Policy analysis of independent curriculum in elementary schools

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Abstract: The purpose of this study is to analyze the policy of implementing the independent curriculum at the elementary school level. This type of research is qualitative with a literature study approach, using a descriptive method in presenting data collection from the keywords Independent Curriculum and Elementary School which was carried out in various online journal sources through Google Scholar. The results of the selection using 50 articles from national journals related to the independent curriculum in elementary school’s state that the essence of the Independent Curriculum is to set goals to provide space for each individual to grow and develop according to their unique nature, the implementation uses a differentiation approach to facilitate students so that their learning needs are met. Implementation of the Independent Curriculum according to the level of school or madrasah readiness through the willingness of the principal and teachers is the key to success.

Keywords: Merdeka Curriculum; Elementary School

Introduction

Education is a scientific field that makes humans more civilized and moral. Technological developments bring changes in the mindset of humans in living their lives, the hope of education for a better life through thinking and acting activities to deliver cognitive, affective and psychomotor levels. The purpose of education is to form and develop the potential and character of intelligent human behavior so that they become human beings who believe and fear God well. To achieve educational goals, a support system is needed from all aspects, one of which is the curriculum. In a broad sense, the curriculum is a guide or benchmark for the success of the implementation of an education implementation determined by the central, regional, city and regional governments throughout the archipelago. In the curriculum there are rules that discuss subjects at every level of education and also activities that are given and will be carried out by students. The implementation of the curriculum in Indonesia, along with the change of government and technological developments, has changed to suit the needs and challenges of its people. Changes to the curriculum are based on curriculum analysis carried out by policy makers (Nur, 2021).

The purpose of changing the curriculum is a response to the results of the previous curriculum evaluation to improve the quality of education in Indonesia (Febriyanti, 2021). The function and purpose of National education is none other than to develop the ability to form dignified national character and civilization in order to educate the life of the nation, so that they become human beings who believe and fear God Almighty, have noble character, are healthy, knowledgeable, capable, creative, independent, and become citizens of a democratic and responsible. Along with the times and an increasingly dynamic society, the education system has also undergone a transformation for the sake of adjustment to the globalization that is happening (Sujana, 2019). Recovery of learning in 2022 s.d. 2024, the Ministry of
Education and Culture issued a policy that schools that are not ready to use the Independent Curriculum can still use the 2013 Curriculum as the basis for learning management, as well as the Emergency Curriculum which is a modification of the 2013 Curriculum can still be used by educational units (Suryaman, 2020; Daga, 2021). The independent curriculum refers to Ki Hajar Dewantara’s philosophy that learning is a process of honing, nurturing and loving from learner to learner or from teacher to learner in order to achieve maximum learning goals which means it contains principles of humanizing humans. The purpose of changing the independent curriculum from the 2013 curriculum is to catch up on learning caused by the co-19 pandemic. This curriculum was created with the aim that education in Indonesia can be like in developed countries, where students are given the freedom to choose what they are interested in learning.

There are five types of Independent Curriculum Implementation (IKM), including: 1). Independent curriculum as a learning recovery option, and will be reviewed in 2024 based on evaluations during the learning recovery period, 2). Stages of Implementation of the Independent Curriculum; several programs that support the Implementation of the Independent Curriculum (IKM) are the Mobilization School (SP) and Vocational High School Centers of Excellence (SMK-PK) programs, 3). IKM strategy independent path adoption route gradually, providing assessment and teaching tools, providing independent training, and teacher learning resources, providing curricular sources, 4). Choice of IKM independent pathways; giving freedom to schools to implement several parts and principles of kurmer, without changing the curriculum of the education unit that is being implemented, 5). Merdeka Teaching Platform; provide references for teachers to develop teaching practices according to the Independent Curriculum.

Philosophically, independent learning has a foundation of humanism and constructivism (Hendri, 2017), progressivism (Mustagfiroh, 2020), and Ki Hadjar Dewantara’s educational philosophy (Ainia, 2020; Masitoh & Cahyani, 2020). Elementary school age children (6-12 years) are also known as childhood (middle childhood). It is at this time that children are at the ideal age for learning. This is because children at that age have a strong desire to master new skills given by teachers at school. Simanjuntak and Pasaribu (1983: 68 dalam Sobandi, 2018) emphasized that one of the early signs of this schooling period was the attitude of children towards the family which was no longer egocentric but objective and empirical towards the outside world. Based on this, it can be said that children at that age already have an intellectual attitude so that this period is called the intellectual period (Victorynie, 2017). This is in line with Nasution’s opinion that this school-age period is often referred to as the intellectual period or school harmony period (Nasution, 2021). From the theoretical explanation above, an independent curriculum policy is very much needed according to the times and also in response to the shift in learning technology that leads to the digital industry era. The condition in the field is that many teachers have retired but are still employed due to a shortage of teachers in public elementary schools throughout Indonesia. So it is necessary to study literature that discusses the analysis of independent curriculum policies from the perspective of elementary school teachers, with the aim of
knowing how far the implementation of the Independent Curriculum can be understood and applied in schools or classes.

Methods

This research method was carried out using library research so that the method used in research was literature study (Cresswell, 2013). Specific characteristics that are used as a basis for developing research knowledge include; this research is faced directly with the data or text presented, not with field data or through eyewitnesses in the form of events, researchers only deal directly with sources that are already in the library or ready-to-use data, as well as secondary data used (Snyder, 2019b). Data collection was carried out using Indonesian and English from the selected scientific journals for this literature study, scientific articles from the most widely used online reference sources through the Google Scholar application with the keyword independent curriculum and its implementation policies for elementary school teachers. In collecting and analyzing articles as material for this literature study, the criteria are published articles from the last 10 years, in the field of education, using Indonesian or English.

The researcher reviewed the contents of the article in accordance with the variables studied regarding independent curriculum policies in schools, and selected from accredited journal sources to be reviewed and followed up on as article manuscripts. Then analyze the data using descriptive qualitative analysis in the form of written sentences from the results of previous studies (Hariawan et al., 2019). The technique used in collecting data indirectly by examining the object in question. The use of secondary data can be accounted for related to the Implementation of Independent Learning (IKM). After collecting several articles in journals related to the Implementation of Freedom to Learn (IKM) policies, then analyzing the data using descriptive qualitative analysis through literature study, the results of the analysis are in the form of written sentence descriptive data and the results of research conducted by previous researchers. Review Ridder, (2014) there are several stages that is:

![Figure 1. Flow of data analysis of Merdeka Learning implementation](Reference; Mile dan Huberman (2014))
1. Data collection, is the process of collecting existing data in the field from the review process from journals regarding the Implementation of Independent Learning (IKM) which is implemented into the Independent Curriculum policy in schools.

2. Data reduction, is a data analysis technique that explores, classifies, separates the required data, and organizes the data in such a way as to obtain final and verified conclusions. Classify journals and articles related to the Implementation of the Independent Curriculum (IKM) in elementary schools.

3. Presentation of data, examining patterns that are useful for research and providing conclusions and taking action from possible data.

4. Drawing conclusions/verification, is an act of concluding new findings that have never existed before. The analysis is carried out by generating general conclusions that lead to specific conclusions so as to find new findings about the Implementation of the Independent Curriculum (IKM) in SD.

Library research was carried out by analyzing the library sources of scientific journal articles from the search results of the Google Scholar application as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tabel 1. Independent Curriculum Policy Reference Data</th>
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Change of curriculum is based on stakeholders, whose implementation is influenced by governance in certain settings to address challenges to both legitimacy and effectiveness to consider alternative steps and make decisions (Chhotray & Stoker, 2009). This in Indonesia is based on democratization and globalization in changing the context of collective decision making (Burns et al., 2016). The government's steps in making decisions on the Implementation of the Independent Curriculum for the recovery of learning are carried out based on the following policies:

1. Permendikbudristek No. 5 of 2022 concerning Graduate Competency Standards (SKL) as a minimum criterion regarding the unity of attitudes, skills, and knowledge which shows the achievement of students' abilities from the learning outcomes at the end of the level.

2. Permendikbudristek No.7 of 2022 Content or material standards developed through the formulation of the scope of material in accordance with graduate competencies. The scope of the material being studied in the learning content is formulated based on: 1). Content must be in accordance with the provisions of laws and regulations; 2). Scientific concept; and 3) track, level, and type of education.

3. Permendikbudristek No. 262/M/2022 concerning guidelines for implementing the curriculum in the context of learning recovery.

4. Decree of the Head of BSKAP No.008/H/KR/2022 Year 2022 contains learning outcomes for all levels and subjects in the independent curriculum structure.

5. Circular No. 0574/H.H3/SK.02.01/2023 contains an explanation and stages of development of the dimensions, elements and sub-elements of the Pancasila student profile that can be used to strengthen Pancasila students in the independent curriculum.

6. Circular No. 0574/H.H3/SK.02.01/2023; Regarding the guidelines for implementing the curriculum in the context of learning improvement.

The policy of implementing the independent curriculum as part of learning with a new paradigm is carried out in stages according to each readiness. And the government prepared a questionnaire to help educational units assess their readiness to use the Independent Curriculum. The following are three options for implementing the Independent Curriculum for educational units that choose to use the Independent Curriculum in 2023/2024, namely:

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<tr>
<th>Kurmer in SD</th>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(Rosidah et al., 2021)</td>
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<td>(Zulaiha et al., 2022)(Zahir et al., 2022)(Jamaludin et al., 2022)</td>
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<td>(Carolus Borromeus Mulyatno, 2022)</td>
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<td>(Ujang Cepi Barlian, Siti Solekah, 2022)</td>
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<td>(Ujang Cepi Barlian, Siti Solekah, 2022)</td>
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Source: Data Processed by Researchers (2023)
a) Independent Learning; schools register themselves as driving schools to apply some of the principles of the Independent Curriculum, even though in the implementation of learning and assessment they still use the education unit curriculum that is being implemented.

b) Independent Change; using the Independent Curriculum in developing their school curriculum and applying it in carrying out learning and assessment.

c) Mandiri Sharing; use the Merdeka Curriculum in developing their schools and apply it in carrying out learning and assessments with a commitment to share good practices with other educational units.

Based on the policy analysis can bring up new ideas (Snyder, 2019a), that the description of the implementation of independent curriculum policies from the teacher's perspective has had a positive impact in encouraging increased competence in areas of expertise. Besides encouraging students' creativity in mastering various scientific fields in preparing 21st century skills. This is in line with opinion Hamdi, (2019) improving the quality of learning must pay attention to several factors that can influence learning, namely the teacher factor; must have the will to build a mindset or mindset of student learning relevant to the present, student factors; giving students the opportunity to explore their knowledge from various media in their environment, infrastructure factors; as a support for learning outcomes and environmental factors; the establishment of a literacy culture as an alternative to positive climate change in schools (Faizah & Adi, 2016).

The thing that prompted the emergence of the independent learning policy was the busyness of teachers who were trapped in learning administration so that teachers were not optimal in carrying out the learning process in class (Daga, 2021). The learning climate at the elementary school level is not based on the learning process (Ottenbreit-Leftwich et al., 2021). The teacher's task is to prepare and arrange learning administration in accordance with applicable regulations. Busyness taking care of the administration of learning is part of the learning process. Teachers and schools actually prioritize administration as the goal and priority of educational activities. So that teachers have difficulty determining and designing an ideal educational and learning environment for children. In addition, the fact that every child is not the same as one another, sometimes this makes the teacher less concerned about the good characteristics of the children.

Fauzi (2022) The independent curriculum prepares students to be able to compete in the global era. In line with Nadiem Makarim's policy regarding the assessment of driving school programs that can encourage students to innovate and encourage creative thinking (Patilima, 2022). So that the assessment of the independent curriculum in driving schools that is implemented is a comprehensive assessment that encourages students to have competencies according to their talents and interests without burdening students with achieving the minimum score that students must take or it is said that there is no more Implementation of the Independent Curriculum (IKM) as said by Nadiem Makarim on December 11 2019 regarding 4 policy pillars namely: National Examination (UN) which will be held and replaced with a minimum competency assessment and character survey, schools are given policies related to USBN (National Standard School Examination), simplification of
Learning Implementation Plans (RPP), Acceptance New Students (PPdB) put more emphasis on the zoning system. The implementation of the independent curriculum provides breadth and motivates students to compete, has negative and positive impacts, there is no pressure on students to achieve the minimum grades according to what has been set, so the teacher's role is able to change the learning mindset from theory-based and teacher-centered to project-based and student-centered (Indarta et al., 2022).

The independent curriculum reflects the understanding that there are two perspectives on the students' self in the nature of nature and also the nature of the times. The nature of nature is interpreted as the age of student development between the ages of 7 to 12 years entering the concrete operational stage. And the nature of the times is linked to the demands of the era of disruption 4.0, stressing that elementary school-age students are already exposed to the digital world and also changes in mindset or mindset of elementary school children have different learning characteristics in adapting and socializing, often finding problems that can unknowingly damage the child's mentality if lack of responsiveness of parents and teachers in their learning. Differentiated learning (Herwina, 2021) is learning that accommodates the learning needs of students. The teacher facilitates students according to their needs, because each student has different characteristics, so they cannot be given the same treatment. In implementing differentiated learning the teacher needs to think about reasonable actions that will be taken later, because differentiated learning does not mean learning by providing different treatment or actions for each student, as well as learning that differentiates between smart and less intelligent students. A learning process will be able to take place effectively or not, largely determined by how high the level of understanding of the teacher about the characteristics of his students. Student characteristics include: ethnicity, culture, social status, interests, cognitive development, early abilities, learning styles, motivation, emotional development, social development, moral development, and motor development.

This is corroborated by Anidah's research results that teachers as educators need to be smart in class management. Among them through; 1). approaches namely: power approach; consistent attitude of a teacher to make norms or rules - rules in the classroom as a reference in enforcing discipline (BK & Hamna, 2022), 2). Threat approach; as a process of controlling student behavior, 3). The freedom approach helps students to feel free to do something anytime and anywhere as long as they don't deviate from the rules and mutual agreement, 4). Prescription approach, trying to remember what students don't like when we teach, 5). Teaching approach, helping teachers conceptualize problem solving when implementing a lesson, 6). Behavioral approach, starting from the point of view of behavioristic psychology that requires a stimulus for good behavior, and vice versa witnesses to behavior that will cause bad behavior, 7). Socio-emotional approach, the teacher establishes a good relationship with students and parents, 8). Group work approach, building collaboration between children, 9). Pluralistic approach, the need for a combination of situations faced by children to recognize differences (Victorynie, 2017).

The hope of implementing the independent curriculum is that students are able to explore information by learning independently in accordance with aspects of the Pancasila
student profile which require students to reason critically, have critical and independent attitudes (Sibagariang et al., 2021). It is hoped that students will not only know what to learn, but for what learning is done so that students through the activities created have high analytical and reasoning abilities in solving problems faced in life. In addition to the activities of students in class, a driving teacher can also act as an instructor or mentor and also an assistant in providing training to other teachers (Dewi et al., 2018).

The Independent Curriculum is a policy of the Minister of Education and Culture Nadiem Anwar Makarim as a solution to the progress of education in Indonesia. This was manifested by the government in carrying out new policies on the two most important points in education, namely the first concept or material for Freedom to Learn and the second driving force or driving teacher. Independent Learning means that teachers and students are able to have the freedom to innovate, the freedom to learn independently and creatively (Yanti, 2022). Whereas Marjanis, (2021) Merdeka Learning is an alternative decision as a resolution program for the Minister of Education and Culture who wants to create a happy and enjoyable learning atmosphere for students. The purpose of improving the curriculum is to address weaknesses in the previous curriculum regarding concepts and their implementation in achieving the stated learning objectives.

The implementation of the Independent Curriculum encourages the teacher’s role both in curriculum development and in the learning process. The role of the teacher as a source of learning, as a learning facilitator, is supported by competencies that can manifest the readiness of elementary school teachers who were initially preoccupied with administrative matters but are now optimal in carrying out the learning process in class. Teachers have a very important role both in curriculum development and in its implementation. Behind that, the teacher is the driving force behind the implementation of the curriculum that runs in the education unit, so that the potential of all teachers is needed by school policy makers in implementing the curriculum goals implemented in elementary schools. Of course, in designing learning the teacher involves fellow teachers in the group or in the region to compile, design and develop innovative learning tools to organize and compile materials, textbooks and learning content. The teacher’s position is very important in aligning curriculum content with the needs of students in the classroom. Teachers as facilitators and evaluators need to have qualities such as planners, designers, managers, evaluators, researchers, decision makers and administrators. Teachers can play these roles at every stage of the curriculum development process. The role of the teacher accepts and carries out their duties starting from designing the curriculum to developing innovative learning including:

a) Learning implementation plans or teaching modules
b) Regarding the RPP, the Ministry of Education and Culture issued Circular Number 14 of 2019 concerning simplification of the Learning Implementation Plan (RPP), which consists of three components, namely learning objectives, learning activities, and learning assessment.
c) Teaching materials; essential, interesting and sustainable
d) LKPD; suggestions that help and facilitate teaching and learning activities so that effective interaction between teachers and students can be realized in learning activities.

e) learning media; able to support the success of learning

f) Assessment instrument; the process of collecting information to determine the needs of students in learning.

Figure 1. The pattern of assessment in the Merdeka Curriculum

There are different levels, including:

Table 2. Differences in formative assessment and summative assessment

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No.</th>
<th>Formative Assessment</th>
<th>Summative Assessment</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Done during the learning process of a particular unit/chapter/competence takes place.</td>
<td>Done at the end of learning units/chapters/certain competencies.</td>
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<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Aims to determine the development of students’ mastery of the unit/chapter/competence being studied.</td>
<td>Aims to determine the learning achievement of students from learning that has ended.</td>
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<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>The results are used as a basis for improving the learning process of the unit/chapter/competence being studied (so that students achieve optimal mastery).</td>
<td>Results are evidence of what is mastered by students.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>The results of the formative assessment are not used in determining the value of the report.</td>
<td>The results of the summative assessment are used to determine the value of the report card, go to class or stay in class, and pass or fail.</td>
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Assessment of learning outcomes as a means of measuring the achievement of predetermined learning objectives. The independent curriculum policy initiated by the government includes four main policies namely: National Standard School Exams, National Exams, Learning Implementation Plans, and New Student Admissions or Zoning Regulations (Kemdikbud, 2019). Following are the strengths and weaknesses of the policy to be considered for the sustainability of the independent curriculum implemented at the elementary school level, namely:

1. National Standard School Exams, based on an exploratory study the purpose of this exam is to be administered by schools with the intention of assessing the competence of each student with the quality of the questions that have been determined by the government through the local Education Office. It is carried out through schools in each regional cluster and controlled by the school principal. The weakness is that each student has limited understanding so that this cognitive assessment is felt to be inadequate according to the characteristics of their needs, while schools with inclusive student conditions need different weights for difficult questions and other forms of assessment are needed such as portfolios and assignments.
2. National Examination: in the independent curriculum the characteristics of the needs of students are very complex when measured by cognitive assessment alone, so they are replaced by a minimum skills assessment and a character survey. The minimum proficiency assessment emphasizes aspects of literacy, numeracy. The advantage of literacy competence is that it emphasizes understanding and using language, while numeracy emphasizes understanding and using mathematical concepts in real everyday life. While the character survey emphasizes the application of values in everyday life. The weakness is that there are still many students' weak literacy skills that make it difficult to grasp the meaning of the information presented using standard Indonesian. So the need for the instrument to be presented using language that students understand according to the cultural conditions and place of residence.

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4. Zoning system for accepting new students: this policy is carried out to reduce inequality or density of students whose schools are far from where they live so that students who live around the school cannot enter the school, the advantage is that students who attend schools in educational units will be heterogeneous origin and competency although the acceptance of the zoning system is expanded or more flexible, namely 50% zoning, 15% affirmation, 5% transfer, the rest is achievement according to local conditions.

1. The concept of the Independent Curriculum policy

   The driving school as the initial initiator of the emergence of an independent curriculum was implemented in its learning unit. The concept of the independent curriculum adopts from Ki Hajar Dewantara's educational philosophy which strengthens the among system, namely asah, asih and foster care, meaning that this independent curriculum is part of the refinement of the previous curriculum, through the method of honing students' talents and interests in the principle of collaboration in implementing the Pancasila alignment profile project and also the teaching style of a loving teacher likes to help his students, and nurturing means that the teacher is ready to be a caregiver for his students showing the right path through closeness and an interesting approach to students (Angga et al., 2022).

2. Implementation of the Independent Curriculum in learning

   Freedom to learn in 21st century learning is designed by coordinating various mastery of material abilities and learning objectives. It is hoped that the application of this curriculum can create active learning, because learning is designed through teaching modules equipped with learning tools, namely lesson plans, teaching materials, worksheets, learning media and assessment instruments. Authentic assessment techniques focus on cognitive, affective and psychomotor aspects(Achmad et al., 2022). The RPP format is designed in a concise manner that contains learning outcomes, learning objectives and learning scenarios, this makes it easier for teachers to reduce the administrative burden on teachers. To address the various characteristics of students, differentiated learning is presented with a learning concept that focuses on the needs of students, not teacher center. The principal's policy as a curriculum observer can realize this independent curriculum to the fullest (Daga, 2020).
Conclusion

The independent curriculum implementation policy in elementary schools is based on Circular No. 0574/H.H3/SK.02.01/2023 that every school can implement the Independent Curriculum in the framework of recovering from learning lag due to the pandemic and its implementation is adjusted to the conditions of school readiness in stages. The implementation of differentiated learning as a feature of the Independent Curriculum is intended as a means for teachers to know and make all their students have a good learning enthusiasm and improve skills development through projects to strengthen the profile of Pancasila students. The teacher's role is not only to transfer information but how the teacher can be well received by students, therefore giving wholehearted attention according to student needs, so that the teacher's personal attitude is able to present a healthier ecosystem; appreciating differences and maintaining similarities as a manifestation of a climate of innovation with character, meaning that teachers and students as a unit complement each other and hone empathy and good competence so that educational goals are achieved.

Recommendations for policy makers that the implementation of the independent curriculum will be effective requires socialization and assistance to schools in remote, innermost and outermost areas for educational equity. In order to create an equal perception of a comfortable learning climate, so that students not only have knowledge, understanding but also skills in solving problems in their lives properly.

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