

## **PAI Teacher's Readiness In Implementing The Independent Curriculum Learning At SMP Negeri 2 Bulu**

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### **ABSTRACT**

*In 2019, the Ministry of Education and Culture of the Republic of Indonesia highlighted new educational initiatives, one of which is the Merdeka Learning Curriculum. During the Covid 19 outbreak, the Free Learning Curriculum attempted to revive Education. The interview approach is one that is applied in this study. Interviews were conducted to find out more about the readiness of PAI teachers in implementing the Merdeka Learning curriculum. Based on the findings of this study, Islamic education teachers in grade 7 were given an introduction to the self-learning curriculum, while Islamic education teachers in grades 8 and 9 were not ready to accept it.*

**Keywords: Independent Learning Curriculum, Teachers, Teacher Readiness, Covid-19, Implementation**

## **A. INTRODUCTION**

Education is a conscious effort and stage in changing the views and behavior of a person or group in an effort to help individuals develop through education, training and teaching. Achieving the goals that have been put forward to be one of the goals of education. In the Education Process there needs to be readiness in the continuity of a good learning process.

Readiness is everything involved in preparing for something. A level of ability that occurs in students with respect to certain instructional goals is often referred to as readiness, as well as a willingness to respond or react. (Yuliati: 2013). For this reason, it is necessary to have direction and upbringing from a teacher in studying.

From kindergarten through high school, children's primary educators are their teachers. This was a defining moment in the development of ideas and a broad joint effort to train the next generation of educators, as stipulated in Law no. 14 of 2005 concerning teachers and lecturers. So, To be a positive role model for their students, a teacher must uphold high moral standards.

Islamic religious education is a program that aims to instill Islamic ideals in students through activities, tutoring, or training. Besides that, students are expected to be able to innovate and be creative in participating in learning without any pressure. So, the Ministry of Education and Culture made a curriculum change. And the curriculum is called "Independence Curriculum". The implementation of Merdeka Learning offers flexibility but adheres to established policies and processes in pursuit of goals. The Key to Freedom of Learning is a learning method that starts from independence of learning for teachers to independence for students.

Islamic Religious Education In the classroom, teachers must actively encourage students to think outside the box. Islamic religious education teachers must be knowledgeable individuals who are willing to learn new things, who are comfortable with technology, and who value reading as a means to broaden their horizons. Teachers are also required to work and be creative in the world of education, be able to socialize in their environment, and have a sincere and sincere attitude in teaching.

To measure the extent to which the readiness of the faculty of Islamic religious education at Bulu 2 Public Middle School uses an independent learning framework in its learning. The research team interviewed people in the field to gain insights. A literature review was conducted to assess the readiness of PAI teachers at SMP Negeri 2 Bulu in implementing the Independent Learning Curriculum. This is due to readiness in implementing the independent curriculum which is carried out in stages and not all schools

implement the complete independent learning curriculum system. The readiness of the Islamic Religious Education Teachers at Bulu 2 Public Middle School is sufficient materially and in practice. However, there are still more inhibiting factors than supporting factors. Therefore, this study aims to explain how the readiness of Islamic Religious Education Teachers at SMP Negeri 2 Bulu is in implementing the Free Learning Curriculum. The overarching aim of this study is to detail the reasons that discourage and encourage Islamic religious education teachers to implement a new, self-sustaining curriculum in these institutions.

## **B. LITERATURE REVIEW**

In writing this research, the researcher has conducted a literature review of previous research which addresses almost the same problems as this research. The following is the research that has been done.

Analyzing the Readiness of PAI Teachers to Accept the Freedom of Learning Policy (Case Study at MTSN 9 Madiun) is a project undertaken by Yeyen Afista, Ali Priyono R, and Saibul Atho Huda. 2020. The findings of the study assess the condition of the learning support facilities at MTSN 9 Madiun and the readiness of PAI instructors for the main policies on Freedom of Learning, including the National Examination, USBN, Learning Implementation Plans, and PPDB Zoning. This study looked at the cognitive, physical and mental readiness of PAI instructors. (Afista, A., I., & L. 2020)

A study by Puput Rahmat Saputra entitled "Response and Readiness of Islamic Religious Education Teachers towards the Implementation of the 2013 Curriculum for Islamic Religious Education Subjects at Yogyakarta 5 Middle School" was conducted in 2013. Islamic Religion Studies at Yogyakarta 5 Middle School. The readiness of PAI educators is concentrated on two dimensions: pedagogic and professional (Saputra, 2013).

Research conducted by Revi Ujiana in 2022 in a study entitled "Analysis of the Ability of Islamic Religious Education Teachers in the Implementation of the Independent Curriculum". The purpose of this study is to provide an overview of the competence of Islamic religious education teachers in dealing with the implementation of an independent curriculum. The results of this study contain 1. Preparation of PAI Teachers in facing the Independent Curriculum policy, 2. Related to achievements learning that has been implemented in the 2022 decision no. 3 BSKAP becomes a learning goal that will be achieved according to the level of students. Global Issues and PAI Teachers' Readiness to Respond to them is the title of a 2020 study by Achmad Fauzi, Mohammad Erihadiana, and Uus Ruswandi. The study findings describe global concerns and evaluate the

readiness of PAI educators to address them. The readiness of PAI educators to take part in the new program launched by the Ministry of Education and Culture, Merdeka Learning, is not a topic explored in this research (Fauzi et al.,2020).

In 2020, research findings entitled "Perceptions of Prospective Islamic Religious Education Teachers on Freedom of Learning" by Naili Nur Firotnun, Moh. Miftakhul Huda, and Achmad Ali fikri will be published. Aspiring educators in the field of Islamic education have their thoughts on the Freedom of Learning initiative and its implementation captured in this study. Prospective teachers in the field of Islamic education are the focus of this study because of the important role expected of them in enforcing educational policies in the classroom. Therefore, the journal will not address the topic of whether prospective PAI educators have the necessary knowledge and abilities to successfully implement the Independent Learning curriculum (Firotnun et al., 2020).

The findings of this research, which investigates the readiness of Islamic religious education teachers to learn independently by using a case study at SMP Negeri Bulu, fills the gap in the existing literature. Researchers look at markers such as student skills and teacher flexibility to determine outcomes.

### **C. RESEARCH METHOD**

The research form, data sources, data collection strategies, data analysis strategies, and data validation checks are all included in this research methodology.

#### **1. Research methods**

In this study, qualitative research techniques were used. According to Sugiyono, qualitative research is naturalistic because it is carried out in a natural setting and takes inspiration from the world around us. Natural objects are objects that evolve in their natural state, are unaltered by study, and unaffected by the presence of researchers.

This qualitative study was conducted to gather information about the readiness of Islamic Religious Education teachers in implementing the independent learning curriculum at Bulu 2 Public Middle School.

#### **2. Approach**

Technical issues in education are the focus of this phenomenological study, which also seeks to clarify these issues and investigate them in depth. Researchers at SMP Negeri Bulu 2 in Indonesia explain the receptiveness of their Islamic religious education faculty to a phenomenological approach to teaching based on the school's self-learning curriculum. As departing from the idea of efficiency in choosing program materials, the phenomenological method ensures that those who undergo this mode of training have the

requisite abilities to do their job perfectly.

### 3. Data source

This study uses two different data sources, namely:

- a. The researcher collected primary data from Islamic Religious Education teachers at the sample school, SMPN 2 Bulu, Bulu District, Sukoharjo Regency, Central Java Province, directly from the teachers themselves, excluding intermediaries.
- b. Secondary data is information that complements primary data and information collected through intermediaries that can be accessed without contact respondent directly. The Principal, TU, and other sources will provide this information.

### 4. Method of collecting data

To obtain complete, comprehensive and accurate information, researchers use the following methods:

#### a. Interview

One method of conducting independent research in accordance with the objectives and parameters set by means of oral research is to conduct direct interviews. This interview is intended to obtain as much information as possible regarding the issues raised by the author.

#### b. Observation

Every incident is captured and documented as part of the observation data collection process using observation instruments that are specific to the object under study.

Researchers in these studies participate in what is known as passive participant observation, in which they appear at the observation site but do not actively take part in any of the activities being studied. In this study, researchers observed students and teachers as they were involved in teaching Islamic and religious education

moral education.

#### c. Documentation

Finding written records, such as books, journals, and lecture notes, can be considered a type of documentation. Researchers can learn more about the context and dynamics of students, educators, and institutions through this documentation method about the Independent Learning Program at SMP Negeri 2 Bulu.

### 5. Data validity technique

Tested qualitative studies add further information to the data. Checking the validity of the data is a process of evaluating the dependability and validity of qualitative research.

Credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability criteria are used to determine whether the data is valid (Sumasno, Hadi: p. 75). Data validity is a key concept that stems from the notion of data validity and reliability. Some examples of reliability checks for research data are:

- a. Determination in observation, or search for features and elements in contexts that are highly relevant to the problem at hand. Researchers at Bulu 2 Public Middle School used this accuracy to measure the level of readiness of PAI teachers in implementing the Free Learning Curriculum.
- b. Triangulation or analysis of data sources, carried out in qualitative research to determine whether information was collected using various methods and tools at various periods.

Based on the justification given, the researchers in this study examined the research data to determine how prepared Islamic education teachers were in implementing the Free Learning Curriculum at SMP Negeri 2 Bulu.

#### 6. Data analysis technique

To facilitate thorough data analysis, researchers used the Miles and Haberman interactive model developed for Basrowi & Kelvin. The explanation meant by the Interactive Model is conveyed through the processing of its constituent parts, namely data reduction, data display, and conclusion production.

- a. The selection process, the data reduction phase requires streamlining, abstracting, and reformatting raw data taken from documentation related to field work. This procedure begins early in the research effort, long before data is collected. Methods for processing large amounts of data include summarization, coding, tracking, and clustering. To achieve this, one must selectively collect data, summaries, or brief descriptions and organize them in such a way as to reveal overarching trends.
- b. The data display stage is the practice of compiling a series of facts into the presentation stage allowing choices to make judgments and take action.
- c. The next stage is drawing conclusions, which involves ongoing efforts to do while out in the field. Researchers draw findings that are strongly supported by the data collected during the data collection phase. This information will then be transformed into a story (Ahmad Rijali: 2018).

## **D. RESULT AND DISCUSSION**

### **1. Contents of Results and Discussion**

Readiness of Islamic Religious Education Teachers in the Implementation of the Freedom to Learn curriculum at SMP Negeri 2 Bulu,

#### **a. PAI Teacher Readiness regarding lesson planning**

Pak Didik has collected and determined learning outcomes in terms of preparation before carrying out learning. In addition, it can be said that the learning outcomes created follow the guidelines for autonomous curricular learning outcomes. Students use a variety of instructional approaches and resources to complete their work, as evidenced by learning outcomes. This can be an indication of student efforts to produce learning outcomes that are in accordance with standards and with the aim of optimizing these results. We can draw this conclusion from the information we have about GPAI readiness in terms of educational outcomes.

#### **b. Readiness of PAI Teachers regarding the implementation of learning**

The pleasant atmosphere in the classroom encourages active participation from children rather than passive listening to the instructor's talk. Teachers must be more inventive and utilize all students' abilities in the application of learning, especially in prioritizing Pancasila values, provoking student creativity, providing a pleasant atmosphere in class encouraging active participation from children rather than just passively listening to instructor talks but also being able to process, present ideas, evaluating information. But in reality, the implementation of learning at SMP Negeri 2 Bulu class 7 is still in the introductory stage. So that in its implementation it is more inclined to the 2013 curriculum.

#### **c. PAI Teacher Readiness in learning evaluation**

Because the student assessment system at Bulu 2 Public Middle School still uses the 2013 curriculum. As a result, E. Mulyasa showed in the 2013 Curriculum Evaluation that his assessment places a proportional emphasis on the cognitive, emotional, psychomotor components, and that the assessment exams on the portfolio complement one another.

The inhibiting factors regarding the readiness of PAI teachers in implementing the independent curriculum both internally and externally are as follows

##### **1) Internal factors**

Students' motivation, attitudes, and interests are examples of internal factors that hinder the successful implementation of an independent learning curriculum.

#### a) Motivation

Motivation to learn has a very significant role in educational activities. Students will find it difficult to understand or absorb the material studied during the learning process if they do not have the drive to learn from the start.

Three sources claim that students at SMP Negeri 2 Bulu are motivated to learn and engage in self-based learning as consequence of the initial survey. There were a number of challenges, including a lack of student willingness to engage in independent learning. Independent learning methods and styles that tend to be free make it sometimes difficult to control students while they are learning, and this seems to be an ongoing challenge in dealing with student attitudes. While in a discussion group. Unrealized projects are still being worked on in a practical sense, both apart from formal education and as opportunities for experiential learning.

#### b) Student attitude

In terms of learning, one's attitude and behavior two internal psychological factors play an important role. A student's motivation and effort to learn is largely determined by his mental structure. It is the student's positive reaction to the lecture, the instructor, and the overall classroom setting that is emphasized here.

The research findings suggest that these children struggle to recognize the value of education. This shows that students still face challenges when faced with instruction that emphasizes independent learning.

Students at Bulu 2 Public Middle School, who have had the Covid-19 outbreak for two years, have a negative attitude in receiving lessons, according to follow-up interviews with informants NM and AN. Then the teacher administration of the class, which occurs during teaching, distracts students from their learning.

#### c) Student interest

Successful efforts to arouse students' curiosity can have a positive impact on their motivation. There will be no obstacles in the educational process, making it easy to achieve the goals set for yourself. Initial conversations and observations with the three informants revealed that schools and teachers had evaluated their interests and talents and developed learning outcomes that met the needs of an independent learning curriculum. There are significant



challenges, especially in practice, to control learning systems.

Informants (NM) at SMP Negeri 2 Bulu shared in follow-up interviews that implementing an independent curriculum for 5 months at school and the subsequent introductory stage in grade 7 means that the school is still working out kinks in classroom management based on student demand and aptitude. That is, there is no method or system to divide students into several levels according to their abilities.

After conducting interviews with IM informants, we learned that the principal of SMP Negeri 2 Bulu received broad approval from both the faculty and students. Educators must never stop thinking about new approaches to help students learn. Each instructor must adopt a methodology that is unique to their personality and the students they work with. This is to ensure that all educators feel comfortable and inspired to implement self-directed learning approaches in their own classrooms.

## 2) External Factors

Good parental support, firm principals, adequate school infrastructure, effective teaching methodologies, and qualified instructors are external factors that make it difficult to implement an independent learning curriculum.

### a) Parental Support

Students benefit greatly from having parents invest in their education. Children need proper time, location, and conditions for learning, and parental attention can provide this.

Interviews with the three informants revealed the challenges in getting parental support for the interest and talent survey of SMP Negeri 2 Bulu. While many parents use the assessment results to guide their child's course selection, some disagree with the results. When this happens, school officials move quickly to mediate between parents, students, and educators to help them reach a consensus on the best way forward.

### b) Principal's leadership

The success of a school depends on the direction given by the principal. Assuming, of course, that the principal has the ideal blend of character traits, mentality, and expertise to effectively manage the institutional needs of the school. A leader in the field of education, in theory, should have influence over all parties involved, including the educators themselves.

### c) School Facilities

Space and time are no longer barriers to sharing and accessing educational resources when they are in schools where teachers, students and other school members can work together. In addition, better teaching is possible in schools with superior facilities, so that students can progress more quickly in their studies.

The initial survey found that the four informants felt that school learning resources supported autonomy and curriculum-based learning. We were able to learn more about DH and HN after conducting in-depth interviews with them. Laboratory equipment, in particular, is still an important piece of the puzzle regarding classrooms and study spaces. Even with its limitations, LCD projectors can be given more power. For some, school resources are helpful enough to facilitate the introduction of alternative curricula.

#### d) Learning System

Learning Systems are structured combinations of individuals, resources, settings, tools, and processes that work together to complete tasks. The challenge in developing learning procedures, especially in producing different content according to students' learning styles, was obtained through observation and interviews with DH and HN informants at SMP Negeri 2 Bulu. Educators may then require additional training time to meet anticipated changing demands. The school week is full of events, and not all educators are adept at prioritizing.

#### e) Learning materials

When students come to class having mastered content, they are better prepared to learn and perform at higher levels. Educators are responsible for more than imparting knowledge; they must also organize classroom instruction, from finding resources to developing lesson plans.

The implementation of learning materials in accordance with independent curricular needs has been successful, as can be seen from the initial data collected through direct observation and interviews with the three informants. But there are challenges in compiling teaching materials based on self-learning curriculum, as well as little time allocation for lessons and inadequate facilities, such as few LCDs, visual aids, and reference books, where the books currently available are teacher books and reference books, student books, and where the existing books are still incomplete. The introduction of the teacher's self-learning program at SMP Negeri 2 Bulu

still needs to be flexible even though the school implements a one-semester learning model.

f) Teacher competence

Teachers need to support learning that is right on target and attractive to their students so that it can be realized. Teachers at SMP Negeri Bulu 2 have started to understand and construct curriculum-based independent learning, as evidenced by interviews with three informants about whether all students can understand what the teacher is saying. More and more students are receiving technology-based assignments and engaging in experiential learning activities outside of traditional classroom settings. Meanwhile, informant HN said that according to them the 2013 curriculum was the best because it was more relevant, useful and practical to use in class. The reason is that new requirements for teaching were included in the 2013 curriculum. Meanwhile, in the Merdeka curriculum, independent learning is encouraged and not hindered by the need for teacher manuals.

## **2. Contents of the Results of the Discussion**

Pak Didik is very ready to implement an independent curriculum as a teacher. However, he struggled to change learning outcomes and evaluations due to a shortage of teachers, resulting in incomplete implementation of the self-directed curriculum. Therefore, Mr. Didik has just implemented learning with a theoretical independent curriculum module debriefing system for every student in the class. Behind the application of learning with a system of provisioning the theory of the Free Learning Curriculum module to their students, Mr. The debriefing carried out by the students is by participating in workshop activities, the Freedom Learning Platform and other seminars. Which activities are related to strengthening the Independent Curriculum for readiness for implementation next year. Ibu Hepi's background as a teacher shows that she is well prepared to guide students through the self-learning curriculum. He also actively pursues opportunities for growth and development through training and other forms of personal development. While the autonomous curriculum will continue to be offered in the future, there will be fewer resources than in other schools due to inadequate facilities and infrastructure.

The implementation of the independent curriculum at Bulu 2 Public Middle School is a form of the school's commitment to tackling the learning loss phenomenon at the junior high school due to changes in the learning system during the Covid-19 pandemic. still

learning all the subjects in the 2013 curriculum structure with one additional project every four months. The allocation of study hours (JP) for the project is obtained from reducing 1 JP from each compulsory subject in the curriculum structure. independently and accompany students during the implementation of the project.

Implementation in SMP Negeri 2 Bulu is still in theory not fully implemented. However, it only provides students with an overview of the independent curriculum. Because in this independent curriculum there are three projects, namely recycling entrepreneurship, making traditional ginger with distilled techniques, and making batik. The three projects are scheduled for 1 academic year with a time allocation of 120 JP and the implementation schedule is spread every day. Because each project takes four months to complete, only one ongoing project has been completed. While each project is not just one so that in learning the independent curriculum is not effective. Apart from that, the purpose of holding an independent curriculum is with the intention that students have noble morals, especially being able to think creatively and reason critically. Which is where the provision of learning material is not only knowledge but, it tends to be more affective and psychomotor. Even though in the K13 curriculum it has been given. However, this independent curriculum is more emphasized on the formation of the character of students. The student activities in the preparation of Islamic Religious Education Teachers regarding the implementation of the Free Learning Curriculum at Bulu 2 Public Middle School include:

- a. Providing some material that previously existed in the 2013 curriculum did not exist in the independent curriculum. So that material regarding Islamic Religious Education was added to the 2013 curriculum. The addition of this material is intended so that students can adjust the learning.
- b. The Independent Curriculum Module Regarding Islamic Religious Education provided by the teacher. Not much different from the 2013 Curriculum Module where this curriculum emphasizes spiritual attitudes and social attitudes. With the hope that students are able to upload students' sensitivity to actual issues and be able to solve these problems properly. Meanwhile, the Merdeka Curriculum Module is broader. That is, this module is added with Pancasila student material. Pancasila students are those in Indonesia who are committed to lifelong learning, are culturally aware, and act in a way that reflects the principles espoused by the philosophy of Pancasila. Faith, piety to God Almighty, noble character, respect for world diversity, mutual cooperation, independence, critical thinking, and creativity are some of the six basic characteristics of these values. However, at SMP Negeri 2

Bulu the material has not been fully provided. However, giving the material in stages with the aim of the students having an overview of the Merdeka curriculum for the future.

## **E. CONCLUSION**

Based on what has been said above, it seems that PAI teachers at Bulu 2 Public Middle School are ready to start implementing the Independent Learning Curriculum. Student preparation can be seen from the many hands-on activities they have completed in class. However, the implementation of the project has not been fully implemented, because the government stated that the school had not met the criteria. Apart from that, the condition of the students at the time of learning. These students are still given motivation and enthusiasm for learning, developing creativity, criticality, independence, both in terms of strengthening the spirit of mutual cooperation and aligning student competencies. Regarding the obstacles it faces, starting from the point of view of facilities and infrastructure, it has not been fully fulfilled, especially in terms of educational staff, there is still a shortage. The competence of educators is lacking in the process of adapting teachers to participants who are not fast enough. In terms of inhibiting factors, both internal and external. There are three internal factors, namely: 1) Lack of interest and talent-based management in schools, as well as the absence of an evaluation system to detect student needs, contributes to a lack of student motivation. 2) The existence of the Covid-19 outbreak caused students to pay less attention when receiving material because their learning style was more flexible, students were lazy to study in class because they were already at home, and teachers were less interested in enforcing discipline in the class. 3) There is disagreement between student expectations and exam results assessing the talents of school students giving rise to conflict. While the external obstacles are as follows: 1) Some families do not agree with the results of the inventory of interests and talents; 2) There is a shortage of classroom resources such as LCD projectors and other forms of instructional technology and laboratory equipment. 3) Obstacles in compiling various learning content materials that are appropriate to student learning styles; 4) The self-learning curriculum takes a lot of time to acquire and understand because there is no guiding structure for its implementation, 5) The time spent on planned lessons is insufficient, 6) There are few resources, instructional aids, and reference materials; 7) Because instructors are still adjusting to curricular changes, the learning process in class is still below standard. 8) the teacher already knows the independent curriculum learning

system, although not fully.

To overcome this problem, schools must foster a culture of reading, discussion/dialogue, and writing that is valued by all school members to develop competence and improve student achievement. This rapid pace of change emphasizes the importance of continuing education and the need to broaden the expertise of those involved, including educators. Apart from the process of change, there is nothing else. Therefore, the only way to solve the problem is to continue learning and practicing what he learns in life.

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