

Implementation of the independent learning curriculum student achievement at SMP Negeri 1 Bengkalis

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to examine, analyse and interpret the description of the implementation of the independent learning curriculum on student learning achievement at SMP Negeri 1 Bengkalis. This research is descriptive in nature using a qualitative approach. Data was obtained from interviews with a number of informants, namely teachers at SMP Negeri 1 Bengkalis who implemented an independent learning curriculum. The results showed that there was an optimal implementation of the Independent Learning curriculum that was able to improve student achievement, and there were also obstacles found, namely learning culture. The key to the successful implementation of the independent learning curriculum is that teachers and students improve their mindset to want to make new breakthroughs so that the results achieved can be maximised. Since implementing the independent learning curriculum in the last two years at SMP Negeri 1 Bengkalis, teachers have changed their mindset in order to effectively achieve educational goals, create strategies and support this by applying competencies to teachers.

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1. Introduction

The curriculum is a set of plans and arrangements regarding objectives, content and learning materials as well as methods used as guidelines for implementing learning activities to achieve certain educational goals. The curriculum must be dynamic and continuously developed or adapted according to the context and needs of students, to build competency according to the present and the future. Seeing the massive impact of the pandemic and the difficulties faced if teachers continued to explain lessons using the 2013 curriculum, the government through the Ministry of Education and Culture announced the use of an emergency curriculum. The government launched through the Ministry of Education and Culture a new curriculum known as the independent curriculum, which was launched in February 2022. This independent curriculum creates a meaningful and intellectual learning process for students. The independent curriculum has now been widely implemented in schools, both at the junior and senior secondary levels. The independent curriculum has been implemented for the past year. As is the case at SMP Negeri 1 Bengkalis, the independent curriculum has been implemented for the past year. The implementation of the independent learning curriculum is of course with the hope of improving student achievement. Likewise, in the context of the nation and state, the curriculum is a very strategic learning tool for cultivating and shaping individual conceptions and behavior regarding identity awareness (Suryaman, 2020).

In fact, the teacher's ability is the most determining factor in every policy implemented by the government, especially in implementing the relatively new independent curriculum. This implementation is more or less influenced by the perceptions and interpretations of teachers (Nurwiatin, 2022). The aim of independent learning is so that student teachers and parents can have a pleasant atmosphere. It is hoped that

from this freedom of learning, teachers and students can be free in thinking so that this can be implemented in teacher innovation in delivering material to students, not only that, students will also be made easier to learn freely because students will be made easier to innovate and be creative in learning, (Hutabarat et al., 2022). Rebuilding student enthusiasm and attracting students to make achievements again is the new task of teachers after the publication of the independent learning curriculum. According to (Rusmiati, 2017) achievement is the result obtained after carrying out an activity whether carried out by an individual or by a group. Therefore, it is very important to know to what extent the independent learning curriculum system influences student achievement at SMP Negeri 1 Bengkalis, because indirectly it can be a benchmark obtained by the community.

Based on the results of observations, it is known that there are obstacles in implementing the independent curriculum at SMP Negeri 1 Bengkalis. The obstacle to implementing the independent learning curriculum actually lies in the school and also the teacher's will. The school's desire and courage to explore, innovate and be creative according to the needs of the school and students, so that the independent curriculum can be implemented well. The obstacles encountered during the implementation of the independent curriculum were firstly the lack of teacher experience in teaching the independent learning curriculum. The lack of teacher experience in teaching at Merdeka Belajar is triggered by the teacher's experience while studying at college. The lack of learning experience using the Merdeka learning method is also due to the fact that when teachers become students, they do not receive enough training as in-service teachers. Second, lack of access to learning. The digital divide and uneven internet connections are also obstacles in implementing independent learning. In the Minister of National Education's discussion regarding the independent curriculum, there are six learning models that can be applied. One of the learning models is online learning. A lack of internet connection will create obstacles in this distance learning process.

Third, time management. When trying to change the learning process, teachers may need more time to relearn, adapting to the demands of the expected changes. Some schools create quite strict programs involving teachers in active participation in various activities. And fourth, the low level of public understanding, in this case parents, is related to the implementation of the independent curriculum, because in implementing the independent curriculum, good cooperation between teachers and parents is really needed. This is mainly related to the financing that arises as a result of projects that students must complete. Many parents don't understand this. Based on the results of observations on students at SMP Negeri 1 Bengkalis, the problem in this research can be formulated, namely how the implementation of the independent learning curriculum affects student achievement at SMP Negeri 1 Bengkalis.

Curriculum in the world of education is something that must be mastered by teachers in accordance with the policies implemented. Teachers have a guideline in the educational program that is implemented which contains a learning plan, this guideline is usually called the curriculum. According to Ibrahim (Ibrahim, 2012) the curriculum is a set of educational programs that are planned and implemented to achieve educational goals. The curriculum dimensions are ideas, plans, processes and results. Meanwhile, the stages of curriculum development are planning, implementation and evaluation. The independent learning curriculum is a new curriculum launched by the Minister of Education and Culture, Mr. Nadiem Anwar Makarim. Especially in the city of Makassar, South Sulawesi Province, several schools have started implementing the independent learning curriculum in 2020. However, the government still allows other schools to choose the curriculum in their respective education units, such as the 2013 curriculum, emergency curriculum, or independent curriculum. The independent learning curriculum was initially called the driving curriculum, then changed its name to the prototype curriculum, until now it has become the independent curriculum. The independent curriculum was launched as an additional optional curriculum for educational units to carry out learning recovery during 2022 to 2024 and will be reviewed after 2024 based on evaluations during the learning recovery period.

The essence of the Independent Curriculum is that education is based on the essence of learning, where each student has their own talents and interests. The aim of independent learning is to effectively mitigate learning delays during the Covid-19 pandemic. For now, the 2013 Curriculum can still be used while schools prepare to implement this new curriculum. Each educational unit can implement the independent curriculum in stages based on their respective readiness (Wiguna & Tristaningrat, 2022). The most important advantage of independent learning is that it is hoped that it can improve the quality of human resources (HR), solve the problem of the gap between education and the world of work, and in the long term it is hoped that it can bring society and this nation out of a prolonged crisis, and encourage the growth of civil society. good and clean governance. And freedom to learn implies that education is not solely the responsibility of teachers, but is a shared responsibility between teachers, school principals, school supervisors, even parents and society in general.

However, because freedom to learn in the digital era positions students not only to receive education at school but also through various sites in cyberspace, generation Z students are very familiar with technology, especially smartphones, which can be used as a learning resource. With that, teachers must encourage themselves to keep up with the times and guide students to use smartphones wisely and responsibly. The implementation of the Merdeka Belajar teacher drive requires the support of a skilled and qualified workforce in order to generate more productive work motivation and empower local regional authorities as well as streamline the system and eliminate overlapping bureaucracy. Therefore, schools are required to be independent and creative in managing education and learning behind their autonomy. Schools must also be able to pay attention to the varying needs of students, the wishes of different staff, various environmental conditions, and the expectations of the people who entrust their children to the school so that in the future they can be independent, as well as the demands of the world of work to obtain productive, potential and quality personnel. However, this concept may not be fully used to solve all educational problems, but it provides a more significant meaning for improving education

According to Rusmiati (Rusmiati, 2017), achievement is the result obtained after carrying out an activity whether carried out by an individual or by a group. Achievement parameters refer to the abilities a person has after receiving learning experience and gaining knowledge therein, so as to obtain results in accordance with applicable regulations. Based on the explanation above, it can be concluded that achievement is the result achieved by someone from an effort undertaken. A written performance evaluation shows the results a person has achieved so far, someone who has worked hard for a long time has a number of work performance assessments. According to Mulyadi (Mulyadi, 2016) work performance assessment is a process aimed at obtaining employee performance information. This information can be used as input in carrying out almost all other HRM activities, namely promotions, salary increases, development and termination of employment. In general, almost all ranking systems are carried out by determining work performance levels as follows: Work performance does not meet the conditions set in the implementation of a task.

Work performance at this level is clearly not satisfactory. If there is no significant improvement, the employee with work performance at this level should be given another more suitable job or dismissed; Work performance does not meet all the basic requirements set for the implementation of a task. Employees with work performance at this level cannot meet the task criteria in one or more main areas. However, his work performance is improving and is expected to reach a truly satisfactory level in the near future; Work Performance really meets all the basic requirements set for the implementation of a task. officers with work performance at this level can perform their duties in a satisfactory manner; Work performance really meets the requirements and sometimes exceeds the required requirements. The work performance point of employees at this level is clearly more than satisfactory and their contribution is above average; Work performance consistently exceeds the required task implementation requirements. Employees with work performance at this level consistently achieve a high level in carrying out their duties. His contribution to the success of your work unit is generally above the average of other employees with the same responsibilities; Work performance consistently far exceeds the requirements for carrying out the required duties to the point that employees with work performance at this level make the greatest contribution to the success of your work unit.

Research related to the relationship between their curriculum and learning achievement was conducted by Iskandar and Angga, (Angga & Iskandar, 2022), with the research title Leadership of School Principals Literature Study School principals as leaders determine policy direction and in Realizing Freedom of Learning in Elementary Schools. The research results found that the school principal as a leader determines the direction of policy and the achievement of educational goals in the school, and has an important role and position in school achievement, namely realizing Freedom of Learning. Research by Rahayu, et al (Rahayu et al., 2022), with the title research, concludes that the Implementation of the Independent Learning Curriculum in Driving Schools. The results of the research conclude that the implementation of the curriculum in driving schools has been carried out optimally and is ongoing, although in its implementation there are still many shortcomings and obstacles. The key to success in implementing the curriculum in driving schools is that the principal as the leader must be able to change the mindset of the Human Resources in the school to want to make changes so that the independent curriculum can be implemented

In implementing the independent learning curriculum, teachers as implementers of the teaching and learning process in schools play an important role in the success of the implemented curriculum. Teachers must be able to innovate and continue to push themselves to keep up with the times. Through the independent learning curriculum, teachers need to reflect, reflect and evaluate today's challenges so that students do not lose out. Teachers must not miss out on information so that students do not appear to be smarter than the teacher,

and teachers must understand the students' current situation. That is why it is important for teachers to have strategies to balance the demands of the modern era and character education, as well as instill good values amidst the development of information technology.

Advances in information technology have increased flexibility in acquiring knowledge for each individual, both teachers and students, including learning that can be done online. In the independent learning curriculum, learning is decorated with a combination of face-to-face learning in class and online learning, usually referred to as blended learning as an alternative innovative learning model in the millennial era. Packaging learning with a model like this makes students better trained and honed in all their abilities, so they are expected to be better prepared to face the fast-paced and sudden developments of the times. Merdeka Belajar prioritizes a learning process that is able to foster student creativity through approaches and methods that can train students' thinking abilities, the learning process allows the creation of students who are independent, have self-confidence, are able to know themselves, understand themselves, self-actualize or self-direction, have emotional and intellectual abilities. who is consistent and reaches a level of personality that is stable and independent. And all of this cannot be separated from integrative efforts to support and enable students to continue to excel.

The implementation of the independent learning curriculum is expected to become a learning development strategy, so that it can produce a comprehensive profile. With a combination of face-to-face and online-based learning, students can be increasingly motivated by the many online-based activities to improve achievement. To increase student achievement, creativity and innovation efforts must be made, so that renewal and the spirit of achievement continue to be encouraged. Because student achievement is a very proud result for both themselves, parents, teachers and the school.

2. Research Method

The type of research used in this research is qualitative research, with a descriptive approach. This research was conducted at SMP Negeri 1 Bengkalis School. The research was carried out for 3 months, from September 2023 to October 2023. The population of this research were students of class VII and class VIII of SMP Negeri 1 Bengkalis who received and underwent the independent learning curriculum teaching system. Samples were taken by conducting interviews with teachers who implemented the independent learning curriculum, namely teachers who taught in class VII and class VIII. The sample used by researchers is purposive sampling or purposive sampling, where informants are selected based on predetermined criteria and people who really understand the phenomenon being studied. The types of data required in this research are primary data and secondary data.

Data collection techniques were carried out using interviews, observation and documentation. The data that researchers have collected is then analyzed. Based on the results of this analysis, a research report was prepared regarding an in-depth analysis of the implementation of the independent learning curriculum on student achievement at SMP Negeri 1 Bengkalis. The stages of data analysis in qualitative research include the following: Data reduction is data obtained at the research location (field data) outlined in a detailed description or report; Drawing conclusions, namely carrying out continuous verification throughout the process.

In this study, the researcher carried out a credibility test by: Increased persistence, increased persistence is related to re-checking the data that has been collected; Triangulation Wiersma (Sugiyono, 2011) explains that triangulation in credibility testing is defined as checking data from various sources in various ways, and at various times; Discussions with supervisors or friends are carried out so that if research results are still temporary, if data is found to be lacking, it can be immediately supplemented with more complete data so that the research results are more credible; Using reference materials, the use of reference materials as a test of research credibility is intended as support to prove the data that has been found by researchers.

3. Results and Discussions

This data analysis has been carried out from the start and simultaneously with the data collection process in the field. In the research that has been carried out, the researcher obtained several findings that can describe the process of implementing the independent learning curriculum on student achievement as seen from the results of interviews and observations that took place in the Bengkalis 1 Public Middle School. Technically, the implementation of the temporary independent learning curriculum involves two levels, namely class VII and class VIII because the independent learning curriculum is a new curriculum that is running into its second year.

Currently, researchers can systematically convey any findings obtained from the results of presenting the data, with a research focus.

Competence

A quality teacher is a teacher who can create good learning, is able to develop and implement learning. The results of teacher informant interviews at SMP Negeri 1 Bengkalis (NZ) show that:

"In my opinion, the competencies needed by an educator in independent curriculum learning cannot be separated from the four standards of educator competency, namely pedagogical competency, personality competency, professional competency and social competency. However, specifically in the application of the independent curriculum, the most dominant ones in my opinion are personality competence and professional competence because by having these two competencies an educator will be able to create a learning atmosphere that is conducive, creative, effective and enjoyable so that it will have an effect on increasing student achievement." (Monday, September 18, 2023)

Meanwhile, according to the informant, one of the teachers (M) stated that:

"Learn more about technological developments because if we understand the use of technology it will make it easier for us to teach and make students more interested in learning, especially in the current era where everything is all about technology, one of which is the use of the TPACK learning model." (Friday, September 22, 2023).

Talking about technology, (R) as a teacher confirmed that in teacher competency digital skills are also very much needed, as revealed during the interview:

"The competencies needed by educators in learning the independent curriculum, apart from personal, pedagogical, professional and social competencies, also require digital competencies. With teachers' digital capabilities, it will be easier for a teacher to find and provide actual information to students. "Apart from that, with digital capabilities, a teacher is able to create more enjoyable learning by using several applications that can trigger students' creativity in supporting independent learning." (Friday, September 22, 2023)

Apart from that, there are two teacher voices (SM) and (K) regarding competency as follows:

"Competence determines appropriate diagnostic assessments for students, competency uses learning models that vary according to student interests and needs." (Friday, 22 September 2023). "The competencies that teachers must have in learning the independent curriculum are that teachers must have knowledge, skills and good behavior in providing maximum service to students. Carrying out all duties as a teacher with full responsibility both in quantity and quality." (Friday, September 22 2022)

From the informant's narrative above, it proves that the teacher at SMP Negeri 1 Bengkalis has implemented the independent learning curriculum in accordance with the expected teacher competency. Where human resource competency has the most dominant influence on service and is an indicator of the participation variable.

Innovation

In implementing the independent curriculum, it is hoped that there will be the latest innovations carried out by teachers as human resources, from previously never being done/not existing to being/implemented, the aim of which is to improve learning in order to increase student achievement. This is in accordance with what the teacher informant at SMP Negeri 1 Bengkalis (ATS) said: "Initially treating students the same. But with the independent curriculum, I became aware that the learning styles of one student are different from another. We must adapt learning based on the students' own needs." (Monday, November 18, 2023)

Innovation in the independent learning curriculum by implementing changes that did not previously exist in previous curricula, which according to (NA) as a teacher who implemented the independent learning curriculum that:

"The changes made during the implementation of the independent curriculum which were not carried out in the 2013 curriculum were the implementation of projects which gave students the freedom to be creative in developing predetermined projects, involving all students with the teacher as the driving force or motivator. Then another change is the change in midset where previously learning was teacher-centred, but with the implementation of this independent curriculum learning has changed to be student-centred, which means an educator must be able to understand the different characteristics of students which influence how an educator must be able to provide various approaches, models and methods in the learning process which of course aim to improve students' learning achievements" (Monday, 18 September 2022)

In this independent curriculum, teachers are required to understand the abilities of each child in order to support students more actively so that they can improve their achievements, where the learning provided is adjusted to the students' abilities. As stated by Mr (A) as the informant, that: "Learning is carried out based on

what and how students expect, including techniques and methods given by the teacher, no longer being an object where students follow the teacher's wishes, but students are the object of learning, including the products produced by students." (Monday, November 18, 2023)

In line with Mr. (A)'s statement, Ms. (R) stated that: "The change that occurred during the independent curriculum was that students were no longer burdened with various concepts that they had to master. In the independent curriculum, the government divides it into several phases and teachers must wisely pay attention to which phase is appropriate for the school level. For junior high school, phase D is used. Apart from that, the independent curriculum uses differentiated learning where students learn according to their abilities. And the assessment is also adjusted to the results of the student's abilities." (Friday, September 22, 2023)

Mrs. (K) also stated that the things that support the existence of differentiated learning in this independent learning curriculum are because there are programs that are not in the previous curricula that are different, as revealed in the interview: "Carrying out a diagnostic assessment before the learning material begins, which aims to determine students' learning readiness, learning profile and interests. "Apart from that, in the independent curriculum there are P5 project activities or projects to strengthen the profile of Pancasila students which emphasize collaboration between students, teachers and all elements of the school." (Friday, September 22, 2023)

The explanation above proves that the implementation of the independent learning curriculum creates the latest innovations, where these innovations introduce changes that did not previously exist, which aim to improve student achievement. One of the innovations in the independent learning curriculum is project-based learning, and students really like projects because teachers give students the freedom and flexibility to express the learning contained in the project.

Creativity

A teacher's creativity in managing learning greatly influences the success of learning. The results of interviews with informant teachers at SMP Negeri 1 Bengkalis (NZ) were that: "At this school we apply a personal approach, a strategy for knowing students' conditions personally which is the basis for using methods and materials in the teaching and learning process. Then get used to good practices, and try to collaborate with school principals and students in creating learning that is oriented to student needs." (Monday, September 18, 2023)

Meanwhile, according to the informant (SM), the results of the interview stated that: "A suitable strategy in implementing the independent learning curriculum is being able to apply appropriate learning modes according to student characteristics by emphasizing student-centred learning and teachers as facilitators." (Monday, September 18, 2023). Similar to (SM)'s statement, informant (R) also emphasized that: "The strategy needed in independent curriculum learning is that learning is student-centered. The teacher is only a facilitator and motivator while students are the main figures in learning." (Friday, September 22, 2023)

Understanding and understanding that students are the main figures in implementing the independent learning curriculum, technically Mr. (A) carries out the strategy as stated by the researcher during the interview, namely: "Obtaining information relating to students' conditions and needs, this is done by providing questionnaires and through interviews to obtain the real conditions and needs of students which will later be used as a reference for conducting classroom learning." (Monday, September 18, 2023)

In contrast to Mr. (A), who focused more personally on finding out the needs of students in class, Mrs. (M) stated that she: "Always learn and look for information that can support success in learning the independent curriculum, diligently participate in training and self-development to improve the quality of teaching, share good practices" (Friday, 22 September 2023)

The description and results of the interview above prove that teachers at SMP Negeri 1 Bengkalis always enjoy creating interrelated creativity between teacher to principal, teacher to teacher, teacher to student with the aim of increasing student achievement. Because collaboration between one party and another makes it easier for the goals of an independent curriculum to be achieved. A teacher who has creativity in the teaching and learning process will be skilled at making learning fun, which can attract students' attention and become a driver of increasing student achievement.

Work Ethic

Work ethic or what is usually called work enthusiasm is something that is important for a teacher to have. A teacher's work ethic can be assessed by the quality or results of the work achieved. This is in accordance with the narrative of the informant (K) as a mathematics teacher who has implemented the independent learning curriculum, as follows: "In my opinion, with the existence of this independent curriculum, there have been changes made regarding work ethic, namely that I am more motivated in how to develop more innovative

teaching modules with various approaches, models or methods in teaching, which of course cannot be separated from my desire to create a learning process that is enjoyable for students." (Friday, September 22 2023)

The above is almost in line with what one of the informants (ATS) said from the interview results: "I will motivate myself to improve my ability to apply the learning model by adding references or learning resources, and participating in training." (Monday, September 18, 2023). In line with the two statements above, informant (R) stated that: "The independent curriculum provides changes in terms of work ethic because teachers have to be smarter and more creative in creating learning so that students don't get bored and enjoy learning." (Friday, September 22 2022)

The informant (NA) stated that: "For me, my work ethic must always be improved regardless of the applicable curriculum, including the independent curriculum, it's just that in this curriculum, I have to vary the methods and strategies for providing material more because of differentiated learning." (Monday, September 18, 2023)

Then it was stated by informant (A) that: "In implementing this independent curriculum, of course there will be changes, teachers are required to always make improvements to the learning that has been given, therefore it is hoped that at the end of each lesson they will always reflect which can be used as a reference to find ideas for the next lesson." Monday 18 September 2023)

Based on the results of the interview above, the growth of a teacher's work ethic begins with improving himself first, how a teacher will motivate himself to be more open, find out what will broaden his knowledge, and improve the best service so that the quality of his teaching also improves.

4. Conclusion

There is an optimal implementation of the Merdeka Belajar curriculum which is able to improve student achievement, and there are also obstacles found, namely the culture of learning. The key to success in implementing the independent learning curriculum is that teachers and students increase their mindset to be willing to make changes so that the independent curriculum can be implemented optimally. Implementing the independent learning curriculum will build students' characters who are more creative, independent, responsible, collaborative, critical and communicative. The competencies required by an educator in learning the independent curriculum cannot be separated from the 4 standards of educator competency, namely pedagogical competency, personality competency, professional competency and social competency. However, specifically in implementing the independent curriculum, the most dominant aspects are personality competence and professional competence. Changes made during implementing the independent learning curriculum that were not made in previous curricula. The strategy needed by an educator in implementing the independent learning curriculum is a personal approach, habituation to good practices by educators and collaboration between educators with school principals and students in creating learning that is oriented to student needs. With the independent learning curriculum, there are changes made regarding work ethic, namely teachers are more motivated to develop more innovative teaching modules, improve the best service to students and vary the methods and strategies for providing material because of differentiated learning.

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