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TEACHER CHALLENGES IN IMPLEMENTING THE INDEPENDENT CURRICULUM AT SMP N 3 PALEMBAYAN

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Abstract

As time goes by, the challenges and roles carried out by teachers will of course also change, one of the factors is developments in the field of technology which also play a role and can influence these changes. Especially when referring to various policies in the existing and newest curriculum, this is certainly an interesting thing to discuss. Therefore, the author's aim in this article is to discuss the challenges and role of the teacher himself, especially in dealing with the use of the independent learning curriculum, which is the newest curriculum and will be implemented in the future. Then related to the data sources used are various forms of literature which are of course related to the theme, whether in the form of books, articles, journals and other written sources on the internet. For the writing itself, the author uses the library research method by searching for and collecting relevant data sources, then filtering the sources that have been collected so that the sources that are most relevant to the theme to be studied or raised can be found, then make conclusions and record various important things from existing sources, and only then will they be implemented in written form.

Keywords: Teacher Challenges, Implementing, Independent Curriculum

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INTRODUCTION

Education is one of the main pillars in a country's development. To achieve optimal educational goals, good curriculum development is very important. In Indonesia, the Independent Curriculum has been introduced as an effort to improve the quality of learning in schools. This policy carries a different approach in curriculum preparation with a focus on student empowerment and development of 21st century skills. In order to study this policy, analysis based on theoretical studies is very relevant to understand the formulation, implementation and impact of the Merdeka Curriculum on improving the quality of learning. (tuerah & M. Tuerah, 2023)

The COVID-19 pandemic has caused changes to the school curriculum as a guide to the learning process at school. This is in accordance with the needs of students and teachers in carrying out teaching and learning activities. Every time a change occurs in the curriculum, teachers must be able to adapt, starting from learning principles to the assessment process, as well as good cooperation between students, teachers and parents so that curriculum implementation can run optimally (Megandarisari, 2021). This is reinforced by the statement that essentially the curriculum lies with the teacher, if the teacher cannot understand the applicable curriculum, then the desired educational goals will not be achieved so that the teacher's ability to adapt becomes important even though it takes time.

Teachers as the main actors in the world of education must always be ready for all policy changes that occur in the realm of education. What is currently needed is a real role for the parties involved to conti (nugraha, 2022)nue to carry out socialization regarding the National Curriculum, so that teachers are truly ready to implement it. The socialization of this curriculum must reach the implementing teachers and not differentiate. This means that the new curriculum can run if socialization has been carried out effectively and efficiently. Apart from that, there are three things that need to be considered when carrying out dissemination, including the readiness of teachers, geographical conditions and dissemination of information (nugraha, 2022)

However, with all the features it has, as a product being developed it is certainly not free from shortcomings for both teachers and students, especially schools located in disadvantaged areas. For teachers there, they will find it difficult to adapt teaching methods and assessments in their implementation. Meanwhile for students, this new thing will feel even more complicated compared to the previous one. This can be felt with the arrival of an

independent curriculum whose learning system is more focused on students. not to mention the sociological factors there, including the community environment, parents and the readiness of the school itself in terms of facilities and infrastructure as well as human resources available at the school. These are some of the challenges that will certainly be experienced by several schools in underdeveloped areas such as in rural areas far from cities.

For this reason, this research will discuss this matter a little as study material for future teachers and curriculum developers themselves. This research will focus on the challenges experienced by teachers in implementing the independent curriculum at SMP N 3 Palembayan and then the opportunities that will emerge later from implementing this independent curriculum.

Literature review

1. Curriculum

   Etymologically, curriculum comes from the Greek words curir which means runner and curare which means place to race. So the term curriculum comes from the world of sports in Ancient Roman times in Greece, which means the distance that runners must cover from the start line to the finish line. It can be understood that the distance that must be covered here means the curriculum with the content and learning materials which is used as the time period that must be traveled by students to obtain a diploma.

   According to S. Nasution (1989), the curriculum is a plan prepared to facilitate the teaching and learning process under the guidance and responsibility of the school or educational institution and its teaching staff. Furthermore, Nasution explained that a number of curriculum theorists were of the opinion that the curriculum not only includes all planned activities but also events that occur under the supervision of the school. So apart from formal curriculum activities which are often called co-curricular or extra-curricular activities (co-curriculum or extra curriculum).

   According to Hasbulloh (2007) curriculum is the entire program, facilities and activities of an educational or training institution to realize its vision, mission and institution. Therefore, the implementation of the curriculum to support the success of an educational institution must be supported by the following things. First, the presence of competent personnel. Second, there are adequate facilities. Third, there are auxiliary facilities as support. Fourth, the existence of educational support staff such as administrative staff, supervisors, librarians, laboratories. Fifth, there is adequate funding,

sixth, there is good management. Seventh, maintaining a culture that supports religious, moral, national and other aspects, eighth, transparent and accountable visionary leadership.

2. Merdeka Curriculum

The Merdeka Curriculum is a curriculum with diverse intracurricular learning where the content will be more optimal so that students have enough time to explore concepts and strengthen competencies (Indrawati et al, 2020). Teachers have the freedom to choose various teaching tools so that learning can be tailored to the learning needs and interests of students. Projects to strengthen the achievement of Pancasila student profiles are developed based on certain themes determined by the government. The project is not directed at achieving specific learning achievement targets, so it is not tied to subject content.

The Independent Curriculum is a choice curriculum (option) that can be implemented by educational units starting in the 2022/2023 academic year (TA). The Merdeka Curriculum continues the direction of development of the previous curriculum (kurtilas). (berlian, solekah, & rahayu, 2022)

According to the Minister of Education and Culture, the concept of independent learning is applying the curriculum to the learning process in a fun way. The development of innovative thinking from teachers is one of the success factors because it can foster a positive attitude among students in responding to each lesson (Fathan, 2020). Merdeka Belajar wants to create educational outcomes that not only make children good at memorizing, but want to build sharpness in analyzing, reasoning and having a broad and complex understanding, and can also help children to develop themselves in various fields, not only developing in terms of their cognitive abilities.

Merdeka Belajar in its concept is a strategy to improve the quality of education in Indonesia. Through independent learning, students will be trained to have communication, creativity, collaboration and critical thinking competencies. With this competency, children will not only memorize lessons, but will be able to create and innovate in various fields, have good character and positive social skills (Prameswari, 2020).

There are advantages to the independent curriculum compared to the previous curriculum, where the content and structure are simpler and deeper, more independent, and more relevant and interactive. Simpler and deeper means that the selected material is

focused on important and essential material and focuses on how to develop students' competencies at the stages of their development. Learning activities are structured in a more in-depth, meaningful way, not too rushed and the most important thing is that the learning activities are designed and applied in a fun way. More independence means that students can choose according to their interests and talents, educators teach according to the child's developmental stages and developmental achievements, and educational units are free to develop and manage their curriculum and learning in accordance with the characteristics of the educational unit and the characteristics of their students. More relevant and interactive means that learning is carried out through project activities by providing wider opportunities for students to explore to support the development of children's character and Pancasila student profile competencies. (retnaningsih & khairiyah, 2022)

METHODS

This research uses a qualitative research design with a descriptive approach. This research design is used to explore and understand the meaning of individuals or groups related to social problems (Creswell & Guetterman, 2018). This research aims to determine the challenges of implementing the independent curriculum at SMP N 3 Palembayan. The questions that arise related to this research topic are (1) What are the challenges in terms of implementing the independent curriculum that often arise in Palembayan 3 junior high schools? The participant in this research was 1 teacher at SMP Negeri 3 Palembayan who taught in grade 7. The reason the researcher chose this location was because SMP N 3 Palembayan was a school that was still far from urban areas. So from a sociological perspective, it is still necessary to pay attention to the implementation of this independent curriculum, especially in terms of school readiness and teacher resources that are ready to implement this curriculum. To collect data, semi-structured interviews will be implemented in this research via Google Form technology which is given to the teacher concerned. This was done because the distance was too far between the researcher and the respondent.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The independent curriculum is designed to support learning recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic. Freedom of learning for teachers and students is what is emphasized in freedom of learning. "The Ministry of Education and Culture defines independent learning as a learning process that provides freedom and authority to every educational institution to be free from complicated administration." "The main assumption of freedom to learn is giving trust to the teacher so that the teacher feels free in carrying out learning" (Koesoema, 2020). The learning atmosphere is more comfortable, teachers and students can discuss more relaxedly, learning can be done outside the classroom where you don't just listen to the teacher's explanation, but form more courage, independence, cleverness in socializing, civilized, polite, competent, and not just relying on a ranking system which according to several surveys only disturbs children and parents." The concept of Independent Learning according to the opinion of (Sherly et al., 2020) "restores the system national education to the essence of the law to give schools the freedom to interpret the basic competencies of the curriculum for their assessment." By implementing an independent curriculum it will be more relevant and interactive where project-based learning will provide broad opportunities for students to actively explore factual issues.

Schools are given the freedom to choose three options in implementing the independent curriculum. First, implementing some of the principles of an independent curriculum by not changing the school curriculum used. Second, using an independent curriculum using learning facilities that have been prepared. Third, using an independent curriculum by developing your own teaching tools. The advantage of having the first independent curriculum is that it is simpler and more in-depth. Because it focuses on important material and develops students' competencies in their respective fields. Second, there is more independence where students do not have specialization programs in high school. Teachers teach according to students' abilities and development levels. To develop curriculum and learning according to its characteristics, schools have the power.

The results of interviews and in one of the schools in West Sumatra province, one of the important elements in a school is the principal who has high fighting values to advance the school. The school principal must be able to guide, direct and inspire all elements of the school to want to move towards better education in order to produce quality graduates. Under the leadership of a good school principal, small schools will progress, even the school

that the researcher visited could be said to be a small school with limited facilities and infrastructure and does not have a large area of land and does not even have a library, but the school is able to become an agent of change which certainly encourages people. parents to send their children to the school. Supervision, discussions and mentoring are carried out periodically to monitor the progress of the learning process if there are obstacles in its implementation.

Apart from school principals, teachers at schools are also an important factor in the successful implementation of the independent curriculum in schools. Teachers must be able to become tutors, facilitators and inspirers for their students so that they can motivate students to become active, creative and innovative students (Savitri, 2020)(Mulyasa, 2021). "The concept of the independent learning policy is that teachers as educators are able to create a comfortable learning atmosphere and are able to generate enthusiasm for learning so that students do not feel burdened by the material presented by the teacher" (Yusuf & Arfiansyah, 2021). The concept of Independent Learning, according to (Sherly et al., 2020), "returns the national education system to the essence of the law to give schools the freedom to interpret the basic competencies of the curriculum for their assessment". To achieve this, teachers must have the skills to process teaching materials in a pleasant atmosphere and utilize technology as a learning resource. At this driving school, they are given guidance by the principal, as well as guidance from fellow teachers to continue to improve the quality of their teaching, teachers who want to retire are also willing to learn to improve their performance, even school guards are trained to be able to use IT.

One of the challenges for teachers in implementing an independent curriculum in schools is that teachers must take the time to prepare creative, innovative and challenging lessons every day. "Teacher involvement in the curriculum development process is important to align curriculum content with the needs of students in the classroom" (Alsubaie, 2016). Another obstacle faced regarding Human Resources (HR) is in inviting teachers to change their thinking to get out of their comfort zone, because the changes made by the school principal will be in vain if the teachers do not want to change. Apart from that, according to (Auliya Javanisa, Farah Fairuz Fauziah, Riasita Melani, 2022) teachers in schools must have the ability to mobilize other teachers so that goals can be achieved together.

Another challenge that teachers have to face is the Pancasila profile project which requires a lot of creativity and time as well as collaboration between one teacher and another.

The large number of projects that must be done and adjustments to themes make teachers who are almost entering their retirement period overwhelmed by activities outside the classroom and required to be creative in creating projects that are interesting and beneficial for students and the environment. Not to mention that teachers have to be faced with limited facilities and infrastructure for remote schools to create Pancasila profile projects, thus requiring students to spend their own funds for the success of the project.

In the learning tools section, teachers have to change all learning tools because curriculum 13 and the independent curriculum have different tools, starting from the names and learning materials which must be prepared by the teacher concerned himself. Preparing learning tools like this certainly requires separate knowledge or learning for the teacher so that errors do not occur when compiling learning tools. Based on the results of interviews, most teachers do not have the basic knowledge to develop learning tools, this is due to the lack of workshops or technical guidance provided by the government. Apart from that, the lack of teacher readiness in implementing this independent curriculum is also influenced by several things, such as the time given by the government to implement this curriculum is very short so that the preparations made by teachers and schools are not yet complete. Based on the author's observations, the unpreparedness of teachers and schools for the challenges faced in the independent curriculum in a short time resulted in teacher confusion in using appropriate learning methods so that the implementation of the independent curriculum did not go well and actually gave rise to several conflicts. It is feared that this will affect the aim of the independent curriculum itself which wants to produce human resources with strong character and based on Pancasila profile projects.

CONCLUSION

Freedom to learn is giving trust to teachers so that teachers feel free in carrying out learning" (Koesoema, 2020). One of the challenges for teachers in implementing an independent curriculum in schools is that teachers have to take the time to prepare creative, innovative and challenging lessons every day. "Teacher involvement in the curriculum development process is important to align curriculum content with the needs of students in the classroom" (Alsubaie, 2016). Another obstacle faced regarding Human Resources (HR) is in inviting teachers to change their thinking to get out of their comfort zone, because the changes made by the school principal will be in vain if the teachers do not want to change.

Based on the author's observations, the unpreparedness of teachers and schools for the challenges faced in the independent curriculum in a short time resulted in teacher confusion in using appropriate learning methods so that the implementation of the independent curriculum did not go well and actually gave rise to several conflicts. It is feared that this will affect the aim of the independent curriculum itself, which aims to produce human resources with strong character and a project-based Pancasila profile.

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