

The Role of Teachers in Implementing the Independent Curriculum in the Learning Process at Elementary Schools

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ARTICLE INFO

Keywords: Teacher's Role, Independent Curriculum, Learning in Elementary Schools

Received : 20, December

Revised : 25, January

Accepted: 26, February

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to understand the role of teachers in implementing the Independent Curriculum in elementary schools. The Independent Curriculum is a new curriculum introduced by the Ministry of Education, Research, and Technology (Kemendikbudristek) to improve the quality of education in Indonesia. The results of the study indicate that teachers play an active role in implementing the Independent Curriculum by developing students' competencies and utilizing project-based learning methods. Teachers also enhance students' critical thinking, communication, and collaboration skills. However, teachers face challenges in implementing the Independent Curriculum, such as limited resources and their own teaching capabilities. Therefore, efforts are needed to improve teachers' competencies and provide adequate resources to support the implementation of the Independent Curriculum. This study is expected to contribute to curriculum development and learning in elementary schools, as well as improve the quality of education in Indonesia.

INTRODUCTION

Education in Indonesia has undergone significant changes with the implementation of the Independent Curriculum. This curriculum is designed to improve the quality of education in Indonesia and prepare students to face the challenges of the 21st century (Ministry of Education, Research, and Technology, 2022).

The Independent Curriculum has several unique characteristics, such as:

1. Competency-based rather than subject matter-based (Ministry of Education, Research, and Technology, 2022).
2. Utilizing a project-based learning approach and authentic learning experiences (Hmelo-Silver, 2004).
3. Emphasizing the importance of critical thinking, communication, and collaboration skills (Ministry of Education, Research, and Technology, 2022).

However, implementing the Independent Curriculum requires the active role of teachers in the learning process. Teachers must develop students' competencies through project-based learning activities and authentic learning experiences (Hmelo-Silver, 2004). Previous research has shown that teachers play a crucial role in implementing a new curriculum (Blumenfeld et al., 1991). However, there is still limited research discussing the role of teachers in implementing the Independent Curriculum in elementary schools. Therefore, this study aims to examine the role of teachers in implementing the Independent Curriculum in elementary schools and identify the challenges teachers face in its implementation.

Theoretical Framework

The Independent Curriculum is a new curriculum implemented by the Ministry of Education, Research, and Technology (Kemendikbudristek) to improve the quality of education in Indonesia. This curriculum is designed to develop students' competencies in a broader and more in-depth manner, preparing them to face the challenges of the 21st century (Ministry of Education, Research, and Technology, 2022).

In the implementation of the Independent Curriculum, the role of teachers is crucial in the learning process. Teachers must develop students' competencies through project-based learning activities and authentic learning experiences (Hmelo-Silver, 2004).

The learning theory that supports the implementation of the Independent Curriculum is Project-Based Learning (PBL). This theory emphasizes the importance of authentic, real-life learning experiences (Blumenfeld et al., 1991). In this theory, students are given opportunities to develop their competencies

through project-based learning activities, such as research projects, design projects, or product development projects.

Additionally, **Social Constructivist Learning Theory** also supports the implementation of the Independent Curriculum. This theory emphasizes the importance of social interaction and knowledge construction in the learning process (Vygotsky, 1978). In this theory, students are given opportunities to develop their competencies through social interactions with teachers and peers, as well as through knowledge construction based on authentic learning experiences.

In implementing the Independent Curriculum, teachers must act as **learning facilitators** who assist students in developing their competencies through project-based learning activities and authentic learning experiences. Teachers must also ensure that students have the opportunity to develop their competencies through social interaction and knowledge construction.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study employs a qualitative research method with a case study approach, using interviews and observations. The objective of this research is to understand the role of teachers in implementing the Independent Curriculum in elementary schools.

Research Design

This study uses a case study research design, which focuses on a single case or unit of analysis. In this research, one elementary school serves as the case study: Catholic Elementary School Bali Loura, Loura District, Southwest Sumba Regency, East Nusa Tenggara Province.

Research Sample

The research sample consists of teachers at the selected school who have implemented the Independent Curriculum. The total number of research participants is five teachers.

Data Collection Techniques

The data collection techniques used in this study include:

1. **Interviews** – Conducted with teachers to understand their role in implementing the Independent Curriculum.
2. **Observations** – Conducted to understand how teachers implement the Independent Curriculum in the learning process.
3. **Documentation** – Conducted to understand how the elementary school applies the Independent Curriculum in learning activities.

4. Data Analysis

The data analysis in this study uses qualitative analysis, which focuses on the meaning and interpretation of data. The collected data is analyzed using thematic analysis, a technique that identifies emerging themes within the data.

5. Research Findings

This study shows that the role of teachers in implementing the Independent Curriculum in elementary schools is crucial. Teachers who have implemented the Independent Curriculum act as learning facilitators, helping students develop their competencies through project-based learning activities and authentic learning experiences.

Table 1: Characteristics of Teachers Implementing the Independent Curriculum

Characteristics	Number of Teachers	Percentage
Enhancing students' critical thinking and communication skills	4	80%
Helping students develop competencies through project-based learning	3	60%
Supporting students in developing competencies through authentic learning experiences	2	40%

Table 2: Challenges Faced by Teachers in Implementing the Independent Curriculum

Challenges	Number of Teachers	Percentage
Limited resources and teacher capabilities	3	60%
Lack of support from schools and parents	2	40%

Table 3: Strategies Used by Teachers to Overcome Challenges in Implementing the Independent Curriculum

Strategies	Number of Teachers	Percentage
Utilizing technology to enhance students' skills	2	40%
Developing teacher competencies through training and mentoring	2	40%

Strategies	Number of Teachers	Percentage
Making use of available resources to improve students' skills	1	20%

CONCLUSION

Based on the research findings, it can be concluded that the role of teachers in implementing the Independent Curriculum in elementary schools is highly significant. Teachers act as facilitators of learning, assisting students in developing their competencies through project-based learning and authentic learning experiences.

However, teachers still face several challenges in implementing the Independent Curriculum, such as limited resources and teacher capabilities, as well as a lack of support from schools and parents. Efforts to address these challenges include leveraging technology, enhancing teacher training, and utilizing available resources to support student development.

DISCUSSION

The results of this study indicate that the role of teachers in implementing the Independent Curriculum in elementary schools is highly significant. Teachers who have implemented the Independent Curriculum serve as learning facilitators, assisting students in developing their competencies through project-based learning activities and authentic learning experiences (Hmelo-Silver, 2004).

The findings show that 80% of teachers implementing the Independent Curriculum in elementary schools have the ability to enhance students' critical thinking and communication skills. This suggests that teachers who apply the Independent Curriculum can foster broader and deeper student competencies (Blumenfeld et al., 1991).

However, this study also reveals that teachers still face several challenges in implementing the Independent Curriculum, such as limited resources and teacher capabilities, as well as a lack of support from schools and parents (Ministry of Education, Research, and Technology, 2022).

To overcome these challenges, teachers can adopt strategies such as utilizing technology to enhance student skills, developing teacher competencies through training and mentoring, and maximizing available resources to support student learning (Vygotsky, 1978).

CONCLUSION

The findings of this study highlight the critical role of teachers in implementing the Independent Curriculum in elementary schools. Teachers act as learning facilitators, helping students develop their competencies through project-based learning and authentic learning experiences. However, efforts are needed to enhance teacher capabilities and provide sufficient resources to support the successful implementation of the Independent Curriculum.

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