

**ADVANTAGES AND CHALLENGES OF THE INDEPENDENT CURRICULUM IN
ENHANCING QUALITY OF INDONESIAN EDUCATION
: A LIBRARY RESEARCH**

**KELEBIHAN DAN TANTANGAN KURIKULUM MERDEKA DALAM
MENINGKATKAN MUTU PENDIDIKAN INDONESIA : TINJAUAN PUSTAKA**

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ABSTRAK

Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menganalisis kelebihan dan tantangan penerapan Kurikulum Merdeka dalam meningkatkan kualitas pendidikan di Indonesia. Penelitian ini menggunakan metode library research. Data penelitian berupa data sekunder yang diperoleh dari berbagai literatur ilmiah, sedangkan sumber data meliputi buku, artikel jurnal nasional dan internasional, serta hasil penelitian yang relevan mengenai implementasi Kurikulum Merdeka yang dipublikasikan dalam sepuluh tahun terakhir. Data dikumpulkan melalui studi dokumentasi dan dianalisis secara deskriptif dengan teknik reduksi data, penyajian data, serta penarikan simpulan berdasarkan sintesis berbagai hasil penelitian. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa Kurikulum Merdeka memiliki berbagai kelebihan, antara lain menciptakan pembelajaran yang lebih fleksibel, berpusat pada peserta didik, mendukung pembelajaran berdiferensiasi, mengembangkan karakter siswa, serta mendorong pemanfaatan teknologi dalam proses pembelajaran. Di sisi lain, implementasinya masih menghadapi berbagai tantangan, seperti keterbatasan kompetensi guru, kurangnya pelatihan, keterbatasan sarana dan prasarana, serta kesenjangan akses pendidikan, terutama di daerah terpencil. Oleh karena itu, peningkatan kompetensi guru, pemerataan fasilitas pendidikan, dan dukungan kebijakan yang berkelanjutan diperlukan untuk mengoptimalkan implementasi Kurikulum Merdeka dalam meningkatkan kualitas pendidikan di Indonesia.

Kata kunci: *Kurikulum Merdeka, Kualitas Pendidikan, Library Research, Implementasi Kurikulum.*

ABSTRACT

The Independent Curriculum (Kurikulum Merdeka) has been introduced to improve the quality of education in Indonesia by promoting flexible, student-centered learning and strengthening students' competencies and character. This study aims to analyze the advantages and challenges of implementing the Independent Curriculum in improving the quality of education in Indonesia. This study employed a library research method. The data consisted of secondary data obtained from relevant literature, while the data sources included books, national and international journal articles, and previous research on the implementation of the Independent Curriculum published over the last ten years. Data were collected through documentation techniques and analyzed descriptively using data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing through the synthesis of previous research findings. The results indicate that the Independent Curriculum offers several advantages, including greater flexibility in learning, student-centered instruction, the development of students' competencies and character, and the integration of technology into the teaching and learning process. However, its implementation continues to face several challenges, such as limited teacher competence, insufficient professional training, inadequate educational facilities and infrastructure, and unequal access to educational resources, particularly in remote areas. Therefore, strengthening teachers'

professional competence, improving educational facilities, and ensuring continuous government support are essential to optimize the implementation of the Independent Curriculum and enhance the quality of education in Indonesia.

Keywords: Independent Curriculum, Educational Quality, Library Research, Curriculum Implementation

INTRODUCTION

Education has an important role in enhancing the quality of human resources in Indonesia. The government has made many efforts to increase the education system, one of which is the implementation of the Independent Curriculum (Kurikulum Merdeka). This curriculum is focused to give more freedom to schools, teachers, and students to choose learning methods that fit their needs and abilities in the future impact. With a more flexible approach, the Independent Curriculum aims to create student-centered learning and promote creativity and independence. The education that is currently developing recognizes the need to adjust learning to the development and needs of society and related parties or stakeholders (Muhammad & Nurdyansyah, 2015). The implementation of the Independent Curriculum, although promising, is not free from various complex challenges, especially related to the readiness of human resources, availability of infrastructure, changes in mindset, and stakeholder support (Naibaho et al., 2025). However in practice, there are several challenges such as limited resources, teachers' preparedness, and equitable understanding of the curriculum concept. This Curriculum carry out the new hopes for student, teacher and school environment. The law underlies this objective so that education can carry out its functions and roles effectively in society (Nurdyansyah, 2016)

Another challenge is the assessment system. The Independent Curriculum changes the old national exam to a more complete evaluation that checks students' skills and character. But switching to this new way needs a change in thinking for teachers, students, and parents. Many still

think school grades are the main sign of success, so it's hard to get used to wider standards. Also, the curriculum asks schools to be more independent, which can be tricky if there's not enough help, watching, and teamwork from everyone involved. To improve the success of implementing the Independent Curriculum, several important strategic steps are needed. First, the government and schools must enhance the quality of teacher training to make it more practical, sustainable, and based on direct experience, so that teachers can understand and apply learning methods that match the principles of the Independent Curriculum. Second, schools need extra facilities and learning materials to support project-based learning, so the government and related parties must ensure that schools have enough access to resources. Third, parents' participation should be increased through more intensive socialization so that they understand their role in supporting learning at home. Fourth, continuous mentoring and supervision are required to make sure teachers get guidance and feedback in using teaching methods that fit students' needs.

Although previous studies have discussed various aspects of the Independent Curriculum, most of them focus on particular issues, such as teacher readiness, assessment systems, technology integration, or implementation challenges. As a result, there is still limited research that comprehensively synthesizes both the advantages and the challenges of the Independent Curriculum in relation to improving the quality of education in Indonesia. A comprehensive understanding of these two aspects is important to provide a balanced perspective on the effectiveness of the curriculum and to identify strategic

efforts needed for its successful implementation. Therefore, this study attempts to fill this gap by examining both the advantages and the challenges of the Independent Curriculum through a library research approach.

METHOD

This study employed a library research method to examine the advantages and challenges of implementing the Independent Curriculum in improving the quality of education in Indonesia. The study used secondary data obtained from relevant literature related to the Independent Curriculum. The data sources consisted of books, national and international journal articles, conference proceedings, and other scholarly publications accessed through Google Scholar and other relevant academic sources. The literature reviewed was limited to publications from the last ten years to ensure that the information reflected recent developments in the implementation of the Independent Curriculum.

Data were collected through documentation techniques by identifying, selecting, reading, and reviewing literature relevant to the research objectives. The collected data were then analyzed descriptively through data reduction, data organization, comparison of findings from previous studies, and synthesis of information to identify the advantages, challenges, and impacts of the Independent Curriculum on the learning process. The findings from various sources were interpreted to provide a comprehensive understanding of the effectiveness of the Independent Curriculum in improving the quality of education in Indonesia.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The Independent Curriculum (Merdeka Belajar) is a curriculum that builds understanding of how to use technology in the digital era. Even though

character education is the main focus in this curriculum, it is actually not a new concept. Character education has been applied for a long time, but it was not clearly focused on one specific value, such as the character of Pancasila (Maulana, 2016; Pratama, 2022). According to Law No. 20 of 2003 about the National Education System, a curriculum is a set of plans that regulates the goals, content, learning materials, and methods used as guidelines to design curriculum and syllabus in each educational unit (Thoriq, 2023). Philosophically, the Independent Curriculum aims to give schools the freedom to organize learning activities based on their own potential and strengths (Warsihna, 2023). The Independent Curriculum was created as a response to the rapid growth of technology. It gives students the opportunity to learn more actively and face new challenges by using various technological media and developing skills needed in the modern world (Hasim, 2020).

The goal of this curriculum is to make learning student-centered, encouraging them to be active in improving both academic and non-academic skills. This process helps students grow into intelligent, creative, and responsible individuals. However, its implementation is not always easy. Many teachers face challenges in applying this curriculum. One of the problems is that the school only got a new principal in October 2022, and teachers still lack understanding of the Independent Curriculum because there are not enough offline training sessions (Alimuiddin, 2023). The implementation of this policy still faces many challenges, especially in the readiness of teachers. Many teachers still do not fully understand the ideas of differentiated learning, learning based on outcomes, and how to include the Pancasila Student Profile project in daily teaching. This shows that changing the curriculum through new policy documents is not enough; it also needs a deep understanding and acceptance from the teachers in the field. The lack of proper training, limited

support from the education offices, and too many administrative tasks make it hard for teachers to apply the real spirit of Independent Curriculum (Inda 2025). At the same time, problems in infrastructure and learning facilities make the education gap between regions even wider. Schools in cities are usually more ready to use the Independent Curriculum because they have better access to technology, internet, and learning materials. On the other hand, many schools in remote or rural areas still face serious limits in those aspects, which affect how well the curriculum can be applied.

This situation also increases the digital gap that impacts not only students but also teachers and school staff. Although the government has provided training and mentoring programs, not all teachers can access them equally, especially those in remote and rural areas (Kurniawan et al., 2023). Another problem found is that the training or workshops are still irregular and do not deeply discuss the technical aspects. Only teachers from *Pioneer School* receive intensive guidance, while most teachers from regular schools feel confused about how to adjust their teaching practices to the demands of the new curriculum (Rahmawati, 2023; Kurniawan et al., 2023). This shows that even though the Independent Curriculum is designed to create learning that is more flexible, contextual, and student-centered, its implementation in schools still faces many serious challenges. These challenges not only come from the technical side of implementation but also reflect deeper issues in the national education system, such as human resource readiness, infrastructure gaps, and policy consistency (Rohani, 2025). However, the Independent Curriculum is basically a very effective curriculum for the fast-growing technological era.

Independent Curriculum also gives happiness in the learning process. It is said to bring happiness because the program aims to create a fun and enjoyable learning atmosphere where students feel

comfortable and teachers feel motivated to share their knowledge. The spirit of *Independent Learning* in elementary schools, especially, is to encourage collaboration between students and teachers to build an effective, efficient, and comfortable learning environment (Aisyah, 2023). To improve the effectiveness of curriculum implementation in the education environment, the first and most important step is to adjust and maintain the curriculum to meet the needs and development of students. Second, providing education and training for teachers can help them apply the curriculum better. Based on the analysis of curriculum implementation, teachers still face problems in understanding the curriculum, the availability of educational facilities, and adapting to students' needs (Azis, 2023). The success of implementing this curriculum depends greatly on the readiness and skills of teachers, as well as the support of adequate facilities and infrastructure. On the other hand, equal education quality across all regions in Indonesia, especially in areas that still lack facilities and trained teachers, remains a big challenge (Inda, 2025). Increasing teacher competence and providing proper educational facilities that support competency-based learning are important steps to ensure the success of the Independent Curriculum.

If these challenges can be solved, this curriculum has great potential to produce graduates who are ready to face the demands of the working world and the rapid changes of modern times (Wahyudi, 2022). However, the success of this curriculum also depends on the government's role in providing equal access to facilities and proper training for teachers, so they can educate students to become intelligent, creative, and innovative individuals. Through equal training for educators, regular evaluation, and community involvement in supporting the education system, Indonesia can take an important step toward building a more advanced and

developed generation of independent and competent learners.

CONCLUSION

The education curriculum today follows the development of the modern era. The growth of technology makes both teachers and students need to use it as a tool for effective learning. Many teachers face challenges in adjusting to this curriculum, especially older teachers who are not used to using technology in the classroom. This situation becomes a big challenge for them in supporting students' learning success. However, if these challenges can be solved, the implementation of this curriculum gives many benefits. Teachers can create more interesting and interactive learning activities, while students become more active and creative in finding information. Therefore, the Independent Curriculum helps improve the quality of learning and prepares young people to face changes and competition in the global era.

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