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## PROBLEMS OF MANAGEMENT AND IMPLEMENTATION OF THE INDEPENDENT CURRICULUM IN PAI LESSONS IN PUBLIC ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS IN BESITANG DISTRICT, LANGKAT

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### **Kata Kunci:**

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### **ABSTRAK**

Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menganalisis problematika pengelolaan dan penerapan kurikulum merdeka pada pelajaran PAI di SD Negeri se-Kecamatan Besitang, Langkat, Sumatera Utara. Fokus penelitian ialah problematika yang dialami guru dalam mengajar menggunakan platform kurikulum merdeka dan kesulitan yang dihadapi guru dalam mengevaluasi pembelajaran PAI di sekolah masing-masing. Penelitian ini menggunakan pendekatan kualitatif dengan metode studi multisitus, yakni SDN 050780 Besitang, SDN 050771 Halaban Blok, dan SDN 056646 Sesirah Halaban. Penelitian ini dilaksanakan sejak Januari-Maret 2024. Informan penelitian meliputi kepala sekolah dan guru PAI pada ketiga SD negeri tersebut. Pemerolehan data menggunakan metode observasi, wawancara, dan studi dokumentasi. Hasil penelitian ini menyimpulkan bahwa *pertama*, problematika yang dihadapi oleh guru dalam penerapan kurikulum merdeka di ketiga SD tersebut adalah keterbatasan ruang belajar, kurang memadainya sumber belajar dan fasilitas di perpustakaan sekolah, serta kendala jaringan internet yang tidak lancar. *Kedua*, kesulitan yang dialami guru dalam implementasi kurikulum merdeka meliputi kurangnya kreativitas guru dalam membuat media belajar berbasis digital dan lingkungan sekitar, serta pemaduan antar mata pelajaran dalam pembelajaran tematik. *Ketiga*, kesulitan dalam evaluasi pembelajaran, meliputi perubahan perilaku (mengarah profil pelajar Pancasila) dan peningkatan hasil belajar siswa.

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**Keywords:**

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Independent Curriculum, Management, Islamic Religious Education, Elementary School.

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**ABSTRACTS**

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*The purpose of this study is to examine the challenges management and associated with using the independent curriculum in PAI courses in state primary schools in Langkat, North Sumatra's Besitang District. The research focuses on the challenges teachers have when utilizing the autonomous curricular platform to teach and the obstacles they have while assessing PAI learning in their individual classrooms. Utilizing a multisite study method and a qualitative methodology, this research is conducted at SDN 050780 Besitang, SDN 050771 Halaban Blok, and SDN 056646 Sisirah Halaban. The study was conducted in January through March of 2024. Principals of the three state elementary schools as well as PAI teachers served as research informants. Methods such as observation, interviews, and documentation studies were used to gather data. According to the research's findings, teachers in the three elementary schools are having difficulty implementing the independent curriculum because of a lack of study space, poor learning resources and facilities in the school library, and shaky internet networks. Second, instructors' inability to be creative in their creation of digital learning materials and the surrounding environment, as well as their inability to integrate subjects into theme learning, is a challenge faced by them when implementing the autonomous curriculum. Third, challenges with assessing learning, such as modifying behavior (guiding the Pancasila student profile) and enhancing learning results for students.*

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## A. INTRODUCTION

The curriculum is a set of methodically organized procedures that comprise the core of the educational process, learning (Julaeha, 2019). Values, culture, and traditional knowledge are all included in the curriculum, which serves as a learning resource. It also provides the means by which the information and values are internalized and transmitted. This demonstrates the curriculum's importance as a source of information for occasionally enhancing learning (Lande, 2021; Purba, *et.al.*, 2023).

The government and educational institutions always create a curriculum, which consists of a collection of lessons (Wahyuni, *et.al.*, 2023). This is a way of adapting to the demands of the workplace, the dynamics of education, and the demands of a changing global community (Hermawan, *et.al.*, 2024; Al Fasya, *et.al.*, 2022). The curriculum will thus always be flexible, up to date, and comprehensive, taking into consideration the dynamics of global education and the current environment.

In the sphere of education ministry, Indonesia's constantly evolving curriculum is considered a waste. Because the quality of Indonesian "humans" has not changed in a noticeable way. Actually, the government has lavished vast sums of money on each curriculum modification (Harianto, 2023). Because of this, the government must be involved in society in order to assess the social controls that the community faces. Keeping in mind that the people who are supposed to become "candradimuka craters" for the Indonesian nation's civilization are the graduates of educational institutions.

Teachers are concerned about the critical function that the learning curriculum plays as technical implementers of all curriculum processes, from learning evaluation to planning (Wahyuni, 2022). Socialization of the autonomous curriculum has been ongoing, phased, and provided to all teachers from the start of 2020. Because each educational institution unit's implementation of the independent curriculum will be judged by its teachers. The emphasis on the value of an autonomous curriculum is on students' "freedom of learning" and teachers' freedom to incorporate principles based on local wisdom into every aspect of the teaching and learning process (Mulyana & Ramdani, 2023).

In actuality, guidebooks with thematic content and concepts relevant to students' everyday experiences are provided to instructors and students. From my village, my family, and my surroundings to additional topic teaching resources (Firdaus, *et.al.*, 2022). In addition, the integration of learning has produced interdisciplinary, multidisciplinary, and transdisciplinary science rather of concentrating on a single scientific field. Moreover, high level thinking skills (HOTS) rather than low or middle level thinking skills are the focus of the anticipated reference outcomes (Masduriah, 2020).

Contextual and comprehensive learning are produced by the learning process that the autonomous curriculum guarantees. so that learning is prioritized and not merely focused on grades or test scores (Hanifah, 2019). In addition, projections generated by the students during their studies, handmade or invented goods, and noble character will all be taken into consideration while evaluating them. Teachers also stress scientifically-based, purposeful learning for kids during this process.

The PAI teachers who were the subjects of this research were still unable to fully create lesson plans that aligned with the independent curriculum platform in their respective schools, according to a preliminary study that took the form of the

findings of initial observations on the content analysis of lesson plans. Interview data, meanwhile, revealed that PAI teachers were still not operating at their best when it came to putting the independent curriculum into practice. Additionally, the findings of preliminary interviews about the application of learning outcomes evaluation conducted by PAI teachers revealed that teachers' capacity to assess learning outcomes in the autonomous curriculum was still restricted.

Taking into account that the idea and the actual implementation of the autonomous curriculum in schools are still out of sync. It is imperative to investigate the challenges associated with executing the autonomous curriculum and the obstacles that face educators during this process (Rahmadhani, *et.al.*, 2023; Windayanti, *et.al.*, 2023). In this manner, as a point of realization of learning that produces "independent" people as the essence of educational goals, solutions or alternatives will be sought to implement an independent curriculum from basic education institutions to higher education, also known as the independent campus learning curriculum (MBKM) (Assingkily, 2020).

Actually, a variety of situations and scientific perspectives have been used to examine pertinent studies on the challenges associated with implementing the independent curriculum. This includes talking about the general issues with putting the independent curriculum into practice (Sumarmi, 2023; Hehakaya & Pollatu, 2022), Challenges in executing a self-contained curriculum for learning mathematics (Oktavia & Qudsiyah, 2023), issues instructors had when putting the independent curriculum into practice (Zulaiha, *et.al.*, 2023), Instructor preparedness for executing the autonomous curriculum (Damayanti, *et.al.*, 2023), Problems of implementing the independent curriculum in Indonesian language learning (Wardana, *et.al.*, 2023), problems of implementing the independent curriculum in elementary schools (Iskandar, *et.al.*, 2023; Rusmiati, *et.al.*, 2023), PAI learning and problems implementing the independent curriculum (Mustofa, *et.al.*, 2023; Damanik, 2023), independent curriculum-based educational revolution (Putri, *et.al.*, 2023), Problems of implementing the independent curriculum in Arabic language lessons (Qomaruddin, 2022), Problems of implementing the independent curriculum in biology lessons (Afinni, *et.al.*, 2024), Problems of implementing the independent curriculum in higher education (Sabriadi & Wakia, 2021), PAUD teachers' readiness and obstacles in implementing the independent curriculum (Marfuah, 2023), independent curriculum development innovation model (Efendi, *et.al.*, 2022), problems experienced by homeroom teachers in implementing the independent curriculum (Mahfudh, 2023), and lack of adoption of the autonomous curriculum in educational institutions (Fatimah, *et.al.*, 2023).

Research on the topic of "Problems of Implementing Independent Curriculum in Islamic Religious Education Subjects in State Elementary Schools in Besitang District" is required in light of the aforementioned issues because, if left unchecked, there is concern that education overall and Islamic Religious Education in particular may suffer, which could have an adverse effect on students' education.

### ***Learning Management***

The main goal of education is learning. The outcomes of a number of educational procedures are actually determined by the quality of learning (Anam, 2021). Learning management initiatives are therefore required to guarantee the degree of efficacy and efficiency in accomplishing shared objectives. The process of improving all aspects of education, including teacher competency, student motivation to learn, a supportive learning environment, and the use of models, strategies, methods, techniques, and learning aids, is the main focus of learning management (Syafaruddin, *et.al.*, 2020). This demonstrates how the development of a welcoming and accommodating learning environment will be a reflection of well-managed learning.

The full application of management functions, encompassing features of planning, implementation, supervision, and assessment, can be used to observe well-managed learning (Hasibuan, 2021). In the framework of planning, learning is examined from the angle of administrative fulfillment, including curriculum, syllabus, and lesson plans which are collected on time. The attainment of learning effectiveness will result from the optimal implementation of all management functions (Nurseha, 2018). Additionally, teaching techniques, learning tools, active learning tactics, and modifying (adapting) classroom settings to accommodate student comfort level all contribute to the coordinated delivery of learning. Learning activities are conducted in phases, beginning with preparatory, central, and concluding with evaluative activities (Ahyat, 2017).

Through internal and external monitoring procedures, learning management is also ongoing. The principal of the school is in charge of internal oversight, while supervisors from the district or city ministry of religion or the education office handle external supervision (Busni, 2022; Harahap, *et.al.*, 2022). When evaluating the learning process on a semester or annual basis, the outcomes of the monitoring are taken into account. Following that, a process of measurement, evaluation, and assessment will be used to evaluate learning in its entirety. Learning will be effectively and efficiently managed in this way.

It is clear from the previous description that learning management in an educational setting is a manifestation of human goods, performances, and creative works based on local knowledge and cultural dynamics. The implementation of learning management systems is beneficial in guaranteeing the caliber of education and serving as a catalyst for accomplishing learning objectives. Additionally, learning management will provide the learning process and outcomes, whether they go in a good way or not. Because evaluating learning achievement needs to be planned, coordinated, and handled thoroughly.

### ***Independent Learning Curriculum***

The curriculum for autonomous learning is an example of how the government is adapting to the extremely quick advancements in science and technology, particularly in the area of education (Purba, *et.al.*, 2023). Because, change is an inevitability that presents challenges or opportunities for education. In the context of curriculum changes, of course there will be challenges in implementation, but will have a positive impact in the form of opportunities for progress and empowerment in the education sector (Ariga, 2022). Therefore, education administrators are expected to be able to implement any changes to ensure the success and quality of education.

The independent learning curriculum is interpreted as a leap in learning culture in Indonesia. Because, so far learning has seemed "not free" or too focused on administrative matters, even learning outcomes only prioritize numerical values in student report cards. Of course, this is not comparable to learning assessments which must balance cognitive, affective and psychomotor skills (Indarta, *et.al.*, 2022). The independent learning referred to includes learning that is autonomous, flexible, innovative, and according to student needs (Assingkily, 2020).

The independent curriculum is oriented towards the realization of students with character, who are also responsive to developments in science and technology, institutional quality challenges, have the Pancasila student profile character *rahmatan lil 'alamin*, and have 21st century skills (Jufriadi, *et.al.*, 2022). This is considering the pressure of a global world that no longer has barriers, to transform in providing equal opportunities to all. For this reason, through the education sector, qualified human resources are prepared to face these global challenges (Frananda *et.al.*, 2023). In this way, the quality of graduates will be competitive, and they will serve themselves to the wider community.

The independent learning curriculum aims to prepare academic people, broad-minded, and willing to serve themselves to the global community. This balance between competence and character must start with creating "independent" learning. This freedom of learning starts from a contextual teaching system (not rigidly always referring to general concepts), active involvement of students in learning, and fostering students to always care for knowledge and foster charity.

## B. METHOD

This study employs a qualitative methodology (Sugiyono, 2016), across three study sites: SDN 050780 Besitang, SDN 050771 Halaban Blok, and SDN 056646 Sisirah Halaban. The study was conducted in January–March of 2024. The three state primary schools' PAI instructors and principals served as research informants. Research informants include the following people:

Table 1. Research Informants

School name	Informant 1	Informant 2
SDN 050780 Besitang	SRW (Headmaster)	ZK (PAI teacher)
SDN 050771 Halaban Blok	EJ (Headmaster)	JL (PAI teacher)
SDN 056646 Sesirah Halaban	MN (Headmaster)	SW (PAI teacher)

Source: School Profile Data.

Methods such as observation, interviews, and documentation studies were used to gather data (Assingkily, 2021). Researchers visit each of the schools under investigation one at a time to observe the PAI instructors' execution of the entire learning process, from planning to evaluation. In addition, there are a few other things that researchers do in advance of an interview, such as crafting interview questions and planning a visitation schedule that specifies which school research area will be visited first in order to avoid scheduling conflicts and ensure that the interview goes as smoothly as possible.

Following the preparations, the researcher visited the concerned school and posed five different types of questions to the resource persons: (1) comprehension of the autonomous curriculum. (2) Knowledge of creating lesson plans in the

autonomous curriculum for PAI subjects. (3) Knowledge of how each school implements the independent curriculum for PAI subjects. (4) Issues that arise when each school implements the separate curriculum for PAI subjects. (5) Knowledge of evaluation (assessment) in the autonomous curriculum for PAI subjects in every school.

Following the acquisition of the data, the researcher organizes the data in accordance with the supplied information and compiles it into comprehensive data. Next, evaluate the information. The process of content analysis involved scrutinizing papers pertaining to the execution of the autonomous curriculum, with a particular focus on learning planning. The three steps of the data analysis technique are data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion drawing. Until the information is deemed legitimate by meeting the requirements for dependability, credibility, transferability, and confirmability (Moleong, 2017).

## C. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

### *Problems of Implementing the Independent Curriculum in Elementary Schools*

In response to the pace of global change, the government's autonomous learning curriculum, which is implemented in educational institutions at the primary, intermediate, and tertiary levels, offers new hope for the field of education (Suryaman, 2020). The fourth industrial revolution, society 5.0, and global dynamics all call for competent individuals who can work independently (Indarta, *et.al.*, 2022).

It appears that there are still issues with implementing the freedom of learning that is expected in Indonesian education in the country's elementary schools (Wahyudiono, 2023). The truth is that these issues stem from school resources that aren't prepared to support the autonomous curriculum just yet. The facilities at each school and the human resources (HR) of the teachers are the resources in concern.

Administrators in educational institutions continue to be concerned about whether each class has enough room for students to study in accordance with study group requirements (Hafizah, 2023). In some schools, there are still insufficient classroom spaces to provide autonomous curriculum-based instruction. According to EJ, the principal of SDN 050771 Halaban Blok, the following:

*"...Yes, sis, after transferring from the 2013 curriculum, we must now execute the autonomous curriculum. Additionally, we have brought facilitators to schools or sent teachers to participate in various trainings. But the most common challenge we face is the restricted amount of space in the classroom that we can use to execute the independent curriculum".*

As you can see from the interview snippet above, one of the things holding up the adoption of the autonomous curriculum in schools is a shortage of classroom space. This is so that kids can participate in urgent government activities, and school facilities and resources should be sufficient for this purpose. Keeping in mind that educational institutions such as schools are responsible for carrying out all government policies.

According to Muliawati (2022), infrastructure is a supporting factor for successful learning. In fact, infrastructure is directly related to the curriculum in the implementation process. How come? Each learning series requires a container (classroom), learning media, and educational tools to bridge teaching material in

communication between teachers and students. Hazimah, *et.al.* (2021) stated that educational success can be achieved if learning in the curriculum is managed well and implemented with the help of adequate infrastructure.

Apart from that, Fahmi & Bitasari (2020) stated that as a form of revitalization of curriculum implementation in educational institutions, learning resources are needed that are complete and easily accessible to students, both online and offline. Offline learning sources include the availability of books in the library, the comfort of the library's reading room facilities, and active school information media such as wall magazines or other types of notice boards. This is certainly an effort to increase students' reading literacy, as recommended in the independent curriculum (Ardianti & Amalia, 2022).

As stated by ZK (PAI teacher at SDN 050780 Besitang as follows:

*“When we break it down, the issues that teachers have when putting the independent curriculum into practice in the three elementary schools are a lack of study space, poor facilities and learning resources in the school library, and shaky internet networks”.*

According to the interview remark above, the internet's ability to access cyberspace is becoming more and more important in the way that education is implemented in schools these days. This is due to the availability of online resources like web information, which provides students with instructional content and edutainment, and the internet, which teachers can easily access when they require digital resources for the teaching and learning process (Hasibuan & Aisyah, 2023). The implementation of the independent curriculum poses challenges for these three elementary schools, including the lack of access to internet, learning resources, and infrastructure.

### ***Difficulties Experienced by Teachers in Implementing the Independent Curriculum***

The goal of Indonesia's educational system is to generate competent, self-sufficient graduates, and this goal is reflected in the curriculum for independent study. Each person's independence will produce the thoughts, inventiveness, and originality necessary for the advancement of the country (Alimuddin, 2023). Within this framework, educators are given significant consideration as they carry out policies linked to the autonomous curriculum in each school or madrasah on a technical level. For this reason, in order to help instructors implement the autonomous curriculum, outreach and thorough coaching are required.

In actuality, the socialization process has been conducted on a regular basis to introduce processes and procedures for implementing the independent curriculum in schools. It takes the shape of technical guidance (Bimtek), workshops, seminars, and conferences. Additionally, in educational establishments registered as driving schools in each district or city, teachers get incentives in their capacity as driving teachers (Jannati, *et.al.*, 2023). This demonstrates the efforts made to maximize the independent curriculum's implementation in classrooms.

Teachers play a crucial role in putting the independent curriculum policy into practice by providing more than just new content and rewards; they also get free time to act as facilitators for the education department while it implements the



independent curriculum (Fitriyah & Wardani, 2022). Similarly, there are still a lot of complaints about the challenges instructors have when putting the independent curriculum into practice (Isa, *et.al.*, 2022). In any case, it's still thought that teachers lack creativity when it comes to using their surroundings as a teaching tool. According to SW (PAI SDN 056646 Sisirah Halaban's teacher) as follows:

*"...We still only have a few learning facilities at the moment. Thus, teaching pupils to follow the steps involved in implementing the independent curriculum in schools remains challenging. I apologize, but there are instances when we still teach using the 2013 curriculum, which was the prior one. Therefore, we believe that in order to meet learning objectives related to the autonomous learning curriculum and independent campus, sufficient facilities must be provided"*.

The aforementioned interview excerpt can be used to analyze the challenges teachers face when implementing the independent curriculum. These challenges include the teachers' lack of creativity when it comes to creating digital-based learning materials, integrating the surrounding environment, and integrating subjects in the context of thematic learning. As a result, initiatives are required to give elementary school teachers frequent training in the use of an independent curriculum as well as learning facilities.

### ***Difficulties in Learning Evaluation***

As an ongoing government initiative to support efforts to educate the populace, the independent learning curriculum is deemed successful if students exhibit the traits of the Pancasila student profile and possess 21st century competencies, such as problem-solving abilities, communication skills, teamwork, cooperation, and high-level critical thinking (Al Husna & Rigianti, 2023).

The progression of graduate quality is positively impacted by the anticipated acceleration of human resource quality through the autonomous learning curriculum at the basic education level (Fifani, *et.al.*, 2023). The realities in the field, however, appear to overlap since many intelligent students appear to be able to keep up with changes, while slower students find it difficult to keep up with the program's acceleration (Dewi, *et.al.*, 2023). This is what makes the process of evaluating learning challenging for instructors and administrators at educational institutions.

The Pancasila student profile is actually defined by their faith and devotion to Allah SWT (practicing and adhering to religious commands, as well as having noble character), their understanding of their role as global citizens, their helping nature, their critical thinking skills, their independence, and their capacity to create something as a creative product generated during the learning process of others (Herlina, *et.al.*, 2023). Similarly, ZK (Teacher PAI SDN 050780 Besitang) has identified six Pancasila student profile features, however they have not yet been fully fulfilled. An excerpt from the interview is as follows:

*"...Yes, sis, so we are still limited by the need to maximize outcomes in accordance with the standards for putting the independent curriculum into practice in schools. Realizing the Pancasila student profile for every student is one of them. Yes, part of it has been accomplished, but not to the fullest extent until at least 80% of the pupils have"*.

The aforementioned interview extract highlights the challenges involved in assessing self-directed curriculum-based learning. Therefore, it can be concluded that modifying behavior (guiding the Pancasila student profile) and enhancing student learning outcomes are among the challenges associated with evaluating learning.

#### D. CONCLUSION

Based on the description above, the first conclusion is that the problems faced by teachers in implementing the independent curriculum in the three elementary schools are limited study space, inadequate learning resources and facilities in the school library, as well as internet network problems that are not smooth. Second, the difficulties experienced by teachers in implementing the independent curriculum include the lack of teacher creativity in creating digital-based learning media and the surrounding environment, as well as integrating subjects in thematic learning. Third, difficulties in evaluating learning, including changing behavior (directing the Pancasila student profile) and improving student learning outcomes.

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