than as "planning." The assumption of rationality emphasizes the response to adapting curricula and disorganized initiatives at the school or local level in this model, which is often referred to as the situational model.
3. The Disciplines Model This plan focuses on the teacher, who plans his curriculum based on systematic considerations regarding the relevance of philosophical knowledge, the problem of meaningful learning, sociology (arguments for social tendencies), and psychology (to explain the order of subjects covered (Baharuddin, 2021).

### **The Concept of Independent Curriculum**

The concept of an independent learning curriculum is the formation of freedom of thought. The teacher determines the freedom of thought. This means that teachers are the main milestone in supporting success in education. (Yasmansyah & Sesmiarni, 2022) In an era of digitalization today, technology development affects the quality of education. In every activity carried out, teachers and students are inseparable from digital-based devices. The concept of independent curriculum education integrates literacy skills, knowledge skills, skills, and attitudes, as well as mastery of technology. Through this concept, students are given freedom of thought to maximize the knowledge that must be pursued. The idea of the 21st-century curriculum requires students to be independent in obtaining knowledge in both formal and non-formal education. The freedom applied in the image of the 21st century will provide opportunities for students to explore as much knowledge as possible (Indarta et al., 2022). One of the things that can be done is through literacy activities, developing talents through skills, and positive things that support the development of each student (Faiz & Purwati, 2021).

The concept of an independent learning curriculum is naturally applied equally in Indonesian educational institutions today. In addition to affecting the development of students, this concept will also make it easier for teachers to implement innovative learning processes. The burden borne by teachers so far can be solved through an independent learning curriculum. In addition, the concept of an independent learning curriculum will also be a solution in responding to educational challenges in the digitalization era as it is today. Now for that, we as academics must be able to be the frontline in driving the independent learning curriculum in Indonesian education today (Marisa, 2021).

## **Implementation of Education Quality Improvement through Independent Curriculum learning**

Sagala (2005), states that learning has two characteristics. (Ayundasari, 2021). First, the learning process involves the process of thinking. Second, the learning process builds a dialogical atmosphere and a continuous question-and-answer process to improve students' thinking skills. In turn, thinking can help students acquire the knowledge they construct. From the description above, it can be understood that a good learning process can be carried out by students both inside and outside the classroom, and with the characteristics possessed by students, it is hoped that they will be able to interact and socialize with their friends wisely and adequately (Muslim, 2022).

With high intensity and continuous learning, it is hoped that the process of social interaction between friends can be created well and, in turn, they respect and respect each other even though in the course of their opinions, they disagree with each other, which in the end they foster a democratic attitude between each other (Prianti, 2022). The current paradigm of educational methodology, whether or not it is realized, has shifted from behaviorism to constructivism, which requires teachers in the field to have the conditions and competencies to make a change in carrying out the learning process in the classroom. (Baharuddin, 2021).

Teachers are required to be more creative and innovative, not the only source of the learning process (teacher-centered), placing students not only as objects of learning but also as subjects of learning and ultimately boils down to a fun, joyful, and democratic learning process that respects every opinion so that in the end the substance of knowledge is truly lived (Marisa, 2021). In line with the above opinion, Learning, according to the view of constructivism, is: "Learning is built by man little by little, the results of which are expanded through a limited (narrow) context and not as uneventful. Learning is not a set of facts, concepts, or rules ready to be picked up and remembered. Human beings must construct that learning and form meaning through experience (Indarta et al., 2022).

Implementing the constructivist approach in learning manifests in the form of student-centered learning (Student Center). Teachers are required to create a learning atmosphere in such a way so that students work together in mutual learning (cooperative learning) (Vhalery et al., 2022). To create the typical situation in the above statement, a teacher must have what conditions are needed in teaching and building student learning to be effective in class and cooperate in learning to create a pleasant and respectful (democratic) atmosphere. From the above opinion, it can be explained that teachers have a cumbersome task and responsibility for improving student competence. The results will be seen from the number of students who graduated and did not pass (Prianti, 2022). Thus, the responsibility for improving the quality of education in schools imposed on teachers is huge (Rahmansyah, 2021). At this time, many teachers have implemented the theory of constructivism in classroom learning. However, the volume is still limited because of the reality on the ground. We still encounter many teachers who in teaching still seem only to carry out obligations. He does not need strategies or methods in education; it is essential to how a learning event can take place. This is a mistaken and illegitimate opinion to follow, if not to be

said to be lazy and unprofessional.

The Merdeka Curriculum is a program that is expected to be able to restore learning, which offers three characteristics, including knowledge based on 1. soft skill development projects and characteristics following the profile of Pancasila students, 2. learning on essential materials, and 3. more flexible curriculum structure. In addition, the independent curriculum wants to make breakthroughs that become a barrier between scientific fields (Kholik et al., 2022). The implementation of the independent curriculum in several schools was carried out in the first year, then developed in many schools this year so that in its performance, the independent curriculum, after being analyzed, was better and followed Indonesian culture than the 2013 curriculum. Given that today's increasingly complex life emphasizes more comprehensive aspects of knowledge than ever, the refinements are diverse in interdisciplinary and multidisciplinary sciences.

## CONCLUSION

The idea of a new curriculum, namely the independent belajar curriculum, was sparked by Nadiem Makarim, Minister of Education and Culture of the Republic of Indonesia. One of the concepts in the independent learning curriculum is to require students to be separated. Every student has the freedom to access knowledge from both formal and informal education independence. With affirmative policies aimed at students from the disadvantaged, frontier, and remote areas, the development of independent learning curricula helps the equitable distribution of education throughout Indonesia. Students' character will be shaped in several ways outside of the classroom, including their courage to voice opinions in discussions, the ability to get along with others, and their competence as students.

This encourages creativity among students and will be realized under the supervision of teachers. It is also recognized that teachers must be able to develop new learning concepts for their students. The idea behind the independent learning curriculum is the establishment of the independence of thought. The teacher determines the freedom of thought. As a result, teachers play an essential role in encouraging educational success. Implementation of the concept of independent curriculum education improves the quality of education by integrating literacy skills, knowledge skills, skills and attitudes, and mastery of technology. The independent curriculum is a program that is expected to restore learning, which offers three characteristics, including project-based learning for developing soft skills and attributes following the profile of Pancasila students, learning on essential materials, and a more flexible curriculum structure.

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