

# **Analysis of the Readiness of Elementary School Teachers in Supporting the Implementation of the Independent Curriculum in the Dr. Wahidin Sudiro Husodo, Tarub District, Tegal Regency**

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**Abstract.** The aim of this research is to identify the factors supporting and hindering the implementation of the Merdeka curriculum in Gugus Dr. Wahidin Sudiro Husodo, Tarub District, and assess the readiness of teachers to support the independent curriculum. A qualitative descriptive method was used to describe the current situation through observations, interviews, and analysis of elementary school teachers' readiness. The findings indicated that schools in the Dr. Wahidin Sudiro Husodo cluster are enthusiastic about implementing the independent curriculum and improving the quality of school principals and teachers. The implementation is carried out in stages with coordination and communication with stakeholders. Involvement of all education stakeholders and the community, including universities, mass organizations, and industry circles, is essential. Policies to improve teacher and school principal quality should be long-term and binding for the government

**Keywords:** Elementary School Teacher Readiness, Implementation of Independent Curriculum

## **1. Introduction**

The curriculum can be understood as a central tool for educational success. Law Number 20 of 2003 concerning the national education system explains the meaning of the curriculum as a set of plans and arrangements in which there are objectives, content and learning materials as well as methods that will be used as guidelines for the learning process to achieve national education goals. Law No. 20 of 2003 Chapter 1 Article 1 states "curriculum is a set of plans and arrangements regarding objectives, content, and learning materials as well as methods used as guidelines for organizing learning activities to achieve certain educational goals". The curriculum was created with the aim of facilitating the educational process.

Good education begins with the formulation of a planned and mature curriculum so that its implementation is as expected. Curriculum is a study plan, a curriculum is a plan for learning. In other words, the curriculum is an educational or learning plan. Another opinion was added by Saylor and Alexander who explained that the curriculum was "a plan for action by students and teachers", an action plan carried out by students and teachers. These actions are not limited to subjects but also include other activities that are under the responsibility of the school[1].

One of the goals of education is to produce superior and intelligent generations who have noble character. The existence of education is also expected to be able to encourage changes

towards things that are better than the previous generation. Through education, the Indonesian nation is expected to be able to produce creative, innovative, solutive and productive generations in the progress of the nation. In the preamble to the 1945 Constitution, education explicitly states that educating the nation's life is the responsibility of the state[2]. Improving and equalizing the quality of education is a major challenge in the development of education in Indonesia. To overcome this challenge, since 2009 the Government has fulfilled the education budget obligation of 20% of the APBN and continues to increase the education budget from IDR 332.4 T in 2013 to IDR 550 T in 2021[3].

This increase in the budget has contributed positively to improving the education level and welfare of teachers, reducing class sizes (teacher-student ratio), as well as improving facilities and infrastructure in education units. However, various indicators of student learning outcomes have not shown encouraging results.[4]

As will be reviewed various measurements of student learning outcomes show the relatively low quality of learning outcomes in Indonesia. Even so, there has been no significant increase in the quality of learning in recent years. It is in this context that education in Indonesia is experiencing a learning crisis, which if not addressed immediately will strengthen what [5] said as schooling ain't learning "going to school but not learning".

Nowadays, through the Ministry of Education and Culture (Kemendikbud), namely by Mr. Nadiem Makarim, an educational program known as the "Freedom to Learn" program was born. In this program there are many activities that actually can be carried out by the entire education community in schools, especially by teachers. The program includes: School KIP, School Digitalization, Achievement and Character Strengthening, Mobilizing Teachers, New Curriculum, Vocational Education Revitalization, Independent Campus/School, and Promotion of Culture and Language. One of the curricula being pursued is the independent learning system. Independent learning is interpreted as a learning plan that provides opportunities for students to study in a relaxed, calm manner, not feeling pressured, happy without stress and paying attention to the natural talents possessed by students. The focus of independent learning is freedom to think creatively and independently. The teacher as the main subject whose role is expected to be able to be a driving force to take action that gives positive things to students. The conclusion regarding the concept of learning is a form of bid in reorganizing the national education system. The rearrangement is in order to welcome the change and progress of the nation so that it can adapt to changing times[6]. The essence of this Merdeka Curriculum is Freedom to Learn. Minister of Education Nadiem said Merdeka Learning was a concept created so that students could explore their individual interests and talents. For example, said Nadiem, if two children in a family have different interests, then the benchmarks used to evaluate them are not the same.

Then children also cannot be forced to learn something they don't like. "We as parents certainly cannot force our children who like art to study computers in depth and vice versa," said Nadiem. Nadiem said that children are naturally curious and have a desire to learn. "So there are no lazy children or children who cannot," he said. The implementation of Freedom of Learning is a breakthrough for the Ministry of Education and Culture- Research and Technology to create superior human resources (HR) through policies that strengthen the role of all education personnel. This policy is implemented through four improvement efforts, namely:

1. Improvements in infrastructure and technology.
2. Improve policies, procedures and funding, as well as grant more autonomy to educational units.
3. Improvement of leadership, community, and culture.

#### 4. Make improvements to curriculum, pedagogy, and assessment.

Merdeka Belajar is divided into several episodes. Starting from the first episode, namely presenting four main policies so that the paradigm of the old way of teaching and learning can be changed towards progress. Some of the manifestations of the four policy points are the abolition of the National Standardized School Examination (USBN), replacing the National Examination (UN) with a National Assessment, then the policy of simplifying lesson plans (RPP), as well as a more flexible new student admissions policy (PPDB).

Ho Sung Woo's research, et al., 2020 in the mpdi journal entitled Development of Curriculum Design Support System Based on Word Embedding and Terminology Extraction states that states that the curriculum must reflect the latest technological trends and societal needs. Curriculum development involves subjective judgments from several experts to extract knowledge from several similar documents. More objective extraction needs to be based on standard terminology, and professional terminology can help build a content framework to organize the curriculum. The learning process needs to be evaluated continuously and consistently from time to time, the evaluation must be carried out thoroughly in terms of skills, knowledge and attitudes. Evaluation is carried out continuously and consistently during the learning process in order to achieve maximum learning and provide decisions based on standards or specific criteria [7].

The Merdeka Curriculum was designed as part of the Ministry of Education and Culture's efforts to overcome the learning crisis that we have been facing for a long time, and which has only gotten worse due to the pandemic. This crisis is marked by the low learning outcomes of students, even in basic matters such as reading literacy. The learning crisis is also characterized by wide disparities in the quality of learning between regions and between socio-economic groups.

Of course, the recovery of the education system from the learning crisis cannot be realized through curriculum changes alone. Various efforts are also needed to strengthen the capacity of teachers and school principals, assistance for local governments, structuring evaluation systems, as well as more equitable infrastructure and funding. But the curriculum also has an important role. The curriculum has a major influence on what teachers teach, as well as how the material is taught. Therefore, a well-designed curriculum will encourage and facilitate teachers to teach better. In implementing the curriculum, the teacher is the spearhead and front guard in implementing the curriculum. Therefore how important is the readiness of teachers in implementing the curriculum in addition to their competence, commitment and responsibilities as well as their well-being which must be maintained. Teacher competency is not only mastering what needs to be learned (content) but how to teach students something that is challenging, fun, motivating, inspiring and gives space for students to carry out process skills, namely observing, asking, finding out, reflecting [8].

The Freedom to Learn Program above is certainly very supportive of the progress of education if it can be implemented properly. In other words, this program can be a way to improve the quality of Indonesian education on the one hand and the quality of Indonesian people in general on the other. Because this program is very dependent on the teachers as the main pillar of education, it is necessary to see the extent of the support of the teachers and the implementation of these programs as an independent curriculum. In line with the development of curriculum innovation, the readiness of teachers to apply the Free Learning curriculum in learning is absolute in order to achieve the expected goals. No matter how perfect the curriculum is, if the teacher does not have the readiness and ability, then the curriculum cannot be implemented properly, so that learning does not provide meaning for students. This shows that the teacher and the curriculum are very closely related.

In fact, there are indeed many obstacles in implementing the Freedom to Learn curriculum in the Dr. Gugus. Wahidin Sudiro Husodo Tarub District, namely:

1. Books, many teachers say that the implementation of the Freedom to Learn curriculum has so far been hampered by books prepared by the government and book providers that have been recommended by the Regional Government. The teachers also said that books could be obtained, but in small quantities and at a time that was nearing the teaching and learning process.
2. Assessment, teachers and education observers said that the independent learning curriculum felt K13, this was what the teacher revealed that so far teaching uses themes but in reality the assessment system still uses each field of study or KTSP. This is still confusing for teachers to find the holistic Merdeka curriculum.
3. Training, teachers implementing the Merdeka Learning curriculum really complain about the lack of training in the Merdeka Learning curriculum being provided, teachers expect that the training provided should be routine and focus on one study.

So that the problems in this study are the limitations of the research as follows:

- A. What factors support the implementation of the Merdeka curriculum in Gugus Dr. Wahidin Sudiro Husodo, Tarub District
- B. What are the obstacles that hinder the implementation of the independent curriculum in Gugus Dr. Wahidin Sudiro Husodo, Tarub district
- C. What is the teacher's readiness to support the implementation of the independent curriculum in the Dr. Wahidin Sudiro Husodo, Tarub District

## **2 Method**

This study used descriptive qualitative method. According to Bagman and [5].define qualitative methodology as a research procedure that produces descriptive data in the form of written or spoken words from people and observed behavior. Meanwhile, Kirk and Miller define that qualitative research is a particular tradition in social science that fundamentally depends on observing humans in their own area and dealing with these people in their language and terms. This qualitative descriptive research aims to describe what is currently happening. It contains attempts to describe, record, analyze and interpret conditions that are currently occurring or existing. In other words, this qualitative descriptive research aims to obtain information about the existing conditions [9].

## **3. Discussion**

The Merdeka Curriculum, which was launched in 2022, is part of the Merdeka Learning policy issued since December 2019. According to the Minister of Education, Culture, Research and Technology (Mendikbudristek), Nadiem Makarim, the Merdeka Learning Curriculum is a development and implementation of an emergency curriculum launched in responding to the Covid-19 pandemic. Schools are given three choices, namely using the 2013 Curriculum in full, the simplified 2013 Curriculum or also called the Emergency Curriculum, or the Independent Curriculum (originally called the Prototype Curriculum). The Independent Curriculum is stated to have advantages because it focuses on essential material and gives independence to students, principals and teachers in choosing appropriate learning.

In its journey, the Implementation of the Independent Curriculum (IKM) is carried out in stages, not simultaneously and not massively. Among them is the formation of Driving

Schools and Vocational High Schools Centers of Excellence (SMK-PK). The government also provides opportunities for schools to conduct IKM learning independently. IKM Mandiri is divided into three categories, namely Independent Learning, Independent Change, and Independent Sharing. In Independent Learning, schools are given the freedom to implement several parts and principles of the Independent Curriculum while continuing to use the 2013 Curriculum. Independently Changed, schools are given the freedom to implement the Independent Curriculum by using the teaching tools that have been provided. Mandiri Sharing is a school that develops its own various teaching tools needed.

Based on observations and interviews with informants in the field, it was shown that schools in the Dr. Wahidin Sudiro Husodo, Tarub District, seemed quite enthusiastic about joining IKM Mandiri. The Merdeka Curriculum gives schools, teachers and students the freedom to choose according to their interests. Providing various choices to schools, teachers and students on the one hand means convenience. Although on the other hand it can mean difficulties. This will mean that it will be easy if school principals and teachers have sufficient readiness, funding capacity, and capabilities. Creativity and innovation are the keywords in the implementation of the Independent Curriculum in schools. Even schools with minimal facilities and infrastructure have no difficulty in applying the principles of the Independent Curriculum. When school principals and teachers understand the philosophy and basic principles of learning, in essence they are ready to implement the Independent Curriculum. Teachers are no longer burdened with excessive and sometimes unnecessary administration. There are no more standard and rigid formats to use. Teachers are given the freedom to design lessons with only 1 sheet of Lesson Implementation Plan (RPP) with various simplifications. This is important, must pay attention to the profile of students. However, these demands for creativity and innovation will become difficult and burdensome if the capacity and capability of teachers and principals is inadequate. Teachers who have been guided by standard formats from the education office or supervisors will, of course, experience difficulties. The low quality of teachers has long been studied by both the government and foreign institutions. The quality of teachers and school principals in Indonesia is a strategic issue that has been a problem so far. The quality of school principals and teachers in the Implementation of the Independent Curriculum in Gugus Dr. Wahidin Sudiro Husodo Tarub District, Tegal Regency is carried out in stages by always coordinating and communicating with stake holders because the quality of learning so far needs improvement. The issue of improving the quality of school principals and teachers should be of great concern to the government because there has not been a systematic effort to improve school principals and teachers that has been recommended by various studies on education in Indonesia.

It is believed that the currently implemented Merdeka Curriculum is better than the 2013 Curriculum. At least theoretically and this needs to be debated. A curriculum that provides independence and freedom to school principals and teachers in designing learning in schools is believed to be an effective solution to improving the quality of Indonesian education, especially in the Dr. Wahidin Sudiro Husodo, Tarub District, Tegal Regency. The importance of evaluation where the Government also needs to explain how to evaluate the 2013 Curriculum so as to produce conclusions to develop a new curriculum, which is called the Independent Curriculum.

The development of the teacher education system has long been mandated by law, such as Law Number 14 of 2005 concerning Teachers and Lecturers. The law mandates the government to develop a boarding bond teacher education system in educational institutions for educational staff to ensure the efficiency and quality of education. Furthermore, it is necessary to build a teacher education ecosystem that will support the emergence of teachers

and principals who are ready to achieve success in the future. For this reason, all education stakeholders and the community must be involved, such as universities, especially those with teacher education programs, mass organizations and the industrial community. Policies to improve the quality of teachers and school principals should be long-term and binding on every government, whoever is in charge. The development of the Independent Curriculum has important prerequisites that must be met, namely teachers and principals who are creative and innovative, and of course have a deep understanding of individual students. High passion and a wide spectrum of student interest in learning, might be broken if educated by the wrong teachers and principals. The man behind the gun will be the key to success, even when the gun is not too good.

Based on physical readiness, the teachers in the Dr. Cluster. Wahidin Sudiro Husodo, Tarub District, Tegal Regency stated that there were no problems in conducting the assessment. If seen from interviews with informants in the Dr. Cluster. Wahidin Sudiro Husodo, Tarub District, Tegal Regency is willing and involved in the preparation of all tools to assess literacy, numeracy and character.

#### **4. Conclusion**

Based on observations and interviews with informants in the field regarding the Analysis of Elementary School Teacher Readiness in Supporting the Implementation of the Independent Curriculum in Cluster Dr. Wahidin Sudiro Husodo Tarub District, Tegal Regency shows several conclusions that can be drawn, namely that:

1. Schools in Gugus Dr. Wahidin Sudiro Husodo, Tarub District, seems quite enthusiastic in participating in the Implementation of the Independent Curriculum, improving the quality of school principals and teachers in the Implementation of the Independent Curriculum in Dr. Gugus. Wahidin Sudiro Husodo, Tarub District, Tegal Regency, is carried out in stages by always coordinating and communicating with stake holders
2. The importance of evaluation where the Government also needs to explain how to evaluate the 2013 Curriculum so as to produce conclusions to develop a new curriculum, which is referred to as the Independent Curriculum. and industrial circles.
3. Policies for improving the quality of teachers and school principals should be long-term and binding on every government, whoever is in charge. The development of the Independent Curriculum has important prerequisites that must be met, namely teachers and principals who are creative and innovative, and of course have a deep understanding of individual students. High passion and a wide spectrum of student interest in learning, might be broken if educated by the wrong teachers and principals. The man behind the gun will be the key to success, even when the gun is not too good.
4. Based on physical readiness, the teachers in the Dr. Cluster. Wahidin Sudiro Husodo, Tarub District, Tegal Regency stated that there were no problems in conducting the assessment. If seen from interviews with informants in the Dr. Cluster. Wahidin Sudiro Husodo, Tarub District, Tegal Regency is willing and involved in the preparation of all tools to assess literacy, numeracy and character.

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