

**IMPLEMENTATION OF THE INDEPENDENT CURRICULUM IN
INCREASING LEARNING EFFECTIVENESS AT MI
AL MUTA'ALIMIN SUKAGUMIWANG**

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Abstract

This study aims to examine the implementation of the Independent Curriculum at MI Al-Muta'alimin Sukagumiwang and its influence on learning effectiveness. The Independent Curriculum emphasizes student-centered learning, differentiated learning, and projects to strengthen the Pancasila Student Profile (P5), thereby encouraging character development, creativity, and critical thinking skills. This study uses a qualitative approach with a case study design, with informants consisting of madrasah heads, teachers, students, and education personnel selected through purposive sampling. Data is collected through interviews, observations, and documentation, then analyzed through data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion drawn. The results of the study show that the implementation of the Independent Curriculum is carried out in stages through the preparation of teaching modules and Learning Objectives Flow (ATP), project-based learning, as well as formative assessments and descriptive reporting. This approach improves student engagement, learning motivation, quality of teacher-student interaction, understanding of essential materials, and strengthening character and social skills. Factors that affect the effectiveness of the curriculum include teacher readiness, facilities, school leadership, school culture, parental and community support, government policies, quality of teaching materials, learning approaches, and student readiness. To optimize the implementation of the Independent Curriculum, it is necessary to increase the capacity of teachers and school management, effective socialization, development of learning resources, and continuous monitoring and evaluation.

Keywords: Independent Curriculum, Learning Effectiveness, Project-Based Learning, Formative Assessment, MI Al Muta'alimin Sukagumiwang



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INTRODUCTION

Education is a universal effort that involves human beings in their efforts to improve their dignity, namely empowering themselves. Although common in every human life, differences in the philosophies and values embraced by different nations, societies, and individuals cause variations in the implementation of educational activities. Therefore, education is not only universal but also national.¹ Education has an important role in shaping quality and competitive human resources. In the midst of the challenges of the dynamics of the times, the creation of an inspiring and effective learning environment has become a priority. In line with this vision, the Ministry of Education, Culture, Research, and Technology (Kemendikbudristek) has introduced the "Freedom of Learning" policy as a solution to form a learning environment that supports teachers and students. Merdeka Belajar carries the principles of the curriculum that creates a fun learning environment and encourages teacher creativity.² Wahyudin emphasized that the concept of Freedom of Learning provides opportunities for teachers and students to innovate and take an active role in learning.

The replacement of the 2013 Curriculum with the Independent Curriculum aims to strengthen the autonomy of schools in determining a curriculum that is more in line with local needs. This step is part of the government's efforts to improve the quality of education in line with the demands of the 5.0 era, so that schools are more flexible in adjusting the curriculum based on student characteristics and local conditions.³ To face the era of community development 5.0, the Minister of Education and Culture started an independent learning program. By implementing an independent curriculum, schools are expected to produce outputs that are in accordance with the times. This method aims to restore the basis of education, namely free humanism. As subjects in the teaching and learning process, teachers and students are not just sources of knowledge for students; They also have to work together to find what students need. Therefore, it can be said that the role of teachers is very important for the success of students in achieving learning goals that are in accordance with the curriculum.⁴

The Independent Curriculum, explained by Nurhasanah, is a curriculum approach that provides freedom to students in determining the course of learning.⁵ In this curriculum, students have an active role in exploring their interests and talents, as well as choosing appropriate learning

¹ Siti Nur Hidayati et al., *Jurnal Pendidikan Dan Konseling*, 4 (2022).

² Isna Zahrotun and Rahmat Kamal, "Analisis Efektivitas Kurikulum Merdeka Dalam Meningkatkan Berpikir Kritis Pada Peserta Didik," *Jurnal Pendidikan Guru Madrasah Ibtidaiyah* 2, no. 1 (March 2024), <https://doi.org/10.56997/pgmi.v2i1.1278>.

³ Gumgum Gumilar et al., "Urgensi Penggantian Kurikulum 2013 Menjadi Kurikulum Merdeka," *Jurnal Papeda* 5, no. 2 (2023).

⁴ Baharuddin Baharuddin, "Manajemen Strategik Mutu Pendidikan," *Idaarrah: Jurnal Manajemen Pendidikan* 3, no. 1 (July 2019), <https://doi.org/10.24252/idaarah.v3i1.9793>.

⁵ Aan Nurhasanah, Marlina Eliyanti Simbolon, and Rahayu Syafari, "Fasilitasi Pengembangan Perangkat Ajar Menuju Kurikulum Merdeka," *PENDIDIKAN: JURNAL PENGABDIAN MASYARAKAT* 3, no. 3 (2022).

methods and resources. The Merdeka Curriculum gives students the flexibility to set learning goals, choose suitable learning methods, and manage their own time. With this, learners can develop self-regulation skills, take responsibility for the learning process, and strengthen independence in achieving their learning goals.

In this spirit, the Independent Curriculum reaffirms the central role of schools, teachers, and students in managing learning according to individual potential and needs. This idea is in line with the principle of educational independence introduced by Ki Hajar Dewantara, where students are given the freedom to develop their potential with guidance from teachers and parents. The implementation of the Independent Curriculum has a significant impact on student learning by fundamentally changing learning methods. This method encourages independence, strengthens critical thinking skills, and promotes collaborative work. Students actively interact, share ideas, and relate learning to the real world. Through project assignments, they develop practical skills and problem-solving, while formative assessments provide helpful feedback. The curriculum also enhances 21st-century skills, including critical thinking, analytics, creativity, and the ability to collaborate. Students also learn the value of cooperation, respect the opinions of others, and be prepared to face changes in a social and professional environment.⁶

According to the Ministry of Education and Culture, the Independent Curriculum applies a different evaluation approach from the previous curriculum (2013) to measure students' learning abilities.⁷ The evaluation methods used include a formative approach, authentic assessment, portfolio use, and observation by teachers. Formative evaluations are conducted regularly to track student progress and provide in-depth feedback. Authentic assessments lead to the application of knowledge in real-world contexts, while the use of portfolios provides a comprehensive picture of a student's abilities. Teacher observation is also an evaluation tool by directly looking at student interaction and participation. This overall approach ensures students not only master the material, but also develop relevant skills and attitudes to face real-world challenges.⁸

Since the issuance of the Independent Curriculum policy by the Ministry of Education, Culture, Research, and Technology and its implementation guidelines for madrasas, basic education institutions have been required to shift learning practices towards a more flexible, student-centered model, and provide space for teachers to carry out differentiation and contextual learning projects.

⁶ Rika Nur Padilah, Cece Rakhmat, and Febri Fajar Pratama, "Analisis Implementasi Kurikulum Merdeka Terhadap Kemampuan Belajar Siswa Kelas V Di SDN 1 Sukamanah," *Jurnal Pendidikan Tambusai* 7, no. 2 (August 2023), <https://doi.org/10.31004/jptam.v7i2.9288>.

⁷ Kemendikbud Ristek, *Kurikulum Merdeka* (2022).

⁸ Zahrotun and Kamal, "Analisis Efektivitas Kurikulum Merdeka Dalam Meningkatkan Berpikir Kritis Pada Peserta Didik."

The implementation of this policy requires adjustments to the planning, implementation, and assessment of learning at the madrasah/MI level.⁹

The effectiveness of learning within the framework of the Independent Curriculum needs to be measured not only from the achievement of final grades, but also through process indicators such as the achievement of learning objectives, student involvement or engagement during the learning process, the quality of teacher-student interaction, the use of learning media, the implementation of formative assessments, and short-term and long-term learning outcomes. The literature on student engagement confirms that student engagement contributes significantly to teaching effectiveness and learning outcomes. Therefore, research that evaluates the implementation of the Independent Curriculum in MI must include these indicators.¹⁰

The role and professionalism of teachers are the main determining factors for the success of the implementation of the Independent Curriculum. Teachers not only adjust lesson plans/modules and learning strategies, but also operationalize formative assessments to monitor and improve learning on an ongoing basis. Recent studies show that teachers' competence in designing and implementing formative assessments and their ability to facilitate student engagement is positively correlated with increased learning effectiveness. Therefore, the analysis of the role of teachers and the readiness of human resources is an important focus in this study.¹¹

MI Al-Muta'alimin Sukagumiwang is an ibtidaiyah madrasah that in the last three years has begun to strive to implement the principles of the Independent Curriculum in response to the national education policy. However, its implementation has not been carried out optimally. Teachers are still in the adaptation stage to CP-ATP-based learning planning, the use of teaching modules, the implementation of differentiated learning, and the implementation of continuous formative assessments. This condition is influenced by several factors, such as the limited understanding of teachers of the concept of the Independent Curriculum, the uneven level of training, and the readiness of supporting facilities that are still being developed in stages.

Nevertheless, the madrasah continues to make various acceleration efforts, such as participating in technical guidance, learning community assistance, and the preparation of learning tools based on the Independent Curriculum. This effort shows that there is a strong commitment of madrasahs to improve the quality and effectiveness of learning in a sustainable manner.

⁹ Anas et al., "Implementasi Kurikulum Merdeka Madrasah Ibtidaiyah (MI)," *Journal of Creative Student Research (JCSR)* 1, no. 1 (2023).

¹⁰ Meilani Rohinsa and Olga Gelasiana Chandra, "Student Engagement : Seberapa Penting Peran Academic Self Efficacy Di Kurikulum Merdeka?," *Schema: Journal of Psychological Research* 10, no. 01 (May 2025), <https://doi.org/10.29313/schema.v10i01.6912>.

¹¹ Rr Kusuma Dewi Nur M, Fathul Amin, and Ahmad Ainur Rifa'i, "Profesionalisme Guru Dalam Asesmen Formatif Dan Sumatif Pada Penerapan Kurikulum Merdeka," *Tadris : Jurnal Penelitian Dan Pemikiran Pendidikan Islam* 18, no. 1 (August 2024), <https://doi.org/10.51675/jt.v18i1.892>.

Based on interviews with teachers at the elementary level, it is stated that this independent curriculum is a new breakthrough that needs to be carefully observed. As teachers as curriculum implementers, teachers are required to realize this noble mission in the learning process. Because this is a new curriculum, there needs to be maximum training for the implementation of learning recovery in a better direction. In relation to 21st century learning, every school that becomes a driving school must automatically align with the concept of 21st century learning.

This research was conducted with the aim of examining how the implementation of the Independent Curriculum at MI Al-Muta'alimin Sukagumiwang can contribute to increasing learning effectiveness, especially in the aspects of achieving learning goals, student involvement, quality of interaction, media utilization, implementation of formative assessments, and improving student learning outcomes. The results of the study are expected to provide an empirical picture of the real conditions in madrasas as well as strategic recommendations for improving the quality of learning in the future.

RESEARCH METHODS

This research uses a qualitative approach with a case study design, which aims to gain an in-depth understanding of the implementation of the Independent Curriculum in improving the effectiveness of learning at MI Al-Muta'alimin Sukagumiwang. The research informants consisted of madrasah heads, classroom teachers, students, and education staff, who were selected using the purposive sampling technique, which is a selection based on the consideration that the informants are considered to know the conditions and processes of implementing the Independent Curriculum in madrasahs.¹² Research data is collected through three main techniques, namely interviews, observations, and documentation, as described in qualitative research methods according to Sugiyono, which emphasizes the importance of naturalistic and thorough data collection. The data obtained was then analyzed using a qualitative analysis model consisting of data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion drawn, as described by Asep Kurniawan.¹³ The validity of the data is tested through source triangulation and triangulation techniques to ensure the consistency and validity of the information obtained. The selection of this qualitative method is considered the most appropriate to comprehensively describe the conditions of implementation of the Independent Curriculum as well as the factors that affect the effectiveness of learning at MI Al-Muta'alimin Sukagumiwang.

¹² Sugiyono, *Metode Penelitian Kuantitatif, Kualitatif, Dan R&D*, 2nd ed., ed. Apri Nuryanto (Bandung: Alfabeta, 2021).

¹³ Asep Kurniawan, *Metodologi Penelitian Pendidikan*, 1st ed., ed. Nita Nur M (Bandung: PT. Remaja Rosdakarya, 2018).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

A. Implementation of the Independent Curriculum at MI Al-Muta'alimin Sukagumiwang

The Merdeka curriculum or the 2022 curriculum is an improvement from the 2013 curriculum. This curriculum was inaugurated by the Ministry of Education, Culture, Research and Technology of the Republic of Indonesia (Kemendikbud Ristek RI). The purpose of this curriculum is to optimize the dissemination of education in Indonesia with diverse intracurricular learning. The implementation of the Independent Curriculum (IKM) emphasizes learning that is comfortable, independent, active, has character, meaning, independence and others. Teachers have the freedom to determine teaching tools that are tailored to the needs and learning interests of students. Supporting the recovery of learning is the main characteristic of the Independent Curriculum. The characteristics of the Independent Curriculum are quoted from the curriculum. kemdikbud.go.id namely: printing Pancasila Student Profiles through project-based learning to develop students' skills and character, Focusing on the subject matter (essential) so that basic materials such as literacy and numeracy get in-depth competence. Learning is more flexible with differentiated learning according to the local context and content and according to the abilities of the students.

The independent learning curriculum gives the right to study independently. Therefore, teachers need strategies in their application. The learning strategy in this curriculum is project-based. Students are asked to implement the material they have learned through projects or case studies. This project is called the Pancasila Student Profile Strengthening Project (P5). This means that this project is cross-subject and integrated. This project-based learning process is carried out by students through the observation of a problem and then provides *a real* solution to the problem.¹⁴

The implementation of the Independent Curriculum at MI Al Muta'alimin Sukagumiwang will be carried out in stages, starting in the 2022/2023 school year. This madrasah officially chose the Independent option to change in accordance with the direction of the Ministry of Religion through the Decree of the Minister of Religion (KMA) No. 347 of 2022, which was then strengthened by KMA No. 450 of 2024. This choice reflects the readiness of madrasahs to implement the curriculum in full, by utilizing teaching tools provided by the government as a starting point for development. The main focus of the current implementation is on classes I and IV, as a pioneer force that will continue the implementation at the next grade level. This curriculum is the government's effort to catch up or learn loss after the Covid-19 pandemic. This policy received significant encouragement from various parties, including academics, education practitioners, and other stakeholders. In the process of its development, the Independent Curriculum has involved various updates in the context of the curriculum, such as an emphasis on active, project-based, and

¹⁴ Umami Inayati, "Konsep Dan Implementasi Kurikulum Merdeka Pada Pembelajaran Abad-21 Di SD/MI," *ICIE International Conference on Islamic Education 2* (2022).

student-centered learning. The Independent Curriculum bases its approach on a more contextual, inclusive, and student-centered educational paradigm.¹⁵ This approach emphasizes learning that accommodates students' individual needs and potentials, and provides space for creativity and active participation of students in the learning process.¹⁶

Some of the key implementation aspects observed at MI Al Muta'alimin Sukagumiwang include:

1. Curriculum Structure and Time Allocation: Madrasas adopt a more flexible curriculum structure, where the allocation of subject time is not calculated per weekly lesson hour, but per year. This gives teachers the flexibility to design more in-depth learning over a certain period of time. MI Al-Muta'alimin Sukagumiwang implements a more flexible structure of the Independent Curriculum, where the time allocation of each subject is no longer limited per week, but is calculated based on the total number of lesson hours in one year. This policy gives teachers the flexibility to adjust the rhythm and duration of learning according to the needs of learning outcomes in each phase. With this flexibility, teachers can deepen certain material in certain periods, especially in subjects that require a strong conceptual understanding. Curriculum flexibility like this has been proven to increase learning effectiveness and allow the application of differentiated learning according to student needs
2. Project-Based Learning (PjBL) is one of the main approaches in the Independent Curriculum that emphasizes authentic learning experiences through project activities that are relevant to students' lives. According to Mergendoller & Thomas, PjBL encourages students to solve problems creatively through in-depth inquiry, collaboration, and reflection, so as to develop 21st-century skills such as critical thinking, communication, creativity, and collaboration.¹⁷ In addition, the Ministry of Education and Culture emphasized that PjBL is a strategic means to strengthen the *Pancasila Student Profile* because each project can be designed to instill values such as mutual cooperation, global diversity, independence, critical reasoning, and noble character.

In many madrasas, this approach is realized through thematic projects, cross-subject projects, and portfolios that integrate academic competencies and character. Many madrasas implement project/portfolio tasks that integrate 21st century skills and Pancasila values

¹⁵ R. Agustina, "Model of Learning Empowerment-Based Curriculum 2013 in Elementary School," *Educational Review: International Journal Volume*: 15 (2018).

¹⁶ Roos M. S. Tuerah and Jeanne M. Tuerah, "Kurikulum Merdeka dalam Perspektif Kajian Teori: Analisis Kebijakan untuk Peningkatan Kualitas Pembelajaran di Sekolah," *Jurnal Ilmiah Wahana Pendidikan* 9, no. 19 (October 2023), <https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.10047903>.

¹⁷ Edy Mustofa, Nor Miyono, and Rasiman, "Implementasi Kurikulum Merdeka Di Madrasah Tsanawiyah Sunan Kalijaga Bawang Kabupaten Batang," *Pendas : Jurnal Ilmiah Pendidikan Dasar* 10 (2025).

(diversity, collaboration, creativity). This model is often used to assess students' complete competencies, Mustofa, Nor Miyono, and Rasiman show that the implementation of PjBL in madrasas is effective in increasing student participation, learning motivation, and collaborative skills.¹⁸ The projects given are usually designed to connect the subject matter with the socio-religious context so that the values of Pancasila and Islamic values can run in harmony.

At MI Al-Muta'alimin Sukagumiwang, the implementation of PjBL has begun to be implemented through several thematic project activities such as the creation of healthy environment posters, literacy projects based on Islamic stories, and simple entrepreneurship projects in the high class. These activities not only provide a more meaningful learning experience, but also become a vehicle for strengthening the *Pancasila Student Profile*, especially in the aspects of mutual cooperation, creativity, and noble morals. For example, in the "Clean and Healthy Classroom Movement" project, students work in groups to design cleanliness campaign posters, conduct observations of school conditions, and present their findings to teachers and peers. This project trains students to collaborate, respect the opinions of others, and take social responsibility for the madrasah environment. At MI Al-Muta'alimin Sukagumiwang, the implementation of PjBL has been realized through several thematic projects relevant to students' lives. Some examples of such projects include:

a. "Healthy Environment Poster" Project

Students work in groups to observe the cleanliness of the classroom and the madrasah environment. From the results of these observations, they designed a cleanliness campaign poster that was presented in front of the class. This project trains students in collaboration, design creativity, and social concern for the surrounding environment.

b. Islamic Story-Based Literacy Project

In the lower and middle grades, the teacher gives the project task of reading Islamic stories, then students make summaries, illustrations, and retell the content of the stories. This activity not only increases literacy, but also instills noble moral values and improves communication skills.

c. Simple Entrepreneurship Project

Especially for high grades, students are invited to make simple products such as handicrafts or snacks as part of an entrepreneurship project. Students learn the planning process, division of tasks, product creation, and presentation of work results. In addition to fostering creativity, the project trains responsibility, independence, and problem-solving skills.

¹⁸ Mustofa, Miyono, and Rasiman.

Through these various activities, PjBL at MI Al-Muta'alimin Sukagumiwang has been proven to provide a more meaningful, contextual, and fun learning experience. In addition to supporting the achievement of curricular competencies, PjBL also strengthens the character of students according to the Pancasila Student Profile, especially in the aspects of mutual cooperation, creativity, critical reasoning, and noble morals. The implementation of PjBL is also in line with the religious culture of madrasah which emphasizes the habituation of politeness, caring, and responsibility.

3. Preparation of Teaching Modules and ATPs: The team of teachers of grades I and IV has compiled a collaborative Learning Objective Flow (ATP) and teaching modules, focusing on literacy and numeracy. This process is supported through internal training (In House Training / IHT) which is held independently by the madrasah.

Implementation of P5-PPRA: The Pancasila Student Profile Strengthening Project and Rahmatan Lil Alamin Student Profile (P5-PPRA) has been integrated in co-curricular activities with an allocation of around 20-30% of the total annual school hours. The theme of the project focused on local wisdom, such as "Getting to Know Indramayu Culture" and "Utilization of Organic Waste in the Madrasah Environment". The team of teachers in grades I and IV of MI Al-Muta'alimin Sukagumiwang has collaboratively developed a Learning Objective Flow (ATP) and a teaching module that focuses on strengthening literacy and numeracy. The preparation is carried out through a meeting of the teacher learning community-based teacher team, starting from the selection of the ATP phase according to the Independent Curriculum, the formulation of learning objectives per module, to the design of learning activities and authentic assessment instruments that are oriented towards measuring students' literacy-numeracy competencies.¹⁹ This process is supported by In-House Training (IHT) activities organized independently by the IHT madrasah which functions as a practical training space (workshop) and mentoring to improve teachers' competence in compiling modules, aligning learning objectives with classroom activities, and utilizing digital learning resources and local madrasah content. The implementation of this collaborative model is reported to improve teachers' understanding of ATP and the quality of teaching modules so that literacy-numeracy learning activities become more contextual, measurable, and relevant to the needs of students at MI Al-Muta'alimin Sukagumiwang.

¹⁹ Khaidir Christina et al., "Pengembangan Alur Tujuan Pembelajaran Dan Modul Ajar Pada Kurikulum Merdeka Di MAN 2 Padang," *Perspektif: Jurnal Pendidikan Dan Ilmu Bahasa* 3 (2025), <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.59059/perspektif.v3i2.2475>.

4. Assessment and Reporting: The formative assessment system is more emphasized than summative. Assessments are carried out on an ongoing basis to monitor student learning progress, with more descriptive and qualitative learning outcome reports (report cards).

In the implementation of the Independent Curriculum, the assessment system in madrasas emphasizes the use of formative assessments that are carried out on an ongoing basis to monitor the progress of student learning. This approach is in line with Paul and Wiliam's view that formative assessments are able to enhance learning through fast, specific, and focused feedback on the learning process, not just the end result.²⁰ In addition, the Ministry of Education and Culture emphasized that the assessment of the Independent Curriculum must provide information on the development of student competencies in its entirety, including the dimensions of literacy, numeracy, attitudes, and skills.

At MI Al-Muta'alimin Sukagumiwang, formative assessments are applied through daily observations, performance assessments, learning journals, projects, and assessment rubrics prepared by teachers according to the Learning Objectives Flow (ATP). Teachers provide direct feedback to students both verbally and in writing, so that students can understand their achievements and shortcomings. Meanwhile, summative assessments are still carried out but are not the only basis for assessment. The results of the assessment are then outlined in a descriptive and qualitative report card, which explains the competencies that have been achieved, attitude development, and follow-up recommendations for students. This descriptive reporting model has been proven to provide a more comprehensive picture of student learning development as found in the Fitriyani & Rahma study which shows that qualitative reporting helps parents understand children's learning strengths and needs more clearly.

Thus, the application of formative assessments and descriptive report cards at MI Al-Muta'alimin Sukagumiwang not only supports the effectiveness of learning, but also encourages the creation of a learning process that is more student-centered and in line with the principles of the Independent Curriculum.

B. How effective is learning after the implementation of the Independent Curriculum?

The implementation of the Independent Curriculum at MI Al-Muta'alimin Sukagumiwang has great potential to increase the effectiveness of learning through various new approaches that emphasize the needs of students. One of its main advantages is its emphasis on student-centered learning. Through differentiated learning, teachers can adjust teaching strategies based on students' initial abilities, interests, and learning styles. This approach is considered to be able to increase student motivation, engagement, and learning outcomes, as emphasized in the research of Wahyuni

²⁰ Paul Black and Dylan Wiliam, *Inside the Black Box: Raising Standards Through Classroom Assessment* (London: GL Assessment (Granada Learning Assessment), 2005).

and Muhammad Iqbal which shows that differentiated learning in the Independent Curriculum has a positive impact on learning motivation and active participation of elementary school students, namely:²¹

1. In addition, the Independent Curriculum presents more essential and in-depth subject matter, so that teachers are no longer burdened with many competencies that must be pursued. This simplification of the material provides a wider space for students to master the core concepts in depth, rather than just completing the curriculum targets. which notes that content simplification allows teachers to focus more on key competencies and improve the quality of learning interactions in the classroom. The Independent Curriculum brings major changes through simplifying subject matter to be more essential and focusing on core competencies. This condition is very felt at MI Al-Muta'alimin Sukagumiwang, especially in subjects that were previously considered dense such as Mathematics, Science, and Bahasa Indonesia. Teachers are no longer burdened by the large number of KD that must be pursued in a limited time, so that the learning process becomes calmer, more directed, and deeper. Students also have more time to understand the core concepts through concrete examples, gradual exercises, and class discussions.

At MI Al-Muta'alimin Sukagumiwang, teachers reported that the simplification of the material made them focus more on core learning achievements, for example on basic numeracy skills, reading literacy, and understanding of simple science concepts. Interaction between teachers and students also increases because learning is no longer in a hurry to complete a lot of material.

2. Another advantage that has a significant impact is the flexibility for teachers in choosing learning methods, media, and models. Teachers at MI Al-Muta'alimin Sukagumiwang can take advantage of more creative methods such as project-based learning, group discussions, simple experiments, or the use of digital media according to the characteristics of the class and the needs of students. Research by Putri Salma et al. confirms that this flexibility increases teacher innovation and contributes to a more adaptive and responsive learning environment.

One of the most perceived advantages by teachers at MI Al-Muta'alimin Sukagumiwang is flexibility in choosing learning methods, media, and models according to students' conditions. Teachers are now more free to develop creative learning strategies such as:

- a. Project-Based Learning (making mini environmental posters, simple plant projects)
- b. Small group discussions to increase participation

²¹ Sri Wahyuni and Muhammad Iqbal, "Evaluasi Efektivitas Penerapan Kurikulum Merdeka Dalam Meningkatkan Hasil Belajar Dan Keterampilan Literasi Siswa Sekolah Dasar," *Journal of Management in Islamic Education* 5, no. 3 (2024), <https://doi.org/10.32832/idarrah.v5i3.16736>.

- c. Simple experiments in science, such as observation of the properties of light or objects
- d. Utilization of digital media such as learning videos, interactive quizzes, and visual images

This flexibility makes learning more adaptive to a variety of students' abilities, including students with low abilities and those who quickly grasp the material. At MI Al-Muta'alimin Sukagumiwang, teachers are also more confident in trying new methods without fear of "leaving the curriculum structure", because the Independent Curriculum provides room for improvisation.

3. No less important, the implementation of the Pancasila Student Profile Strengthening Project (P5) is one of the indicators of the effectiveness of the Independent Curriculum in building students' character and soft skills. Through contextual-based projects, students are trained to think critically, creatively, collaborate, and have concern for the surrounding environment. The study of Hamidah et al., shows that the implementation of P5 in elementary schools and madrasahs is able to strengthen character values, improve collaborative skills, and foster students' confidence.

The Pancasila Student Profile Strengthening Project (P5) is one of the most effective components in character formation at MI Al-Muta'alimin Sukagumiwang. The school has carried out various thematic projects, such as:

- a. "Love the Environment" project: classroom cleaning activities, sorting garbage, and making hygiene posters
- b. "Local Wisdom" Project: getting to know traditional games, folklore, and local culture of Indramayu
- c. "Art Creativity" project: making simple crafts from second-hand items
- d. "Sharing and Empathizing" Project: donation and social service activities

Through these projects, students show improvement in terms of:

- a. the ability to cooperate,
- b. confidence,
- c. attitude of caring for the environment,
- d. creativity,
- e. simple problem-solving ability.

Teachers at MI Al-Muta'alimin Sukagumiwang also reported that students who were usually passive became more courageous when involved in group projects. Thus, these four aspects of student-centered learning, deepening of essential materials, pedagogical flexibility, and character strengthening through P5 are strong indications that the implementation of the Independent Curriculum has the potential to provide high learning effectiveness at MI Al-Muta'alimin Sukagumiwang, especially if supported by teacher readiness, adequate facilities, and consistent school leadership in overseeing curriculum changes.

C. Factors Affecting the Effectiveness of the Independent Curriculum

Based on the findings in the field through interviews with the Head of MI Al-Muta'alimin Sukagumiwang, the Curriculum Coordinator, and several classroom teachers, it can be seen that the implementation of the Independent Curriculum in this madrasah is supported by several very important internal factors. The internal supporting factor mainly comes from the readiness of Human Resources (HR), namely teachers who have participated in various trainings related to the Independent Curriculum, both through technical guidance, workshops, and independent programs such as the Independent Teaching Platform (PMM). Teachers at MI Al-Muta'alimin Sukagumiwang also have a high commitment to developing new learning models, including differentiated learning and project-based learning. In addition, the existence of teachers who actively participate in the learning community and are used to teachers working collaboratively is an internal force in the implementation of this new curriculum.

The readiness of human resources is strengthened by the existence of internal support structures, such as a responsive curriculum team, good coordination between teachers, and the leadership of madrasah heads who provide innovation space for teachers. The teacher said that the technical implementation of the Independent Curriculum is relatively easy to understand because the guidelines provided are quite clear, both in the CP (Learning Outcomes), ATP (Learning Goal Flow) documents, and teaching modules. This condition is in line with Edward III's opinion that resources, especially the quality of human resources, are a key factor in the successful implementation of the policy.²² This is also in accordance with Masmanian and Sabatier who are quoted again by Redana and Suprpta as saying that the level of technical difficulty of a policy affects the success of its implementation; the easier it is to understand, the greater the potential for success.²³

In addition to internal factors, the implementation of the Independent Curriculum at MI Al-Muta'alimin Sukagumiwang is also supported by strong external factors. Based on information from the head of the madrasah, curriculum coordinator, and students, it can be understood that the clarity of the policy content is an important factor that facilitates the implementation of this curriculum. The Merdeka Curriculum is considered to have a clear and detailed structure ranging from learning outcomes, learning principles, P5 modules, to assessment guides. The clarity of the document makes it easier for teachers to translate it into practical steps in the classroom. In addition, support from the Ministry of Religion in the form of training, mentoring, and access to the Independent Teaching Platform are other external factors that strengthen the implementation of the curriculum.

²² Dewa Nyoman Redana and Nyoman Suprpta, "Implementasi Kurikulum Merdeka Di SMA Negeri 4 Singaraja," *Jurnal Unipas* 15, no. 1 (2023).

²³ Redana and Suprpta.

This is in accordance with the view of Masmanian and Sabatier stating that the clearer a policy is drafted, the easier it will be for the implementer to understand and translate the policy into concrete action.²⁴ Thus, the clarity of the content of the Independent Curriculum and the government's external support are important drivers of its successful implementation at MI Al-Muta'alimin Sukagumiwang.

Various factors affect the effectiveness of the Independent Curriculum which can be grouped into several categories:

1. Internal Factors of the School:

- a. Teachers' readiness to understand, adapt, and implement the Independent Curriculum effectively is a key factor.
- b. Adequate facilities and infrastructure, such as textbooks, teaching materials, information technology, and school infrastructure, support the implementation of quality learning.
- c. Visionary and supportive leadership from the principal and school management team is very important in encouraging the effective implementation of the Independent Curriculum.
- d. School Culture: A positive, collaborative, and open learning culture to innovation supports the creation of a conducive learning environment under the Independent Curriculum.²⁵

2. School External Factors:

- a. Understanding, support, and active participation of parents and the community are very important in the successful implementation of the Independent Curriculum.
- b. Conducive and supportive government policies and regulations help the smooth implementation of the Independent Curriculum at all levels of education.
- c. Easy access to quality teacher training and development helps improve teachers' competence in implementing the Independent Curriculum effectively.
- d. The availability of adequate funds from the government helps schools in meeting the needs of facilities and infrastructure, as well as teacher training and development programs.

3. Curriculum Factors:

- a. Teaching materials that are of quality, relevant to the needs and context of learning, and up-to-date to support effective learning under the Independent Curriculum.
- b. An innovative, active, and student-centered approach to learning encourages student engagement and motivation to learn.

²⁴ Subarsano, *Analisis Kebijakan Publik : Konsep, Teori Dan Aplikasi* (Yogyakarta: Pustaka Pelajar, 2014).

²⁵ Muhammad Khasib et al., "Evaluasi Efektivitas Kurikulum Merdeka Sebagai Langkah Kritis Menuju Implementasi Yang Optimal," *Edukatif: Jurnal Ilmu Pendidikan* 6, no. 5 (2024).

- c. A holistic evaluation mechanism, oriented towards achieving the Pancasila student profile, and in line with the learning approach helps measure the effectiveness of the Independent Curriculum comprehensively.²⁶

4. Student Factors:

- a. Students' readiness to adapt to changes in the learning system is an important factor in the smooth implementation of the Independent Curriculum.
- b. An Independent Curriculum that focuses on students' learning needs and interests can increase student motivation and learning engagement.
- c. Learning that is differentiated and in accordance with individual students' abilities ensures that all students get optimal learning opportunities.²⁷

The effectiveness of the Independent Curriculum does not stand alone, but is influenced by various factors that interact with each other. Hulkin emphasized that the implementation of this curriculum is influenced by internal school factors, external factors, curriculum components, and student characteristics.²⁸ Internal factors include teacher competence, availability of facilities and infrastructure, school culture, and leadership of school principals. Meanwhile, external factors include government support, regional education policies, the role of school committees, and community involvement.

In addition, the success of the Independent Curriculum is also highly determined by the quality of the preparation of the school operational curriculum, the flexibility of learning planning, and the ability of teachers to apply approaches such as *differentiated learning*, *Pancasila student profile projects*, and formative assessments. On the other hand, students' readiness ranging from learning motivation, social background, to literacy and numeracy skills is an important factor that determines the extent to which learning can run optimally.

Therefore, collaboration and synergy of various stakeholders such as the government, schools, teachers, parents, and the community are the main keys. When all parties work together to provide consistent support in the form of policies, facilities, mentoring, and a conducive learning environment, the implementation of the Independent Curriculum can run more effectively so that the great goal of Indonesian education, which is to create students who are free to learn, creative, and have character, can be truly achieved.

²⁶ Hilda Ainissyifa; Yufi Mohammad Nasrullah; Nurul Fatonah; Shelsya Azzahra Indriani; Syifa Nuril Asyifiya; Julistya; Alfi Rohmah, *Manajemen Pendidikan Dalam Kurikulum Merdeka Di Madrasah* (Cahaya Smart Nusantara, 2024).

²⁷ Primanita Sholihah Rosmana et al., *Kesiapan Sekolah Dalam Proses Penerapan Kurikulum Merdeka Di SD*, 3 (2023), <https://doi.org/Website:%20https://j-innovative.org/index.php/Innovative%20Kesiapan>.

²⁸ M. Hulkin, "Analisis Implementasi Model Konsep Kurikulum Merdeka Di Sekolah Dasar: Studi Kepustakaan M. Hulkin 1," *Mentari Jurnal Of Islamic School* 2, no. 1 (2023).

D. Critical Steps to Optimize the Implementation of the Independent Curriculum

In an effort to improve the quality of education and achieve the goals of the Independent Curriculum, MI Al-Muta'alimin Sukagumiwang needs to take various strategic steps that include increasing the capacity of teachers and schools, effective socialization, development of learning resources, and continuous monitoring and evaluation. These steps are important because the success of curriculum implementation does not only depend on changes in the learning structure, but also on the readiness of all parties involved, including teachers, principals, students, parents, and the community around the madrasah. With a planned and systematic approach, MI Al-Muta'alimin Sukagumiwang can ensure that every aspect of the Independent Curriculum is implemented optimally, starting from the provision of facilities, strengthening teacher competence, to the use of relevant technology and learning methods. The following is an explanation of the critical steps that can be taken by MI Al-Muta'alimin Sukagumiwang to support the effective implementation of the Independent Curriculum.

It is important to take critical steps to ensure the effective implementation of the Independent Curriculum and achieve educational goals in Indonesia. Here are some critical steps that can be taken:

1. Capacity Building of Teachers and Schools:
 - a. Teachers need to be trained and accompanied on an ongoing basis to understand, adapt, and implement the Independent Curriculum effectively.
 - b. School principals and school management teams need to be increased in their capacity to lead the implementation of the Independent Curriculum with a visionary and supportive attitude.
 - c. School facilities and infrastructure, such as textbooks, teaching materials, information technology, and school infrastructure, need to be improved to support quality learning under the Independent Curriculum.²⁹
2. Effective Socialization and Communication:
 - a. Understanding, support, and active participation of parents and the community are very important in the successful implementation of the Independent Curriculum.
 - b. Open and transparent communication between schools, teachers, parents, and the community can help build mutual trust and support the implementation of the Independent Curriculum.

²⁹ Muh Ibnu Sholeh and Nur Efendi, "Integrasi Teknologi Dalam Manajemen Pendidikan Islam : Meningkatkan Kinerja Di Era Digital," *Jurnal Tinta* 5, no. 2 (2023).

- c. Providing an information and education platform that is easily accessible to all parties can help increase understanding of the Independent Curriculum.³⁰
3. Development of Learning Resources:
 - a. Teaching materials that are of quality, relevant to the needs and context of learning and up-to-date support effective learning under the Independent Curriculum.
 - b. Information and communication technology can be used to support more creative, innovative, and interactive learning.
 - c. A quality and easily accessible digital learning platform can help students learn independently and flexibly.³¹
4. Continuous Monitoring and Evaluation:
 - a. Monitor the implementation of the Independent Curriculum periodically to ensure that it runs as expected.
 - b. Evaluate learning holistically to measure the effectiveness of the Independent Curriculum in achieving educational goals.
 - c. To make adjustments and develop the Independent Curriculum on an ongoing basis based on the results of monitoring and evaluation

CONCLUSION

Based on the results of the discussion, it can be concluded that the implementation of the Independent Curriculum at MI Al-Muta'alimin Sukagumiwang has run effectively through the implementation of student-centered, flexible, and project-based learning (P5). The Project-Based Learning approach provides a meaningful learning experience, increases creativity, collaboration, responsibility, and instills character values according to the Pancasila Student Profile. The preparation of teaching modules and Learning Objectives Flow (ATP) collaboratively, supported by internal training, strengthens literacy and numeracy and ensures that learning is relevant to the needs of students. In addition, the application of formative assessments and descriptive reporting allows teachers to monitor learning progress on an ongoing basis and provide appropriate feedback, so that learning becomes more focused, contextual, and student-centered, while supporting the achievement of academic competencies and overall character.

Based on the results of the discussion, it can be concluded that the implementation of the Independent Curriculum at MI Al-Muta'alimin Sukagumiwang has been proven to increase the effectiveness of learning through several key aspects. First, student-centered learning with

³⁰ Nurul Amelia et al., "Efektivitas Peran Guru Dalam Kurikulum Merdeka Belajar Nurul," *Jurnal Ilmiah Wahana Pendidikan* 9, no. 2 (2023), [https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.7575797](https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.7575797).

³¹ Amelia et al.

differentiated strategies allows teachers to adjust methods and materials according to students' abilities, interests, and learning styles, so that motivation, engagement, and learning outcomes increase. Second, simplifying subject matter becomes more essential to provide space for students to understand core concepts in depth and improve the quality of interaction in the classroom. Third, the pedagogical flexibility provided by the curriculum allows teachers to use various creative methods, such as Project-Based Learning, group discussions, simple experiments, and digital media, so that the learning process becomes more adaptive and innovative. Fourth, the implementation of the Pancasila Student Profile Strengthening Project (P5) contextually fosters students' character and social skills, including cooperation, creativity, environmental concern, and self-confidence, so that learning is not only academically effective but also supports character development according to Pancasila values.

The effectiveness of the implementation of the Independent Curriculum at MI Al-Muta'alimin Sukagumiwang is influenced by various interrelated factors, both internal and external. Internal factors include the readiness of teachers who have participated in training, have a high commitment to developing new learning models, are used to working collaboratively, supported by a responsive curriculum team, visionary leadership of madrasah heads, adequate facilities, positive school culture, and clear technical guidance. External factors include clarity of the content of the Independent Curriculum policy, support from the Ministry of Religion through training and the Independent Teaching Platform, parental and community participation, conducive government regulations, access to teacher training, and availability of funds. In terms of curriculum, the quality of relevant and up-to-date teaching materials, innovative and student-centered learning approaches, and holistic evaluation mechanisms in line with the Pancasila Student Profile also determine effectiveness, while student readiness including motivation, literacy and numeracy skills, as well as adaptation to the new system are other important factors. With the collaboration and synergy of all parties, ranging from the government, schools, teachers, parents, to the community, the implementation of the Independent Curriculum can run optimally so that the educational goal of producing students who are independent in learning, creativity, and character can be achieved.

Critical steps that can be taken by MI Al-Muta'alimin Sukagumiwang to optimize the implementation of the Independent Curriculum include increasing the capacity of teachers and schools, effective socialization and communication, development of learning resources, and continuous monitoring and evaluation. Teacher capacity building is carried out through continuous training and mentoring so that teachers are able to understand, adapt, and implement the curriculum effectively, while principals and management teams are increased in their capacity to lead visionarily and supportively, supported by adequate infrastructure such as textbooks, teaching materials, information technology, and school infrastructure. Socialization and effective

communication involve the active participation of parents and the community, open communication between stakeholders, and the provision of an easily accessible information platform to improve understanding of the Independent Curriculum. The development of learning resources emphasizes quality and relevant teaching materials, the use of information technology for innovative and interactive learning, and the use of digital platforms that support independent and flexible learning. Monitoring and evaluation are carried out periodically to ensure that the implementation runs as expected, evaluate the effectiveness of learning holistically, and make adjustments to the curriculum based on the findings of the evaluation so that the implementation of the Independent Curriculum can take place optimally and sustainably.

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