

**Analysis of problems in planning and organizing independent curriculum in madrasah
ibtidaiyah: teacher's perspective**

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Abstract: *The Merdeka Curriculum, as the latest innovation in the world of Indonesian education, raises a number of problems in the process of implementing it in Madrasah Ibtidaiyah, especially for teachers. This article analyzes the problems that arise, especially related to curriculum planning and organization. The method used is a descriptive survey, data were collected from teachers at Madrasah Ibtidaiyah Negeri 2 Trenggalek. The results showed that the majority of respondents had a lack of understanding of the independent curriculum, difficulties in preparing documents and learning tools for the independent curriculum, inadequate facilities and infrastructure. Lack of participation in intensive training and technical guidance results in a lack of understanding of the substance of the curriculum being the main factor behind this problem. In the face of these challenges, a number of alternative solutions were proposed, including intensive training, comparative studies, teacher working groups, and improved technological facilities and infrastructure.*

Keywords: *Independent Curriculum; Planning; Organizing; Problems; Solutions*

Introduction

The curriculum is the main foundation in the learning process in the implementation of education. A curriculum is a written document that contains materials, but basically, it is an educational plan for people as long as they follow the education provided at school (Beauchamp, 1975). Indonesian education has experienced many curriculum changes. Every change that occurs is the policy of the parties responsible for handling education in Indonesia. Even though it seems that there is a political element, this change is also a demand of the times that continues to develop. In the changes to the curriculum currently used, it is known as the independent curriculum or the concept of independent learning.

The Independent Curriculum is a curriculum with diverse learning. The Merdeka Curriculum focuses on essential content so that students have enough time to explore concepts and strengthen competencies (Nurani et al., 2022). The independent curriculum was born to overcome educational problems during this endemic period by formulating several new policies which conceptually provide freedom for both institutions and students in implementing the learning process (Ardianti & Amalia, 2022). The concept of independence in this curriculum refers to the ideals of the father of Indonesian education, Ki Hajar Dewantara, who focuses on free learning so that students can learn independently and creatively. The paradigm changes aimed at include strengthening teacher independence as the holder of control in the learning process, being flexible in different learning processes in each unit, and strengthening *student agency*, namely the rights and abilities of students to

determine their learning process through setting learning goals, reflecting on their abilities, and take steps proactively and take responsibility for his own success.

The independent curriculum applies in educational units under the auspices of the Ministry of Religion. Through the Decree of the Minister of Religion (KMA) No. 347 of 2022, the Directorate of Islamic Education implements an independent curriculum in educational units at RA, MI, MTs and MA/MAK levels. In 2022, 2,471 madrasa institutions will implement the independent curriculum. A number of these madrasas were selected as *pilot* madrasas for implementing the independent curriculum based on Decree of the Director General of Islamic Education No. 3811 of 2022 concerning Madrasas Implementing the Independent Curriculum for the 2022/2023 Academic Year. Referring to the guidelines for implementing the independent curriculum in madrasas, in the first year of the 2022/2023 school year, the Independent Curriculum will be implemented at the basic education level in a limited manner at *piloting madrasas*. Implementation of the Independent Curriculum at MI grades 1 and 4. Meanwhile, students in grades 2, 3, 5, 6, 8, 9, 11 and 12 still use the 2013 curriculum.

Implementing the new curriculum requires curriculum management to be able to carry out what is mandated in the new curriculum. Curriculum management is the process of utilizing curriculum resources which includes planning, organizing, implementing and monitoring to achieve learning and educational goals. (Syafaruddin & Amirudin, 2017). The initial stage in curriculum management plays an important role in the continued implementation of the new curriculum. The curriculum planning stage is the activity of making judgments about what the learning objectives should be, how the objectives can be met through the teaching and learning process, and whether the curriculum is correct and effective is an ongoing process in which planners participate at various levels (Silitonga, 2023). Organizing the curriculum is a very important principle for the curriculum development process and is closely related to learning objectives, determining the content of learning materials, determining the form of experience that will be presented to students and determining the role of teachers and students in implementing the curriculum. (Hidayati et.al., 2021).

There are two conditions that need to be analyzed in every curriculum planning (Nasbi, 2017), namely, First, sociocultural conditions, professional managerial abilities require the ability to be able to process or utilize various sources that exist in society, to become resource persons. The availability of abundant resources and the existence of capital resources and increasingly sophisticated technology, will not have a value-added contribution, without being supported by qualified human resources (Roesminingsih et al., 2022). Educational activities are behavioral activities in which various social interactions occur between teachers and students, students and students, and/or teachers and students and their environment. The curriculum planning process must pay attention to holistic and sociocultural approaches by involving competent human resources including teachers as curriculum implementers (Saufi & Hambali, 2019). Secondly, the availability of facilities, one of the causes of the gap between curriculum planners and teachers as practitioners is if the curriculum is prepared without involving teachers, and moreover the planners pay little or no attention to the readiness of teachers in the field. So that in practice in the field it is found that many teachers

face problems in planning a new curriculum such as the independent curriculum such as, lack of understanding so that it is difficult to prepare Alur Tujuan Pembelajaran (ATP), teachers have difficulty operating technology, teachers have difficulty developing learning models according to the independent curriculum learning based on the Pancasila Student Profile Strengthening Project (P5), lack of infrastructure facilities (Rusmiati et al., 2023; Solikhah & Wahyuni, 2023; Zulaiha et al., 2023).

Then referring to Wahyudin's (2014) opinion in terms of curriculum, organizing can be seen from two perspectives. Firstly, a structural perspective in a management context, and secondly a functional perspective in an academic or curriculum context. In the management context, organizing the curriculum is related to the implementation of a management structure that is determined in accordance with the organizational structure with certain work tasks in the curriculum process. In a functional context, curriculum organization is organized from the center. At the educational unit level there should be organization in the context of management. There are roles that must be played to carry out what is mandated by the independent curriculum.

In the implementation process, curriculum management is mainly related to planning and organizing which results in various problems. There are several problems in implementing the Independent Curriculum in schools. These include a lack of information for teachers about how to create learning tools, a lack of textbooks, and a lack of formats for reporting student learning outcomes. Several madrasas also stated that they were not ready to implement an independent curriculum (Nurhayati et al., 2022). Research by Tsania & Surawan (2022) also shows that madrasas are not ready to implement the independent curriculum in the 2022/2023 school year due to socialization and training problems. Most teachers at Madrasah Ibtidaiyah in Turi District, Lamongan Regency said that they did not understand the Independent Curriculum well because only a few teachers received special technical guidance to implement it.

Madrasah Ibtidaiyah Negeri 2 Trenggalek is one of the piloting madrasas that implements an independent curriculum. Madrasas that have been designated as implementers of the independent learning curriculum carry out implementation stages. The independent learning curriculum cannot be implemented simultaneously in all classes at the MI level and must be done in stages. With this gradual implementation, this means that this madrasah implements two curricula simultaneously, part of which is the independent curriculum and part of which is still the K13 curriculum.

In this regard, the independent curriculum is quite interesting and gives birth to new ideas so that it is different from the previous curriculum, especially in the implementation of learning. The implementation of an independent curriculum requires the readiness of school principals and teachers to learn new things (Ariesanti et al., 2023). This is interesting to examine in its implementation, especially the curriculum management process which involves planning and organizing. These two processes are important and interesting, considering that madrasas are starting to implement a new curriculum and are still in the transformation stage of the old curriculum and harmonizing religious characteristics. The Merdeka Curriculum found, among others, still needs adaptation for students regarding project-based learning,

there are misconceptions of differentiated learning, each teaching unit still needs further direction to adjust the needs and phases of students according to the peculiarities of the education unit. (Nurjanah & Mustofa 2024). This means that in this case it is still in the adjustment period and of course there are problems in the independent curriculum management process at MIN 2 Trenggalek and other madrasas that implement the independent curriculum.

This article aims to analyze problems that arise and develop alternative solutions to problems in the independent curriculum management process at MIN 2 Trenggalek, which is mainly viewed from the perspective of the curriculum planning and organizing process. The analysis is also strengthened by various findings from other schools that have implemented the independent curriculum.

Method

In accordance with the aim, namely to see a portrait of problems in the independent curriculum at MIN 2 Trenggalek, this research used a descriptive survey. Survey research is conducted to collect information about individual attitudes, values, beliefs, opinions, stances, desires, ideals, attitudes and behavior (Maidiana, 2021). The descriptive survey method used in this research is also known as the normative survey method *because* it is based on the assumption that certain phenomena usually follow a general or certain pattern (Arsy, 2013). This is based on the aim of this research which is to describe the problems felt by teachers in the independent curriculum process, which in fact, this unrest is common in educational units that implement this curriculum.

Data collection was carried out using closed and open questionnaires. Closed questionnaires have answer choices, while open questionnaires give respondents the opportunity to answer with their own sentences (Sugiyono, 2019). This is intended so that the author gets natural answers according to what is felt in the practice of the independent curriculum. Because it is also descriptive in nature, by using this open questionnaire, it is hoped that teachers can also describe clearly the circumstances of the problems that occur. The instrument relates to understanding the characteristics of the independent curriculum, the independent curriculum module document, the independent curriculum assessment process, and the obstacles encountered by teachers who implement the independent curriculum. In addition to the questionnaire instrument, a literature review was also carried out to enrich references regarding the curriculum. In this case, the author managed to collect answers from 15 respondents out of a total of 23 teachers. Furthermore, the analysis of the answers to the questionnaire was carried out using descriptive statistical data analysis techniques to see the dominant answers which were then described and analyzed with related literature to draw conclusions.

Results and Discussion

After conducting a survey of teachers at MIN 2 Trenggalek, the author obtained data relating to the findings of the problems that occurred. In the question at the beginning, the author tries to explore in general the extent of teachers' understanding of the independent curriculum. Through the questionnaire that the author gave, it shows that the majority of teachers (60%) stated that they did not understand the independent curriculum.

The author continues with questions related to curriculum modules, considering that modules currently replace lesson plans and become the basis for learning plans. As many as 60% of teachers felt they did not understand the preparation of independent curriculum modules, 30% understood, and 10% did not understand. This means that there is still a lot of confusion in preparing curriculum modules considering the lack of understanding in preparing independent curriculum modules which is also part of planning in curriculum management.

Furthermore, related to the planning process, assessment preparation is also required. Considering that this independent curriculum is a new curriculum, it is not impossible that teachers still feel they don't understand it. Based on the results of the study, it can be seen that half 50% of the sample teachers understand the independent curriculum assessment process, 40% do not understand, and 10% do not understand. Then, to be more certain, the author asked reflective questions regarding the obstacles in preparing independent curriculum-based learning. As many as 70% of teachers have problems, the other 30% often experience problems. This means that overall teachers have obstacles in the independent curriculum process.

To follow up on this, an open questionnaire was used to collect, identify and describe any problems that were obstacles for MIN 2 Trenggalek teachers regarding planning and organizing the curriculum. Based on the results of data analysis in the field, there are three problems that are most focused on from the results of field studies in madrasas at MIN 2 Trenggalek, namely as follows.

Lack of understanding of the Independent Curriculum

Most teachers stated that they did not understand the characteristics of an independent curriculum. The real difficulty felt is in lesson planning or commonly called Rancangan Pelaksanaan Pembelajaran (RPP) in accordance with the independent curriculum. Difficulty analyzing CP, formulating TP and compiling ATP and Teaching Modules, determining learning methods and strategies so that they often only follow or copy templates that are already available and partly have an impact on learning that is less varied and lack of learning innovation. Some teachers also do not really understand the differentiation of learning. This lack of understanding certainly has many factors and can cause misinterpretation and confusion in the curriculum implementation planning process. Apart from planning, the organizing stage also requires adaptation considering that there are roles that must be played to carry out according to what is mandated by the independent curriculum. The majority of respondents said that the independent curriculum was a new curriculum so it needed to adapt to the new paradigm regarding the independent curriculum. There is a lack of

understanding of the substance of the independent curriculum so that pilots and comparative studies are still needed in terms of planning and organizing the independent curriculum. Apart from that, there has been no special and intense training or technical guidance from the Ministry of Religion which is the umbrella for the madrasah ibtidaiyah unit. Training was carried out several times, but not intensely and not comprehensively. So in this case the teacher staff at MIN 2 Trenggalek are still feeling around and trying to continue to adapt to the guidelines and training exercises available on several ministry portals.

In this regard, planning is the initial stage in the curriculum process. At the education unit level, curriculum planning is closely related to preparations before implementing the independent curriculum. According to Hariani et al. (2023) in terms of planning, educational units need to understand the rules and prepare the supporting documents needed for the process. This is of course to support learning that is in accordance with the mandate rather than an independent curriculum. The learning process runs in a coordinated manner if supported by teachers who have prepared the design and learning media well (Sephiawardani & Bektiningsih, 2023). At this stage, teachers should identify learning needs such as devices, media, and preparation for teaching for one year of independence. Apart from preparing, teachers must understand the curriculum itself, both its objectives, characteristics and implementation.

In general, findings in the field at the planning stage have relatively the same problem, namely a lack of understanding of the independent curriculum. This was also concluded by Asrifan et al. (2023). where the initial implementation of the Independent Curriculum was hampered by a lack of knowledge regarding the implementation of this new curriculum. Hariani et al.'s research. (2023) also found that in planning an independent curriculum, the main obstacles often faced in elementary schools include a lack of understanding of the curriculum and difficulties in applying creative and innovative learning methods. This is also supported by research by Dewi & Astuti (2022) which states that problems with the independent curriculum at SDN 3 APUAN include that not all teachers have participated in training, teachers do not understand the substance of the Independent Curriculum.

One of the factors that influences teachers' understanding of the independent curriculum is participation in curriculum training that has not been optimal. Even though it is a pilot madrasah in implementing the independent curriculum, aspects of the substance of the curriculum must continue to be considered and evaluated to achieve curriculum goals. The implementation of the new curriculum, especially the independent curriculum, requires training that is not only carried out once but continuously (Ardianti & Amalia, 2022). Mastur's (2023) research results also show that the implementation of the independent curriculum makes teachers more professional, provided that they go through various coaching and training.

There are several alternative solutions to the problem of understanding the curriculum, 1) Delegation to workshops/training/training related to the independent curriculum. This is intended to continue to follow developments and upgrade capabilities. Apart from that, delegations can cut funding allocations if it is too difficult to conduct or follow training thoroughly. 2) Comparative study, to reflect between educational units regarding the

implementation of the independent curriculum. This is intended to get to know each other and evaluate each other's various knowledge regarding understanding of the independent curriculum. Comparative studies can also create a collaborative climate in the curriculum development process. 3) Focus Group Discussion with various stakeholders, this is intended to make it easier to formulate goals and achieve achievements in accordance with what is mandated by the independent curriculum and adjusted to the needs and conditions expected by each unit. 4) Training from trainers and seminars from experts who are experts in the independent curriculum, in accordance with the results of data collection that there has been no comprehensive training or training regarding the implementation of the independent curriculum, so it would be good if this should be implemented considering that this curriculum is the basis for implementing learning .

Then related to this solution, it also refers to the independent curriculum strategy expressed by Hidayati (2023), including the following:

First, Actively Implement Independent Curriculum Training. Plan materials and elements of the Independent Curriculum by actively holding technical guidance, training and workshops. This can be achieved through independent learning through available platforms, such as <https://sikurma.kemenag.go.id/>, <https://pintar.kemenag.go.id/>, and the Merdeka Teaching Platform (PMM). Teachers can also support madrasahs in studying and compiling important Independent Curriculum documents, such as the Madrasah Operational Curriculum (KOM) and Madrasah Organizing Documents. The technical guidance strategy must be changed to a workshop if so far it has been carried out passively. Resource persons must change their function to become facilitators who can accompany all preparation processes for implementing the Independent Curriculum. Mentoring is carried out intensively and is not short and can be completed in a few days, the results will also be maximum.

Second, carry out training on the main material of the Merdeka Cuticle. The main material discussed is important aspects of the Merdeka Curriculum, such as differentiated learning, new learning paradigms, assessment and assessment, learning outcomes (CP), learning objectives (TP) and learning objective flow (ATP), and the project to strengthen the Pancasila Student Profile and Rahmatan lil Alamin Student Profile (P5 P2RA). However, assessment topics function as assessment or evaluation in the learning process. Therefore, these important things must be truly understood by teachers and the academic community as a whole.

Third, Forming a curriculum development team. Learning committee is another term for this curriculum development team. In cases where there are many teachers in a madrasa, the learning committee is the one responsible for initiating and developing the curriculum. This learning committee will also be responsible for implementing the Independent Curriculum, which can be implemented through training within the school. One of the first steps can be started with a Focus Group Discussion with relevant stakeholders.

Fourth, reflect on educational units periodically. One part of implementing the Independent Curriculum is reflection on educational units. The purpose of educational unit reflection is to provide teachers with the opportunity to reflect periodically and continuously and develop follow-up plans to improve and meet the needs of students and the school.

Programs or needs can determine the theme of reflection. The latest educational themes can be used, provided that the theme is relevant to the implementation of the Independent Curriculum. Reflection can be carried out internally or externally to gain new insights and more optimal follow-up.

Difficulty in compiling Independent Curriculum documents and learning tools

Among teachers in preparing curriculum modules considering the lack of understanding in preparing independent curriculum modules which is also part of planning in curriculum management. Confusion in preparing modules was also greatly influenced by previous understanding of the independent curriculum. Apart from that, based on respondents' answers, there is no comprehensive guidance regarding the preparation of independent curriculum modules. This means that teachers feel they have not received a clear picture of the independent curriculum modules.

Basically, this finding is also related to a lack of understanding of the independent curriculum as previously understood. A typical document in an independent curriculum is a teaching module. The findings at MIN 2 Trenggalek, the majority of teachers who implemented the independent curriculum, still lacked understanding in preparing teaching modules for the independent curriculum. So in this case the planning process still relies on modules and documents provided by the center and has not yet reached the stage of independence for development. The Independent Curriculum teaching module is a new policy, so not many teaching modules have been developed in the learning process in grades I and IV (Suardana et al., 2022). Research conducted by Sumarmi (2023) At MI Negeri 10 Gunungkidul, it can be seen that teachers have not prepared learning plans such as ATP and Teaching Modules because they are still being worked on in groups in the KKG forum. This means that in preparing the module, assistance and mentoring is needed.

Apart from mentoring and mentoring, concrete guidelines are also needed, considering that many teachers are still in a transition period and adapting to the characteristics of the new curriculum. Research by Hariani et al (2023) revealed that teachers felt difficulties because in the teaching module, at the beginning of learning there had to be a diagnostic test, KKM was eliminated so that teachers found it difficult to measure student success, in learning assessment there were two report cards, namely the academic assessment report and the project assessment report. , this makes teachers have to add a lot of time. The importance of teaching modules in this curriculum has implications for the appropriate teaching guidelines expected by the independent curriculum.

Regarding the difficulties in compiling modules, the first alternative solution is special monitoring and supervision, both from the school principal and related agencies. Considering that the module is an important document, monitoring and supervision must be needed to assess and improve the module itself. Second, the Teacher Working Group Routine is intended to form a collaborative and productive climate between fellow teachers within one scientific umbrella, so that in this case teachers can share and exchange opinions to make it easier for each other in preparing modules. Third, assistance in compiling modules is intended to assist teachers in compiling modules and make it easier to ask questions and answers about

errors and justifications for the modules being prepared. The four concrete guidelines are expected to have a special consensus within an educational unit so that what is defined as flexible does not mean free but instead is confusing.

Inadequate Facilities and Infrastructure

Problems relate to facilities and infrastructure, especially those related to technology. Not having an LCD projector and IT equipment is one of the obstacles in planning the MIN 2 Trenggalek curriculum. The independent curriculum also emphasizes the use of technology, but when media and equipment are not yet available, a curriculum planner must think about how to keep learning going by involving current technological factors. One of the readiness of elementary schools in welcoming the new curriculum is that material readiness is in the good category where the school has provided infrastructure in good condition as well as infrastructure for teachers through curriculum development activities. (Jamilah et al., 2023).

Support for teachers in developing an independent curriculum is also needed. Very real support is the infrastructure that will be planned as tools, materials or learning media. Hariani et al (2023) revealed that there are obstacles in providing adequate facilities and infrastructure to support the implementation of the independent curriculum, namely limited classroom space, lack of laboratory or library facilities, and a lack of textbooks or other learning resources. This must also continue to be coordinated with related parties to improve facilities and infrastructure to support the implementation of the independent curriculum.

The success of the learning process itself is influenced by various factors, including school readiness in developing the applicable curriculum, providing various school facilities and equipment as learning resources and media (Awwaliyah, 2019). Regarding inadequate infrastructure, the alternative offered is of course to improve infrastructure and technology in schools, including internet access and digital devices considering that this curriculum also touches on the use of technology in it. Education units are expected to be able to allocate or make efforts to provide technological infrastructure. At this time technology and digitalization are a necessity and have become competencies in the 21st century. The concept of independent learning is also part of Society 5.0 where in this concept that Society 5.0 combines the development of technological advances with community problems, which is evidenced by the fact that technology has become part of the social needs of individual life. (Marisa, 2021)

Then the second alternative is collaborative action between elements in digital use. If procurement cannot be done, then teachers must also be able to utilize existing ones to collaborate in technology and digital. Training, technical support, relevant learning resources and professional collaboration are important factors to fulfill teachers' needs in integrating technology and digital literacy in learning (Suryaningsih & Purnomo, 2023). At this time, it is likely that almost every family already has a smartphone, as do educators. Collaboration here can start from small things such as using smartphones as creative and innovative learning tools and media. Learning that focuses on collaboration, discussion, and presentation enhances creativity and craftsmanship (Thana & Hanipah, 2023). Currently, many learning applications are developing that can be used by teachers and students as well as parents and

guardians of students. This collaborative action can be used as an alternative to make learning more flexible and easy to access. In addition, training and development strategies, collaboration and sharing, and the use of technology in learning are effective methods to develop teacher competencies (Purwati & Sukirman, 2024).

Conclusion

This research aims to analyze problems that arise and develop alternative solutions to problems in the independent curriculum management process at MIN 2 Trenggalek, which is mainly viewed from the perspective of the curriculum planning and organizing process. The following solutions are suggestions aimed at schools and related education units to be used as evaluation and input in implementing the independent curriculum. Based on the research results, there are three most prominent problems: First, insufficient understanding of the Independent Curriculum . Solution: Delegation to workshops/training/training, comparative studies, focus group discussions, training from trainers and seminars from experts. Second, Difficulty in compiling documents and learning tools for the Independent Curriculum , Solution: Monitoring and supervision, routine Teacher Working Group, assistance in compiling modules, concrete guidelines. Third, inadequate facilities and infrastructure . Solution: Improving infrastructure and technology in schools, collaborative action between elements in digital use.

Apart from that, regular and continuous reflection needs to be carried out to ensure that the implementation of the Independent Curriculum goes as expected. By implementing these solutions, it is hoped that it can improve teachers' understanding and skills in managing the independent curriculum, as well as increasing the effectiveness of learning at MIN 2 Trenggalek, especially in the planning and organizing process.

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