

## READINESS OF ELEMENTARY SCHOOL TEACHERS IN IMPLEMENTING THE INDEPENDENCE CURRICULUM

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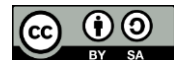
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**Abstract**— *This study aims to describe (1) teachers' understanding of independent curriculum policies, (2) teachers' readiness in formulating learning objectives of the Pancasila profile, (3) teachers' readiness in implementing 21st century learning, and (4) teachers' readiness in identifying students' potentials. The research design uses surveys and needs analysis. The study population consisted of 40 elementary school teachers in cluster 4 of Nglegok District, covering 5 institutions. The sample is determined using a random technique. Data collection techniques used questionnaires and interviews with teachers and principals. The results showed that the teachers understood (1) the essence of the independent curriculum policy, (2) how to formulate learning objectives for Pancasila student profiles, (3) how to implement 21st century learning, (4) the concept of identifying various kinds of student potential. The recommendations from the results of this study are: teachers need reinforcement in understanding learning outcomes in the independent curriculum, how to develop learning paths and objectives, steps for preparing school operational curricula, and implementing projects to strengthen Pancasila student profiles.*

**Keywords**— *Elementary School Teacher Readiness, Implementation of the Independent Curriculum.*

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## I. INTRODUCTION

Curriculum is the main part of education. Directions and goals as well as tools in learning are controlled by the curriculum. The curriculum as an educational design has a strategic position in all aspects of educational activities [1]. Government policy through an independent curriculum is expected to be a solution for learning recovery due to the co-19 pandemic. The limited emotional bond between teachers and students due to online learning has an impact on the meaninglessness of learning in the classroom, as well as a decrease in the good attitude and character of students. This phenomenon is better known as learning loss, which is a condition where student learning outcomes decline as a result of disparities in access and quality of learning, especially in distance learning during the pandemic.

Education policy refers to national objective standards, but its implementation still depends on the competence and learning styles of students, problems encountered in learning, availability of facilities and infrastructure, local wisdom, vision, mission and school goals, as well as other relevant factors. Education aims to provide opportunities for teachers to develop learning according to the characteristics of each student and school [2]. The curriculum is designed so that teachers are able to build the condition of students, have awareness independently in managing their learning based on the learning style that suits them. The government's independent curriculum program has provided an answer to this. The Merdeka Curriculum instructs the implementation of differentiated learning based on student characteristics.

The independent curriculum initiated by the Minister of Education and Culture Nadiem Anwar Makarim formulated several new policies. Conceptually, this independent curriculum provides freedom for institutions and students in carrying out their learning process [3]. The advantages of the Independent Curriculum, as explained by the Ministry of Education and Culture, focus on essential material and develop students' competencies in their phases so that students can learn more deeply, meaningfully and pleasantly, and comfortably [4]. Teachers play a very important role in implementing the independent learning policy. Teachers can contribute collaboratively and effectively work with school curriculum development to organize and structure materials, textbooks, student activity sheets, and other learning content.

As educators, teachers understand the psychology of students, know about learning methods and strategies. The teacher also acts as an evaluator for assessing student learning outcomes. In curriculum development, teachers need to have the ability to plan, design, manage, evaluate, research, make decisions and as administrators. The teacher as the center of education

needs to manage learning activities properly so that the implementation of the independent curriculum is in accordance with what is aspired to. How important is the involvement of teachers in curriculum development in education. The term developers (curriculum developers, who have the authority to design the curriculum) even appears.

A teacher prepares everything that will be done as well as possible. According to [5], states that readiness is a guarantee of results in the implementation of curriculum planning including learning that will be carried out in class. Meanwhile, according to [6], in order to achieve success in implementing good teaching and learning activities, teachers need to prepare systematic learning designs from the curriculum used in schools. An indication of the low quality of learning in the classroom is influenced by the readiness of a teacher who is not good enough. Therefore, it is necessary for the teacher's efforts to prepare lesson plans properly so that the quality of learning as a basic principle in education is good.

The role of the teacher in developing an independent learning curriculum is (1) formulating specific learning objectives according to the curriculum objectives and the characteristics of the subjects and students and class conditions; (2) designing learning processes that can effectively help students achieve learning objectives or predetermined competencies; (3) carrying out the learning process as curriculum implementation; (4) carry out evaluation of learning processes and outcomes; (5) as well as carrying out evaluations of the interactions of the curriculum components that have been implemented [7]. How the presence of teachers is very decisive in bringing the success of government programs, as well as the success of learning for each student.

Research conducted by [8], entitled Analysis of Elementary School Teacher Readiness in the Implementation of the Independent Curriculum, with a population of public elementary school teachers in Cirebon City of 768 people from 128 elementary schools. The results show that public elementary school teachers in Cirebon City are ready to implement the independent curriculum in learning, as evidenced by their competence in understanding: (1) the essence of the Independent Curriculum policy, (2) the concept of formulating learning objectives for Pancasila student profiles, (3) how to implement 21st century learning, (4) how to identify various kinds of potential in students.

The next research was conducted by [9], entitled Analysis of Teacher Readiness in Implementing Independent Curriculum Learning at Elementary School 47 Penanjung, Sekadau Regency, with 15 respondents. The results of data analysis show that educators are ready to carry out learning with an independent curriculum. This is evidenced by the acquisition of data

as much as 86.7% of teachers already understand the structure of the independent curriculum, and as many as 80% of teachers understand how to use the Merdeka Teaching Platform (PMM).

Based on the results of the research above, that the readiness of teachers in implementing the independent curriculum in learning is quite good. This is evidenced by the high percentage of achievements presented. The new curriculum program in the current digitalization era, namely the independent curriculum launched by the government, was welcomed by education practitioners and the wider community. It is hoped that the teacher's readiness in implementing the independent curriculum in public elementary school cluster 4, Nglegok District, Blitar Regency will succeed as desired, so that the competence of students can develop and be valued. Likewise, the enthusiasm of the teachers in accompanying students will certainly increase.

Based on the explanation above, it is interesting to carry out in-depth research on the readiness analysis of public elementary school teachers, especially in cluster 4, Nglegok District. This research is important because teachers must know their readiness before implementing the curriculum so that teachers do not experience difficulties. In addition, in order to be able to find out how prepared the teacher is in implementing the independent curriculum in reducing learning loss that occurs in students.

## **II. METHOD**

The design of this study uses survey methods and needs analysis. The research objective is the readiness of state elementary school teachers in cluster 4 of Nglegok District in implementing the Independent Curriculum. The study population was public elementary school teachers in cluster 4 of Modangan Village which included SD Negeri Modangan 01, SD Negeri Modangan 02, SD Negeri Modangan 03, SD Negeri Modangan 04, and SD Negeri Modangan 05 with a total of 40 principals and teachers. The sample was determined using a random technique (random). Data collection techniques used questionnaires and interviews given to school principals and teachers. Indicators of teacher readiness consist of: (1) teachers' understanding of the independent curriculum policy; (2) the teacher's understanding in formulating learning objectives for Pancasila student profiles; (3) the teacher's understanding of implementing 21st century learning; (4) the readiness of the teacher to identify the potential of students. Data analysis was carried out qualitatively (reading previous research, interviews) and quantitatively (percentage). The data that was successfully collected was analyzed by the following steps: (1) reviewing all data obtained from data sources, (2) categorizing and

classifying data according to the research problem, (3) data reduction and codification for further abstraction and meaning, and (4) draw conclusions from the analysis results. (Sunuyeko et al., 2016). The data obtained is then processed using the score formula obtained, namely the maximum score multiplied by one hundred. The average score of 75% to 100% is in the good category, 60% to 75% is sufficient, and 0% to 60% is low.

### III. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The level of understanding of elementary school teachers in cluster 4 of the Nglegok District about the independent curriculum policy.

The results of interviews with school principals in cluster 4 provide information that related to the independent curriculum, various rules regarding this new curriculum have been conveyed to all teachers in schools according to the rules set by the central government. Each school is given options in implementing the curriculum according to the learning needs of students. Each school is allowed to choose one of three types of curriculum, namely: (1) 2013 curriculum; (2) emergency curriculum (ie simplified curriculum by the Ministry of Education and Culture); or (3) independent curriculum. Schools that wish to implement an independent curriculum must independently study the material prepared by the Ministry of Education and Culture. If after studying the material the school feels ready, then you will be asked to fill out a registration form and a short survey that has been prepared by the Ministry of Education and Culture. The results of this survey will be used to map the level of school readiness in implementing the independent curriculum. Furthermore, based on the results of filling out the questionnaire by elementary school teachers in Cluster 4, information was obtained that 41% of teachers had a good understanding of the independent curriculum policy. 20% of teachers have low understanding, while 39% fall into the sufficient category. The teachers stated that they were aware of the independent curriculum policy, either through official official information or social media, but they stated that they were still confused about how to implement the curriculum in everyday learning.

The readiness of schools to implement the curriculum is not limited to cognitive ability, for example understanding the content of the curriculum and how to apply it. According to Anggraena, et al, that the compatibility between the curriculum philosophy and the teacher's paradigm regarding their role as educators and the learning principles they hold are factors that determine teacher readiness to implement the curriculum. In addition, the teacher's

commitment to implementing the curriculum is also a driving factor for effective curriculum implementation. This is shown in various studies conducted in many countries such as the OECD report and research from Cheung & Wong in 2012, that intrinsic motivation.

The level of readiness of state elementary school teachers in cluster 4 of the Nglegok District in formulating learning objectives for the Pancasila profile

The Merdeka Curriculum accommodates various intra-curricular learning to strengthen the competence of students with sufficient time. Teachers are more flexible in choosing teaching tools according to the needs and interests of their students. The school principals explained that in the Merdeka Curriculum there is a project to strengthen the achievement of the Pancasila student profile, developed based on a particular theme chosen from various themes that have been set by the government. The project to strengthen the Pancasila student profile is not tied to subject content. The results showed that only 7% of teachers were not prepared to formulate learning objectives for Pancasila student profiles. 60% of teachers have good readiness, while the remaining 33% have sufficient readiness. This is understandable because indeed the teachers so far have been optimally formed to create student profiles with character in accordance with the mandate of national education goals.

The profile of Pancasila students in the independent curriculum is designed to answer one big question, namely to produce (competent) attitudes that meet national needs through the Indonesian education system. The Pancasila student profile has a competency formulation that complements the focus on achieving Graduate Competency Standards at every level of the education unit in terms of instilling character that is in accordance with Pancasila values. Through this Pancasila student profile, the institution is able to translate the goals and vision of education into concrete manifestations in everyday life. These characters and abilities are built in the daily life of students and are brought to life in students through the school culture which includes the school climate, policies, patterns of interaction and communication, and the norms that apply in schools.

The level of readiness of teachers in cluster 4 of Nglegok District in the implementation of 21st century learning.

The information obtained from the interviews is that 21st century learning is designed to prepare young people who are able to adapt to current technological developments. Learners must master 4 learning skills (4C), namely: (1) creativity and innovation; (2) critical thinking

and problem solving; (3) communications; and (4) collaboration. A teacher must have the following characteristics: (1) a lifelong learner; (2) applying a differentiation approach in learning; (3) creative and innovative; (4) do self-reflection; (5) collaborate in learning; (6) utilizing technology in learning; and (7) implementing learner-centered learning. Based on the teacher's questionnaire about the readiness to apply 21st century skills in learning, it was found that 7% of teachers felt they were not ready, 55% were ready.

21st century learning can be marked by a change in the paradigm from teaching (root learning) to learning (deep learning). 21st century learning is designed by integrating various learning skills and visions into the learning process described in the Framework for 21st Century Learning which describes the knowledge, skills, and expertise that are beneficial to the lives of students. According to Rosidah, et al, that the application of each of these 21st century skills requires developing knowledge and understanding of academic subjects, with the hope that students are able to think critically, communicate effectively, solve problems, and also collaborate with others to build cooperation.

#### Readiness of teachers in cluster 4 in identifying students' self-potential

Teachers are able to understand the characteristics of students as a characteristic of learning so that teachers are able to optimize the development of the potential of their students, can foster positive behavior in students. The goal is to increase motivation, enthusiasm and effective ways of learning students. The results showed that 80% of teachers were good at identifying the potential of their students, being able to assess students' self-potential before designing semester lessons, and understanding the importance of: (1) designing a learning environment that fits students' learning needs; (2) provide opportunities for students to act independently and in groups; (3) implementing differentiated learning to facilitate students' self-potential; (4) open space for discussion and opinion for students; (5) giving options to students to demonstrate their understanding of the concept according to their interests; (6) provide opportunities for students to appear as a leader alternately; and (7) always give appreciation for the good things students do.

The good practices that have been implemented by state elementary school teachers in cluster 4 of the Nglegok District to identify students' self-potential include: (1) creating a learning environment according to the needs of students, especially the learning class; (2) designing active student learning to ask questions, teamwork, and communication between

students, through worksheets; (3) implementing a reward and punishment system that builds enthusiasm for learning.

#### IV. CONCLUSION

Based on the results and discussion above, it can be concluded that the principals and teachers of state elementary schools in cluster 4, Nglegok District, Blitar Regency are ready to implement the independent curriculum in classroom learning. There are several recommendations from the results of this study, namely teachers need reinforcement related to: (1) understanding the learning outcomes that have been set in the independent curriculum; (2) how to set learning objectives; (3) how to arrange the flow of learning objectives; (4) understand the steps for preparing the school's operational curriculum; and (5) implementing a project to strengthen the profile of Pancasila students. This recommendation can be carried out through workshops/training activities for teachers in one sub-district, assistance by supervisors or peer tutors, or through the activities of the School Group Teacher Working Group (KKG).

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