Implementation of Independent Curriculum and Relevance to Teaching and Learning Process

Taufiq Ramadhani[1]*, Yuniarto Mudjisusatyo[2], Wanapri Pangaribuan[3], Isli Iriani Indah Pane[4]
Educational Administration Postgraduate Program, Medan State University
e-mail: Taufiqrd01@gmail.com

Abstrak

Salah satu bentuk manajemen pendidikan adalah penerapan kurikulum di sekolah. Terutama bagi sekolah-sekolah yang masih banyak membutuhkan bantuan dan berada di daerah tertinggal. Tanpa persiapan yang matang, hasil pendidikan yang maksimal tidak akan tercapai, melainkan hanya hasil percobaan, dan pelaksana pendidikan justru direpotkan dengan tuntutan penyesuaian yang terus menerus. Tujuan penelitian ini adalah untuk mengevaluasi penerapan Kurikulum Merdeka dan pengaruhnya terhadap proses belajar mengajar. Metode yang digunakan dalam penelitian ini adalah metode kualitatif dengan analisis evaluasi kebijakan Willian Dunn. Hasil penelitian ini adalah implementasi kurikulum yang relevan masih jauh dari harapan, sekolah terkesan masih belum siap menerapkan kurikulum dan masih berpegang pada ketentuan kurikulum lama. Hal ini terlihat dari evaluasi kebijakan yang terdiri dari efektivitas, efisiensi, kecukupan dan pemerataan masih memiliki berbagai kelemahan.

Kata Kunci: *Kurikulum Mandiri, Proses Belajar Mengajar, SMK Telkom Medan.*

Abstract

One form of education management is curriculum implementation in schools. Especially for schools that still need a lot of help and are in underdeveloped areas. Without proper preparation, maximum educational results are not achieved, but only experimental results, and educational implementers are actually bothered by demands for continuous adjustments. The purpose of this study was to evaluate the implementation of the Merdeka curriculum and its influence on the teaching and learning process. The method used in this study is a qualitative method with Willian Dunn's policy evaluation analysis. The results of this study are that the implementation of the relevant curriculum is still far from expectations, schools still seem not ready to implement the curriculum and are still based on the provisions of the old curriculum. This can be seen from the evaluation of policies consisting of effectiveness, efficiency, adequacy and equity which still have various weaknesses.

Keywords: *Independent Curriculum, Teaching and Learning Process, SMK Telkom Medan.*

INTRODUCTION

Education management is a good benchmark in the world of education, good quality of education, is very dependent on the management of many problems that occur in the world of education because the goals and policies taken by managers in education are not accurate. To be able to solve various problems,

it is necessary to conduct research in that direction so that education has good quality and is significant for the lives of Indonesian people. One form of education management is the implementation of the curriculum in schools. The education curriculum in Indonesia experiences frequent changes in terms of implementation in educational units. The curricula that have been implemented in Indonesia include the 2006 education unit level curriculum (KTSP), the 2013 curriculum (KURTILAS) and what is currently still running is the Merdeka curriculum (Merdeka Learning) (Triatno, Fauziati, 2022). The goal of implementing the curriculum in educational units is a reference for the realm of running education at the education unit level (Restiana, Sri, 2022). However, not all implementation of this curriculum runs smoothly, because there are still many differentiating variations to achieve even distribution of results obtained by students. Changing the curriculum or implementing the new curriculum in the delivery of education is a necessity when the previous curriculum is no longer relevant or when there is an urgent need to accelerate education recovery. However, curriculum changes that are not mature, hasty, and change too quickly will be very burdensome to the educational unit as the implementer. Especially for schools that still need a lot of help and are in underdeveloped areas. Without proper preparation, maximum educational results are not achieved, but only experimental results, and educational implementers are actually bothered by demands for continuous adjustments. This is because the one curriculum has not been implemented properly, it has been replaced with a new curriculum.

Conditions are also different when looking at the case of the implementation of the independent curriculum in Vocational High Schools. Vocational High Schools (SMK) are vocational education programs that produce skilled workers who are ready to work in certain fields in the business/industrial world (DUDI) and work independently with the provision of attitudes, skills and knowledge to become productive human beings. For this reason, the pattern of learning in schools is the habituation of work patterns and culture in the industry, so that students have real experience of the real work culture if they will enter the world of work someday. The curriculum applied in SMK must be adapted to the conditions, characteristics, wealth, and developments of the business/industrial world and society.

Differentiating variations can come from various student cultures which still influence student learning, language, and student economic levels. This variation affects student learning outcomes, so that the way of learning and the results obtained by students on subjects that have followed the curriculum are not evenly obtained by students (Al Salamah, 2021). For this reason, teachers in the independent curriculum are still required to be able to innovate to create and practice effective learning methods during face-to-face learning at school (Manik, Hanter, 2022). Efforts to implement or implement an independent curriculum for teachers can innovate with student learning methods and can be applied to all subjects, hoping that the implementation of an independent curriculum in student learning methods for all subjects can produce students according to expectations (Syafuri, 2022).

The basis for implementing the Independent Curriculum is based on Permendikbud number 3 of 2020 concerning National Higher Education

Standards. Curriculum is a set of plans and arrangements regarding objectives, content, and learning materials as well as the methods used as guidelines for organizing learning activities to achieve Higher Education goals. Described in Article 11 of the Minister of Education and Culture (1) The characteristics of the learning process as referred to in Article 10 paragraph (2) letter a consist of interactive, holistic, integrative, scientific, contextual, thematic, effective, collaborative, and student-centered characteristics. In implementing the MBKM curriculum, mature collaboration is needed so that curriculum implementation can run well. For this reason, it is interesting to see how the implementation of the independent curriculum and its relevance to the teaching and learning process at SMK Telkom Medan. The purpose of this study was to evaluate the implementation of the Merdeka curriculum and its influence on the teaching and learning process.

Independent Learning Curriculum as an effort to provide freedom and flexibility to students in determining their learning path. This involves changing the educational paradigm, where students are considered as active learning subjects, while teachers act as facilitators and mentors (Inayati, 2022). Free Learning Curriculum as an educational approach that is inclusive, responsive, and oriented towards lifelong learning. It focuses on developing individual student potential and interests, giving them freedom in choosing subjects, extracurricular activities, and learning methods (Almudin, 2023). (Sermsuk et al., 2014) stated that the Free Learning Curriculum seeks to give students freedom to explore their interests, develop creativity, and acquire skills that are relevant to the needs of the world of work.

The Independent Learning Curriculum has factors for success, where these factors are as follows:

- Understanding and commitment of related parties, where the success of the Free Learning Curriculum requires a strong understanding and commitment from all related parties, including the government, educational institutions, teachers, students, parents, and the community. All parties must understand the goals and values of this curriculum and be committed to implementing it consistently.
- Teacher Training and Development, where the teacher plays a central role in the implementation of the Free Learning Curriculum. Therefore, adequate training and professional development for teachers is essential. Teachers need to gain a deep understanding of the concepts, methods and learning approaches that are relevant to the Free Learning Curriculum in order to implement them effectively in the classroom.
- Adequate support and resources, where the Free Learning Curriculum requires adequate support and resources, both in terms of infrastructure, learning tools, technology, teaching materials, as well as other supporting facilities and infrastructure. Availability of and access to these resources will support effective implementation and enhance student learning experiences.
- Collaboration and active participation of students, where the success of the Independent Learning Curriculum depends on the active participation of students in the learning process. Students need to be empowered to take

initiative in determining their learning path, exploring their interests and talents, and collaborating with teachers and classmates. Good collaboration and active student participation will increase their motivation and involvement in learning.

(Dunn, 2003) explained that the teaching-learning process refers to the interactions that occur between teachers and students in an effort to transfer knowledge, skills, and values from teachers to students. This process involves a series of activities and strategies designed to create an effective learning environment. (Al Salamah, 2021) states that learning is a process in which students acquire new knowledge, skills, and understanding through experience, reflection, and interaction with learning material. Learning can occur in various ways , such as reading, listening, discussing, practicing, or experiencing directly. (Inayati, 2022) states that teaching is a process in which the teacher organizes and delivers learning material to students with the aim that students gain the desired understanding and skills. Teachers use various strategies, methods, and learning media to convey information effectively to students.

(Manik, Hanter, 2022) states that the factors that influence the success of the teaching and learning process in schools are:

- Teacher Quality, where competence, knowledge, experience, and teaching skills of teachers greatly affect the success of the teaching and learning process. Qualified teachers can convey material clearly, use effective methods, motivate students, and provide constructive feedback.
- Learning Environment, where the physical and psychological environment in the classroom plays an important role in the success of the teaching-learning process. An environment that is comfortable, safe, organized and supported by adequate learning resources will create conditions that are conducive for students to learn.
- Curriculum and Learning Materials, where a curriculum that is relevant, comprehensive, and in accordance with student needs will influence student motivation and interest in learning. Learning materials that are interesting, relevant, and related to students' daily lives will increase their engagement and understanding.
- Educational Technology, where the use of appropriate educational technology can increase the success of the teaching and learning process. Technology can facilitate access to information, increase interactivity, and support different learning styles. However, the use of technology must be supported by adequate infrastructure and training for teachers and students.
- Student Motivation and Involvement, where Student motivation and involvement have a significant influence on the success of the teaching-learning process. Motivated students have high interest, determination to learn, and actively participate in learning activities. Encouraging intrinsic motivation and providing appropriate challenges can increase learning success.

Parental and Community Support, where the role of parents and support from the community is also important in the success of the teaching and learning process. Parents who are actively involved in their child's education, provide support, and work closely with the school will provide a positive environment for learning. Community support can also involve collaboration with institutions, organizations or individuals outside of the school to provide a richer learning experience.

METHOD

This research was conducted at SMK Telkom Medan. The method used in this study is a qualitative method, namely research that aims to understand a phenomenon experienced by research subjects based on findings, events, processes and results related to how the curriculum development model, how the learning process, what are the challenges and obstacles in implementation of an industry-based curriculum, through several stages of research, namely the pre-field, field, data processing and analysis as well as reporting and evaluation stages (Retnowati, 2018) .

First, the pre-field stage is a pre-survey activity to the research location, which is motivated by the knowledge the researcher has obtained through library research. The two stages of the field were activities to collect and collect data through in-depth and intensive interview techniques with informants, observation of the situation and condition of the school, study of documentation and field notes to interpret the actual conditions. Third, the stages of data processing and analysis by coding, classifying and reducing data based on themes and conducting data validity tests together with theoretical analysis using policy evaluation theory (Dunn, 2003) which states that the indicators for analyzing policies are effectiveness, efficiency, adequacy and even distribution. Fourth, the reporting and evaluation stages are in the form of discussion of research results and consultation with supervisors on data analysis that has been carried out (Moloeng, 2016) .

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Implementation of the Independent Curriculum at SMK Telkom Medan

Curriculum is a study plan therefore concepts about individual learning and development can color curriculum forms, so that curriculum development must pay attention to several aspects. Curriculum development must be adapted to the needs of the type of work in the industry. This is confirmed by (Sermsuk et al., 2014), The curriculum is a set of plans regarding the content, objectives, and educational programs provided by educational providers whose contents are about the design of lessons to be provided by educators to students in a period of education that is tailored to the circumstances and abilities of each level of education and employment needs.

The independent curriculum is carried out independently with three alternative choices (Almudin, 2023). First, the Independent Learning option which gives freedom to educational units in implementing several parts and principles of the Independent Curriculum without changing the education unit curriculum that is being implemented in Early Childhood Education (PAUD) units, grades 1, 4, 7, and 10. Second, the choice Mandiri Changing which gives flexibility to educational units

when implementing the Independent Curriculum by using teaching tools that have been provided in PAUD education units, grades 1, 4, 7 and 10. Third, the Mandiri Sharing option which gives freedom to educational units in implementing the Independent Curriculum by develop their own teaching tools for PAUD education units, grades 1, 4, 7 and 10. Schools can implement one of the three Independent Curriculum options according to their respective readiness. The implementation of the Independent Curriculum in schools cannot be separated from various challenges. One of them is the readiness of the mindset of educators. The Director General of Vocational Education at the Ministry of Education and Culture, Wikan Sakarinto, explained that the curriculum implemented by Indonesia in the 1970s until now has adopted the German system. While the country has changed rapidly, Indonesia still follows the same pattern. This is a challenge for educators. In the Independent Curriculum, there is a change in the function of educators who originally taught with a uniform approach or one size fits all (one size fits all), to become someone who is able to create students as lifelong independent learners. In this case, the teacher must become a mentor, facilitator, or coach in active project-based learning activities. To change the mindset of teaching staff, the Ministry of Education and Culture conducts project-based training and pedagogic competencies for teachers and lecturers (Restiana, Sri, 2022) .

The entire process and procedure for the curriculum development model at Telkom Medan Vocational School uses a problem-centered curriculum development model (*Problem Centered Curriculum Design*). This is based on the low absorption rate of SMK graduates, which results in high unemployment rates of SMK graduates. This condition is a serious concern of curriculum development, of course the development model is adapted to the school's vision, mission and goals and is able to integrate several scientific disciplines to form a single concept of attitude, knowledge and skills. Students are invited to integrate knowledge in solving problems and students are also trained for specific types of work according to industry demands, students are also trained to be able to adapt well to industry demands and be able to duplicate work steps in industry to school.

There are several evaluations of the Implementation of the Independent Curriculum at SMK Telkom Medan, they are:

Effectiveness

Effectiveness comes from the word effective which implies the achievement of success in achieving the goals that have been set. This condition shows that the school is too focused on knowledge (*Focus on knowledge*). So far, schools have only focused on learning knowledge, so the learning process has focused more on theory. In other areas it is not optimal in its application. Related to this, the learning process is designed differently to suit the demands and needs in order to realize the ideals of the school. Learning design by means of specialization will easily develop and mold students according to industry needs, such as forming positive characters, equipping them with knowledge and skills.

Efficiency

Efficiency (efficiency) with regard to the amount of effort required to produce a certain level of effectiveness. This condition can be seen from the reluctance of schools to change school principles/ mental blocks (*Reluctant to*

change specially for school principles), as a psychological barrier that prevents them from achieving what they want or need. The mental block in question is a reluctance to change school principles according to demands and needs (safe-looking mentality). As well as assuming that the world of school is different from the world of work. Then also the legal basis that is not yet binding on the implementation of the Merdeka curriculum. Challenges and obstacles as above can be overcome through continuous socialization of the vision and mission and goals of the school to all elements of the school and stakeholders involved. So that every element of the school will internalize the vision, mission, goals and values adopted by the school and slowly eliminate mental blocks.

Adequacy

Adequacy relates to how far a level of effectiveness satisfies the needs, values, or opportunities that give rise to problems. Adequacy is concerned with how far a level of effectiveness satisfies needs, values, or opportunities that create problems. This condition can be seen from the school's target only on the graduation of students, not on the distribution/absorption of work in the industry (*the school's target focuses on the student graduation, not the working distribution in industry*). Schools only focus on graduation, not accompanied by the absorption of graduates into industry. The lack of understanding of vocational education results in a lack of creative processes and curriculum development innovation coupled with a mental block of leaders. Then the pattern of educational autonomy that is not fully appropriate, makes graduation often used as a tool to increase self-image and institutions, so that it forgets that the benchmark for the success of vocational education is the distribution/absorption of graduates to companies. This means that SMK prepares graduates who are adaptable to the world of work, continuing, and entrepreneurship

Equity

Equality in public policy can be said to have a meaning with justice given and obtained by public policy targets. The criterion of equity (*equity*) is closely related to legal and social rationality and refers to the distribution of effects and effort between different groups in society. Equalization-oriented policies are policies whose results or efforts are fairly distributed. This can be seen from the poor networking with industry (*Poor networking with industry*). The lack of communication networks with industry can be built by making cooperation offers for teacher/student internships, guest teachers and so on. Collaboration with the world of work is very much needed considering that increasing the competence of graduates requires industry. Companies are users of vocational education graduates, so that in the process of improving the abilities of students, they must be aligned with the needs and demands of the company. Effective and efficient communication will make it easier to interact with the industry through the link and match program, so that it can be directed towards a competent graduate recruitment pattern.

Based on the results of the study, it can be concluded that the implementation of the Independent Study Curriculum at Telkom Medan Vocational School gives freedom to educational units in implementing several parts and principles of the Independent Curriculum without changing the education unit

curriculum that is being implemented in Early Childhood Education units up to Vocational Schools, where this is in accordance with research. (Manik, Hanter, 2022) , where according to this research the Free Learning Curriculum contains several things to be successful, which are related to the learning model, the commitment of the Principal to the development of the Free Learning Curriculum, and the school's commitment to conducting teacher training and development, so that teachers are able to apply learning in accordance with the Independent Learning Curriculum.

CONCLUSION

The use of new terms in the Independent Curriculum actually summarizes what was in the previous curriculum but with different terms. The challenge is when teachers develop their own learning objectives. Teachers are given independence, but in terms of ability there are still many teachers who are not ready. The reality is that there are still many teachers who have not been able to develop a good lesson plan. Therefore, reinforcement for school principals, teachers and school supervisors is important. Regarding the implementation of the independent curriculum at Telkom Medan Vocational School, there is still a lot that needs to be fixed, this can be seen from the mapping of Dunn's policy evaluation regarding effectiveness, efficiency, adequacy and equity, there are still urgent problems. It seems that schools are not ready for the Merdeka curriculum model and are still stuck with the old curriculum model which has an impact on the teaching and learning process and the level of ability of graduates in terms of absorption in the world of business and industry.

REFERENCES

Al Salamah, M. (2021). Cognitive Individual Differences of Grade VII Students in Learning Arabic at MTS Mahdaliyah, Jambi City. *AD-Dhuha: Journal of Arabic Language Education and Islamic Culture*, *2* (2), 12–21.

Almudin, J. (2023). Implementation of the Independent Curriculum in Elementary Schools. *Contextual Scientific Journal*, *4* (2), 67–75.

Dunn, WN (2003). *Public Policy Analysis*. Gadjah Mada.

Inayati, U. (2022). Concept and Implementation of Independent Curriculum in 21st Century Learning in SD/MI. *ICIE: Journal International Conference on Islamic Education*, *2*, 293–304.

Manik, Hanter, et al. (2022). The Challenge of Becoming a Mathematics Teacher with an Independent Learning Curriculum during the Omicron Covid-19 Pandemic. *Edumaspul: Journal of Education*, *6* (1), 328–332. https://doi.org/10.33487/edumaspul.v6i1.3048

Moloeng, LJ (2016). *Qualitative Research Methods*. Youth Rosda Karya.

Restiana, Sri, et al. (2022). National Education Process Standards: Implementation and Analysis of Mathematics Teacher Components at SD Muhammadiyah 027 Batupembe. *Masaliq: Journal of Education and Science*, *2* (4), 489–504.

Retnowati, R. & RI (2018). *Social Research Methodology*. Sky Arbitrators.

Sermsuk, S., Chianchana, C., & Stirayakorn, P. (2014). A Study of Model of Vocational Curriculum Development Under Vocational Education Commission Using Cross-impact Analysis. *Journal Procedia-Social and Behavioral Sciences*, *116*, 1896–1901.

https://doi.org/10.1016/j.sbspro.2014.01.491

Triatno, Fauziati, E. and M. (2022). Implementation of Free Learning Curriculum in the Perspective of Progressive Philosophy John Dewey. *Lantern: Educational Scientific Journal, 17* (2), 17–23.