

## Teachers' Perceptions in Educational Concepts (Study on Independent Learning Application at MIN 1 Mataram)

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**Abstract:** This study's goal was to describe how elementary school instructors felt about the autonomous curriculum's implementation. This study is qualitative in nature. Research that examines and comprehends the significance of numerous individuals or groups of individuals resulting from social problems is known as qualitative research. The respondents are primary school teachers. interviewing people in order to gather information. The primary research tool is the researcher, supplemented by field notes. All data is obtained and descriptively evaluated in order to produce accurate and precise findings. The study's findings indicate that: (1) The Independent Curriculum is being implemented in elementary schools, and teachers seem to like it; (2) Success in implementing the curriculum is greatly influenced by the teacher's intensity in doing so in the classroom. Teachers have a significant part in the process of establishing and implementing curriculum in school foundation; (3) To enhance the effectiveness of teaching and learning processes, the teacher has strong ability to create, implement, and design lesson; (4) With relation to creating Pancasila student profiles in particular, Bimtek socializing and training have not been fully utilized; (5) Some elementary school instructors are not using the Independent Curriculum, (6) not all teachers have IT skills, and (7) Due to unstable internet access, especially for users linked to the Merdeka Curriculum platform, there are restrictions on how the Merdeka Curriculum can be implemented.

**Keywords:** Teacher's perception, independent curriculum implementation, elementary school.

### INTRODUCTION

The curriculum is one of the important elements in implementing the learning process at all levels of education (Marlina, 2022). The existence of a curriculum is necessary to prepare learning programs that are following the expected targets, this is because the curriculum as a set of guidelines is designed in a learning program consisting of principles, environment, and needs according to program targets, learning is carried out (Fahira et al., 2022).

After the inauguration of Nadiem Makarim in October 2019 as Minister of Education, Culture, Research, and Technology (Mendikbudristek), superior policies and programs were issued in the field of education. One of them is the Driving School. The Mobilizing School Program was launched by the Minister of Education and Culture on February 1, 2021. This program will start in 2021/2022 in 2,500 schools spread across 34 Provinces and 111 districts/cities. The Mobilization School Program is still being implemented in stages and still requires structured assistance to schools that have been declared qualified to become driving schools. However, this program has received the attention of observers and observers of education in Indonesia. The emergence of this program is a form of educational reform that focuses on cultural transformation. According to Nadiem school culture should not only focus

on the administrative approach, it must also be able to be oriented towards innovation and learning that focuses on students, with the hope that the graduates produced are in accordance with the Pancasila student profile (Desyandri, 2016; Sumarsih et al., 2022).

The education curriculum in Indonesia often experiences changes in terms of its application in educational units. Curriculums that have been implemented in Indonesia include the 2006 KTSP, 2013 Curriculum and the one that is currently still running is the Merdeka Curriculum (Freedom Learning) (Sekarwati & Fauziati, 2021). The purpose of implementing the curriculum in educational units is a reference for the realm of running education at the education unit level (Yaelasari & Yuni Astuti, 2022). However, not all implementation of this curriculum runs smoothly, because there are still many differentiating variations to achieve an even distribution of results achieved by students.

The teacher as a driver of independent learning means a teacher who is required to be able to be active and enthusiastic, creative, innovative, and skilled to become a facilitator driving change in schools (Arviansyah & Shagena, 2022; Swandari & Jemani, 2023). The teacher as a driver of independent learning must not only be able to master and teach effectively in class but also must be able to create a good environment by building closeness with students. Then teachers are also required to be able to take advantage of various existing technologies as an improvement in teaching methods (Swandari & Jemani, 2023). Then the teacher also has to practice correcting mistakes and deficiencies during teaching and learning activities. Through updates related to the Freedom to Learn policy, all educators need to measure and introspect themselves so that they can adjust to the current developments. This is done so that the teacher does not lose out in terms of information and the use of technology by his students, but besides that the teacher who drives independent learning must be able to instill good values during rampant changes that can occur quickly due to easy access and easier use of technology for use (Mulyasa, 2021).

The Merdeka Curriculum as a form of improvement to the 2013 Curriculum certainly gets various responses from teachers, students, and parents of students. Each of them supports it and not a few complain about curriculum changes that they feel are too fast to replace the 2013 Curriculum (Saputra & Hadi, 2022).

Until now, the concept of the Independent Curriculum has received various responses from various educational institutions that facilitate the learning of students, both at the elementary, secondary, and higher education levels (Saputra & Hadi, 2022). The Guidebook for the Development of the Pancasila Student Profile Strengthening Project contains a description of the implementation evaluation. It is explained in this section that the evaluation of the implementation of the Independent Curriculum, especially strengthening the profile of Pancasila students, must essentially involve students (Susilawati et al., 2021). However, in this study what was studied was only limited to teacher perceptions.

Preliminary studies conducted by the author in several public and private elementary schools show that in fact, schools have carried out strengthening character education since 2017. However, until now an evaluation of the The Independent Curriculum has not been put into practice. Therefore, it is necessary to identify how teachers perceive the implementation of the Independent Curriculum, especially in elementary schools. Perception is a person's understanding in interpreting something (Kotler, 2000). Perception is also the process of how a person chooses, organizes, and interprets information that creates meaningful conceptions. The teacher's perception of the implementation of the Independent Curriculum needs to be studied because it will have a significant impact on the practice of learning by teachers in the classroom.

The teacher is a key actor in the implementation of the Independent Curriculum in schools. Particularly in the context of this study are teachers at the basic education level

(elementary school). Therefore, further research is required to determine how the Independent Learning Curriculum is perceived by teachers in elementary schools.

## **METHODS**

The research method used is the descriptive qualitative method. This method aims to describe the findings in detail according to the phenomena that occur. Qualitative research examines and understands the relevance of particular individuals or groups of individuals as a result of social problems (Creswell, 2017). According to Guba & Lincoln (2005), This research is extremely concerned with processes, events, and intensity because researchers are attempting to construct reality and grasp its significance. Data collection was carried out in April 2023 through structured interviews with teachers who apply the Independent Curriculum. The researcher, assisted by field notes, is the primary research instrument. All data were methodically gathered and descriptively examined. In the part on data analysis, an interactive cycle model is utilized. Miles, Huberman, & Saldana (2014) state that there are a number of steps involved, starting with data collection and ending with data presentation and data verification.

## **RESULT AND DISCUSSION**

The curriculum is a key factor in the success of an educational process in schools. Training on the implementation of a curriculum that has changed for teachers is a very important matter because changes and updates to documents such as the curriculum require a comprehensive understanding for teachers so that a quality learning process is implemented.

The Independent Curriculum is an optional curriculum that can be implemented by educational units starting in the 2022/2023 school year. The Merdeka Curriculum carries on the preceding curriculum development's direction. The Pancasila Student Profile Program is currently being implemented at both the elementary and tertiary school levels (Azzahra & Dewi, 2021; Jamaludin et al., 2022). In the process of strengthening the Pancasila Student Profile, it is important to have the role of a teacher. Teachers have a very vital role in strengthening the character in children. Because besides teaching and learning activities, the teacher also acts as the second parent of students at school (Ramdan & Fauziah, 2019; Rudiawan & Asmaroini, 2022).

When creating and implementing the curriculum in schools, the teacher is the most crucial participant. With their knowledge, experience and competence, any effort to build curriculum must focus on instructors. Because they are the most informed about teaching techniques and are in charge of providing the curriculum in the classroom, better instructors promote better learning. Teachers at MIN 1 Mataram have positive perceptions and appreciate the implementation of the Independent Curriculum for learning in elementary schools. Teachers integrate the basic characteristics of the Pancasila Student Profile in learning. The characteristics of Pancasila students include: (1) faith, (2) worldwide diversity, (3) mutual cooperation, (4) independence, (5) critical analysis, and (6) creative. The Independent Curriculum is being implemented in elementary schools is an action or implementation of the curriculum from a plan that has been prepared in a mature and detailed manner.

The implementation of the Independent Curriculum at MIN 1 Mataram based on interviews with respondents, can be stated as follows: (1) until 2023 there is still the option of

implementing the 2013 Curriculum, the emergency curriculum or the independent curriculum, but in 2024 must implement the independent curriculum without further selection, ( 2) for now the independent curriculum is implemented only for Grades I, II and III; (3) students become the center of learning; (4) learning is mostly carried out in groups, in order to build mutual cooperation among students according to the Pancasila student profile; (5) the diversity of students is highly valued; (6) A diasnotic assessment is used as the first step in implementing the autonomous curriculum; and (7) project-based learning.

If other parties have developed the curriculum, the teacher must know and understand it. Therefore, teachers must be involved in the development of curricula. For instance, instructors' thoughts and ideas should be considered when developing the curriculum. On the other hand, as part of the curriculum-influencing environment, the curriculum development team in schools must take into account teachers. For the curriculum to be developed successfully and meaningfully, teacher involvement is essential. In the last step of developing the curriculum in schools, the teacher serves as an executor.

In order to meet the needs of the neighborhood, it is crucial that teachers participate in the construction of the curriculum. Every step of the curriculum development process requires teachers to take initiative and take society's needs into account. However, there are times when it's not entirely clear what steps teachers should take. Since the procedure is not clearly defined, teachers find it extremely difficult to participate in it, which causes a variety of problems for them. Every stage of the curriculum creation process requires teachers to actively reflect on the needs of the community. On the other hand, not every teacher gets the chance to participate in the implementation of the curriculum. The successful creation and execution of the curriculum is significantly influenced by teacher professional development.

Teachers have the necessary knowledge and abilities to effectively contribute to the creation and implementation of curricula. As a result, instructors require professional development-focused training and seminars in order to take part in the development of curricula. On the other side, there is something crucial to do in order to make the participation of teachers in curriculum development effective, namely, teachers must be given influence over the process. This implies that many areas of the learning process need to be improved. So, in order to enhance student learning outcomes, teachers are essential to the process of establishing and implementing curriculum.

There are several tasks and obligations for teachers who are active in curriculum groups. To help their pupils develop their interests and talents, teachers supervise and carry out the learning process. Teachers create lesson plans and syllabi within a specific curriculum framework since it is their duty to execute the curriculum to fulfill the requirements of their students.

The Independent Curriculum is a curriculum with a variety of extracurricular learning opportunities where the content will be better organized so that students have ample time to explore ideas and build competency. (Nugraheni & Siswanti, 2022; Purnawanto, 2022; Ujang Cepi Barlian, Siti Solekah, 2022). Teachers are able to choose from a number of teaching tools so that they can adapt the curriculum to the interests and learning requirements of each student. A set of governmental topics are the foundation for the creation of projects to enhance the attainment of Pancasila student profiles. Because it is not designed to satisfy any particular learning objectives, the project has nothing to do with the subject matter.

Effective educational changes are attained when instructors are involved as the focal point of curriculum creation. As a result, the teacher plays a crucial role in the implementation and evaluation phases of curriculum development. In order to match curriculum content with student requirements, teacher participation in the curriculum creation process is crucial.

The problem is that not all teachers at MIN 1 Mataram have had the opportunity to attend training on the Independent Curriculum. Particularly in terms of socialization and particular Bimtek in relation to the creation of the Pancasila Student Profile. This is as expressed by teachers at MIN 1 Mataram who were selected as respondents. They stated that not all teachers at MIN 1 Mataram had the opportunity to take part in socialization about the Independent Curriculum.

The findings in this study, there is agreement with previous studies. (Sumarsih et al., 2022) argues that having a driving school can become a role model, a place for training, and also an inspiration for teachers and other school principals. In driving schools, having teachers who understand each student is different and has a different way of teaching, according to the right level produces student profiles that are noble, independent and independent, have the ability to reason critically, creatively, work together, and have a sense of national and global diversity. A very significant finding from the driving school is the support from the community around the school which supports the educational process in the classroom, from parents to community leaders, local government.

Based on the findings of interviews about teachers' opinions of the Independent Curriculum's implementation, the advantages are: (1) teachers can be more creative and develop, (2) learning can be more fun and meaningful, (3) learning is directed at the needs of students, and (4) learning in the Merdeka Curriculum is directed to Student Centered-based learning models.

Meanwhile, the constraints of teachers are that they are elderly, over 50 years old it is sometimes difficult to keep up with IT developments. According to one of the Supervisors, there are obstacles regarding the readiness of school resources which are required to be proficient in the use of IT while the Merdeka Curriculum requires the use of the internet to access the independent learning platform. In addition, it also requires a good network. Meanwhile, signal access in some areas is still very difficult. This is an obstacle for private schools, especially those in remote areas.

Other obstacles, as experienced by one of the informants, were: (1) the Freedom Curriculum program seemed forced, (2) not all teachers welcomed the socialization of the Independent Curriculum, and (3) the lack of competence of human resources in schools. This is because the teachers who have participated in socialization and training only use the Merdeka Learning platform. The teachers just install the application without any follow-up.

## **CONCLUSIONS**

Based on the results and discussion above, it can be concluded as follows: (1) Elementary schools are implementing the Independent Curriculum, and teachers seem to like it; (2) Success in implementing the curriculum is greatly influenced by the teacher's intensity in doing so in the classroom. Teachers have a significant part in the process of establishing and implementing curriculum in school foundation; (3) To enhance the effectiveness of teaching and learning processes, the teacher has strong ability to create, implement, and design lesson; (4) With relation to creating Pancasila student profiles in particular, Bimtek socializing and training have not been fully utilized; (5) Some elementary school instructors are not using the Independent Curriculum, (6) Not all educators are proficient in IT, and (7) Due to unstable internet access, especially for users linked to the Merdeka Curriculum platform, there are restrictions on how the Merdeka Curriculum can be implemented.

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