

An Analysis of English Teachers' Problems in Implementing the Independent Curriculum at Junior High School

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ABSTRACT

This research aims to identify inhibiting factors in the implementation of the Merdeka Belajar curriculum. The study was conducted at Upt Smp 1 Mattiro Bulu, Upt Smp 2 Mattiro Bulu, Upt Smp 3 Mattiro Bulu, Upt Smp 1 Suppa, and Upt Smp 4 Suppa. The research problem revolves around the issues faced by English teachers in implementing the Merdeka curriculum.

Data were collected through questionnaires, employing a quantitative approach. The research focused on: 1) Internal Factors: Student Motivation, Student Attitude, and Student Interest. 2) External Factors: Parental Support, School Leadership, School Facilities, Learning Systems, Learning Materials, Teacher Competence, and Time.

The results indicate that the identified inhibiting factors include Internal Factors such as Student Motivation, Student Attitude, and Student Interest. However, the highest contributing factor is Student Motivation. External inhibiting factors include Parental Support, School Leadership, School Facilities, Learning Systems, Learning Materials, Teacher Competence, and Time. The most significant factor here is Learning Materials. According to the findings, teachers do not face issues related to Parental Support and School Leadership. This research also indicates that inhibiting factors in implementing the Merdeka Belajar curriculum vary across schools based on their specific conditions. The identification of inhibiting factors provides recommendations to the Ministry of Education and Culture as the regulator and policymakers in Junior High Schools.

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INTRODUCTION

The curriculum in Indonesian education itself has undergone several changes, most recently changing the Education Unit Level Curriculum (KTSP) to the 2013 National Curriculum or 2013 Curriculum. On February 1, 2021, the Independent Curriculum became an order from the Minister of Education, Culture, Research, and Technology Nadiem Makarim to be implemented in Indonesia which will begin to be implemented in the 2021/2022 Academic Year in 2,500 schools spread across 34 provinces and 111 districts/cities in Indonesia.

The Independent Learning Curriculum is a policy designed by the government to make a giant leap in the quality of education to produce students and graduates who excel in facing complex future challenges and giving students more independence. The essence of Independent Learning is freedom of thought for educators and students. Freedom to learn encourages the formation of an independent spirit character where educators and students can freely and happily explore knowledge, attitudes, and skills from the environment.

In the independent learning curriculum, teachers are free to create educational and fun learning. Current pedagogical competence also requires teachers to be able to model and implement the learning process. Teachers are also given the mandate to act as a driving force to plan, implement, evaluate, and follow up on the evaluation. The concept of active, innovative, and comfortable learning must be able to realize students according to the needs of the times, especially in the current era.

The Independent Learning Curriculum answers the intense global competition for human resources in the 21st century. Lukum stated three significant competencies in the 21st century: thinking, acting, and living in the world. This competency should be applied in 21st-century learning because this era will require innovative and creative people to adapt quickly. Therefore, implementing the Independent Learning Curriculum is prepared to prepare quality generations to face this era. The independent curriculum is interpreted as a learning design that provides opportunities for students to learn calmly, relaxed, fun, stress-free, and pressure-free, to show their natural talents.

This curriculum was developed to produce a millennial generation that can understand the material or knowledge taught by the teacher quickly, not just be clever at remembering the teaching material given by the teacher. Students are also expected to be able to utilize technology in their learning process. Previously, education in Indonesia relied heavily on textual books, but now they are starting to be replaced by digital products such as e-books. The curriculum is not only limited to the fields of study contained in it and the learning activities but includes everything that influences the personal development and formation of students by the educational goals to be achieved to improve the quality of education.

However, its implementation must be supported by maximum teacher ability. Curriculum renewal is very influential in the learning process. With this renewal, the learning process, model, or method will be more effective and efficient, and progress will be made to improve the quality of education in Indonesia. Better. The curriculum must be updated to suit current developments, especially when science and information technology have developed increasingly massively and uncontrollably. Curriculum changes in Indonesia are among the most significant changes in the world of education. At this time, the independent learning curriculum is only an option in the world of education because the Ministry of Education and Culture is carrying out socialization first so that this independent curriculum can become a national curriculum.

The concept of the independent learning policy is that teachers as educators can create a comfortable learning atmosphere and arouse enthusiasm for learning so that students do not feel burdened by the material presented by the teacher. In the Independent Learning Curriculum, a teacher must be creative and innovative in designing learning. In creating independent learning for students, a teacher must be able to use his creativity in designing learning using various existing learning methods and media. Learning will be exciting and fun if a teacher can create learning creatively and innovatively. Teachers can choose learning methods suitable for students and use learning media so that students can more easily understand the material being taught. By using the correct learning methods and media, learning will be created that is fun and not monotonous.

As is known, the Independent Learning Curriculum has just been implemented in Indonesia, which previously implemented the 2013 Curriculum. Implementing the Independent Curriculum as a post-COVID-19 recovery step is urgent, which leaves many problems, such as 1) a lack of facilities and infrastructure and 2) teachers' lack of IT skills. ,3) lack of social interaction, 4) difficulty in providing concrete descriptions to students, 5) students' workload is too much, 6) reduced allocation of class time, 7) lack of parental assistance and supervision. The Independent Learning Curriculum was implemented in the 2021/2022 Academic Year, and not all schools have implemented this curriculum, so there are still few references regarding the Independent Learning Curriculum, especially at the elementary school level. In its implementation, there are still teachers who cannot get out of their comfort zone, whereas in learning the Independent Learning Curriculum, a teacher is required to be more creative and innovative in designing their learning; that is, the teacher must have the ability to master the learning material and develop in-depth material that is interesting and fun. So, teachers have to get out of their comfort zone and follow current developments in teaching. The Independent Learning Curriculum's Pancasila Student Profile guides Indonesia's education system, including learning, programs, activities, and assessments. This confuses teachers in implementing and strengthening the Pancasila Student Profile. This certainly raises several problems experienced by teachers in implementing the Independent Learning Curriculum.

According to President Regulation (in Nurlisa, 2019), the curriculum is a set of plans and arrangements covering educational objectives, content, learning materials, and learning methods that aim to serve as guidelines in implementing the teaching and learning process to achieve the stated goals. However, the curriculum is a program or learning system designed to train student creativity and activeness.

Handler (2010) said that teacher professionalism development is essential to curriculum development and implementation success.

However, implementing the curriculum is not easy for a teacher who needs to gain knowledge, especially in curriculum development; it will make it difficult for the teacher to implement the curriculum

related to what the students and school need. According to Sani (2015), teachers need sufficient knowledge about the scientific approach. The curriculum creation is a local, regional, state, or provincial process that student teachers sometimes need help understanding.

The digital era of Industrial Revolution 4.0 has impacted the learning process because IT has developed. However, teachers still need to use technology to its full potential, which has challenges and opportunities for educational institutions. The conditions for the progress and development of educational institutions must have the power to innovate and collaborate. You must be able to innovate and collaborate to be included. Educational institutions must be able to balance the education system with current developments. To realize this, it is necessary to update the curriculum with advances in time and technology. If there is no reform, Indonesia's learning and education process will experience delays compared to education in other countries. As time goes by, updating the curriculum may be irrelevant if you are still using the old curriculum method. It can be used as a foundation in the learning process to make it more effective and efficient so that learning can be created that can achieve the national goals set.

RESEARCH METHODS

This research employed Descriptive Quantitative research, a survey method with a questionnaire to collect the data. Fowler stated that the survey method provides a quantitative or numeric description of trends, attitudes, or opinions of a population by studying a sample of that population. The location of this research is MGMP Pinrang, and it focuses on English teachers. It is located on Pinrang. The Duration of the research is 30 days.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The data presented in the Findings consists of 3 types: data related to teachers' problems in implementing an independent curriculum, data about internal factors, and the external factors associated with implementing a separate curriculum. The data are administered as below.

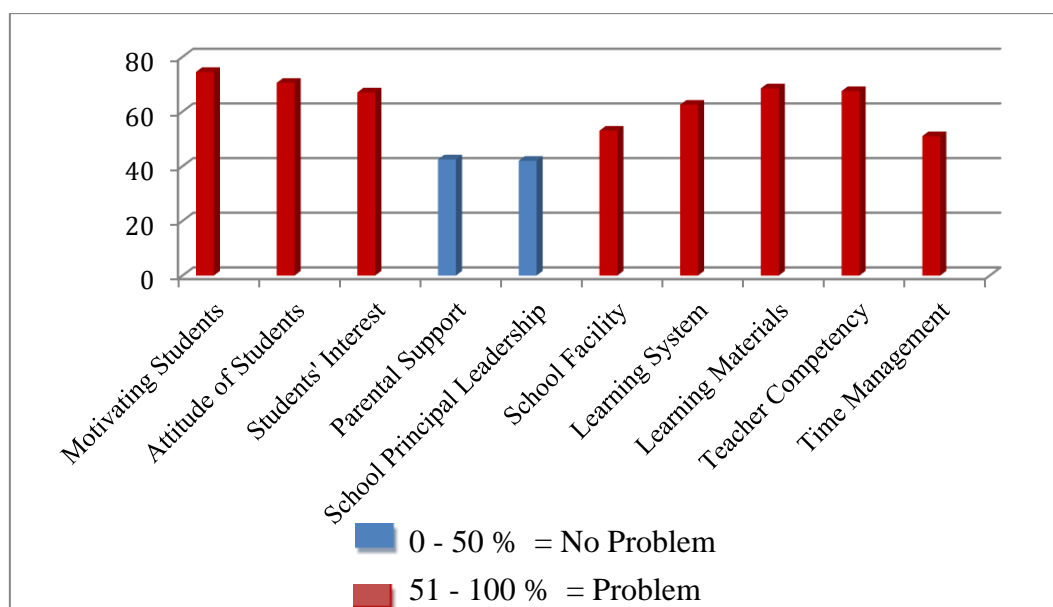


Chart 1. Teachers' problems in implementing the independent curriculum

Based on the diagram above, motivating students is the highest problem factor. Learning motivation plays a vital role in learning activities. If there is no motivation to learn from the start, then students will find it difficult to understand or digest the material being studied during the learning process. Attitude/behavior is an internal psychological factor that plays a vital role in learning. Whether a student will be willing and active in studying depends on his attitude. In this case, the attitude referred to is the positive attitude/response of students towards the lesson, the teacher who teaches, and the environment in the classroom. The attitude of students is included in the second highest category. The highest factors are student interest, teacher competency, and learning materials. If student interest is developed well, this can increase students' learning motivation. Learning activities will run well so that learning objectives can be achieved easily. The next highest factor is the learning system, which has obstacles in compiling learning procedures, namely in preparing diverse content according to students' learning styles. Then, teachers may need more time to study again to adapt to the expected changing demands. Because the activity agenda at school is relatively quiet, all teachers can manage their time well. External factors, such as the need for

books/references, are also a further problem, with the lack of facilities becoming an obstacle to the independent curriculum. The last highest problem is the problem of time; teachers need more time to learn to be more adaptive to the expected demands for change. Because the activity agenda at school is quite busy, not all teachers can manage their time well. Research data shows that not all indicators are problems; parental support and school principal leadership are not problems teachers face.

Based on the above data, it is evident that the primary challenge teachers face in implementing the independent curriculum is motivating students. This underscores the crucial role of student engagement in the success of learning. Teachers must create innovative strategies to inspire and maintain students' interest, aligning with diverse learning styles.

Additionally, there are several additional challenges faced by teachers. Student attitudes emerge as a significant factor, indicating that students' ways of thinking and behaving significantly impact the independent curriculum's success. The availability of learning materials also becomes an important concern, emphasizing the importance of resources to support the teaching and learning process. Furthermore, the data highlights student interests as an area that needs attention. Curriculum alignment with diverse student interests is crucial for creating a more engaging and relevant learning environment. Teacher competency emerges as a factor, emphasizing the need for ongoing professional development to equip educators with the skills and knowledge required to implement independent learning effectively.

Issues related to the learning system indicate potential challenges in the structure and organization of the curriculum. School facilities and time constraints are also identified as significant barriers, indicating that the physical and temporal aspects of the educational environment play a crucial role in determining the success of the independent curriculum.

On a positive note, teachers are exemplary with parental support and school principal leadership. This indicates that collaboration between teachers, parents, and school leadership can be vital to overcoming challenges in implementing the independent curriculum. The second data concerns Internal factors, including motivating students, student attitudes, and student interests. The data can be seen in the chart below:

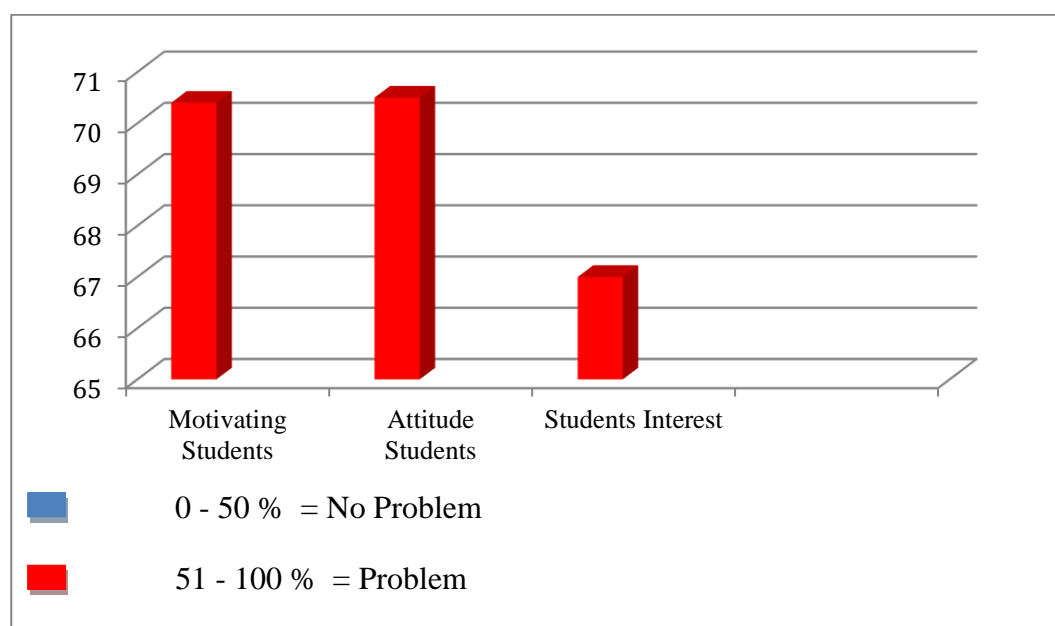


Chart 2. Internal factor in implementing the independent curriculum

The second data focuses on internal aspects, such as how teachers motivate students, student attitudes, and student interests. Chart 2 presents this information visually. The analysis shows that teachers face internal challenges, especially in motivating students, which is the biggest problem. This underscores the need for specific strategies to increase student engagement in the independent curriculum. Apart from that, addressing various student attitudes and interests is very important; student attitudes are the most significant problem after motivating students, and student interest is the lowest problem experienced by teachers when implementing the independent curriculum by highlighting the need for teaching methods that can be adapted and aligned with individual preferences. Internal challenges involve efforts to make students more interested and thus require innovative teaching approaches.

The third data concerns External factors, including parental support, principal leadership, school facilities, learning systems, learning materials, teacher competency, and time. The data can be seen in the

chart below:

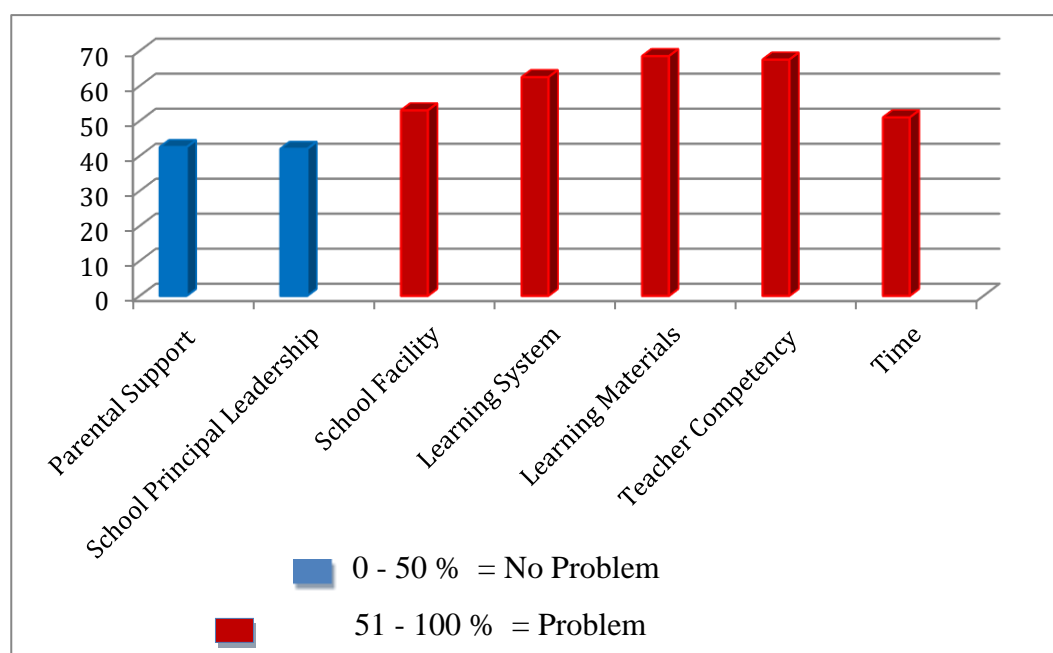


Chart 3. Eksternal problems in implementing the independent curriculum

The chart above shows teachers are fine with parental support and school principal leadership. External factors include problems with school facilities, learning systems, learning materials, teacher competency, and time. However, the highest factor is learning materials.

The highest external problem is related to learning materials and teacher competency; the following external problem, which has almost the same number, is the learning system, and the next highest problem is the same regarding school facilities and time.

Based on the data above, teachers do not face problems related to parental support and the school principal's leadership, which shows positive external support. However, the challenges lie in other external factors such as school facilities, learning systems, learning materials, teacher competence, and time.

Data shows that although teachers receive adequate support from parents and school leaders, there are obstacles in terms of physical and learning elements in the learning environment. Problems with school facilities may be related to the availability of necessary resources and infrastructure, including poor learning spaces, lack of textbooks, reading books, and learning media regarding the independent curriculum. At the same time, challenges to the learning system can be related to the organization and structure of the curriculum. The prominence of learning materials as the most substantial factor indicates the need for improvement or accessibility in this aspect of the educational process. This highlights the importance of addressing material-related challenges to increase the effectiveness of independent curriculum implementation.

CONCLUSIONS

The research results show that there are factors internal and external obstacles implementation of the independent learning curriculum at the level Senior High School. Obstacle factor Internal is divided into three points, namely: 1) Still low student motivation because there is no school yet implement an assessment system to find out students' interests and talents and their absence class management and grouping based on interests and skills. 2) there are students who are not focused when receiving the material because learning style based on independent learning tends to be more freedom (students can quickly move here and there), there is an effect of being lazy about studying in post-study classes home during the pandemic, and it's less interesting classroom management by the driving teacher., 3) there is discrepancy between the results of interest assessment tests students' talents that the school implements with student expectations, giving rise to conflict. Meanwhile, external inhibiting factors are 1) there are parents of students who do not support it the results of the interest and talent assessments carried out school, 2) there are deficiencies in facilities learn in classes such as LCD Projectors and several teaching aids and laboratory equipment, 3) there are obstacles in preparing content Diverse learning according to learning styles students, 4) there is no guiding framework implementation of the independent learning curriculum so that it takes quite a long time to get it study and understand the curriculum, 5) lack of appropriate time allocation learning planning, 6) limitations facilities,

teaching aids, and also reference books, 7) the learning process in class is still not there maximum because teachers are still adapting to curriculum changes, and 8) teachers have not know the ins and outs of the independent learning curriculum and not yet optimal in developing independent learning curriculum because there is none teaching achievement guide or guidelines learning so that the teaching process becomes not maximal.

The result analysis of internal factors, there are 3 indicators of problems, namely motivating students, students' attitude, and student interest. However, the highest factor is the problem of motivating students. The result analysis of eksternal factors, there are 7 indicators of problem namely on external factors which are problems with school facilities, learning systems, learning materials, teacher competency, and time. However, the highest factor is learning materials.

Based on the results of the data, teachers did not experience problems regarding parental support and school principal leadership.

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