



IMPLEMENTATION OF INDEPENDENT CURRICULUM IN ISLAMIC RELIGIOUS EDUCATION AND CHARACTER SUBJECTS AT NAHDLATUL ULAMA 2 GRESIK JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL

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Abstract:

The implementation of the Independent Curriculum as a response to education in Indonesia after the COVID-19 pandemic, considering that many students have experienced learning delays. Focusing on overcoming learning loss and learning crisis is a strategic step to help students return to their education process; the Independent Curriculum is one solution to overcome problems in the world of education. This study aims to determine 1) How is the implementation of the independent curriculum in the subjects of Islamic Religious Education and Character Education at SMP Nahdlatul Ulama 2 Gresik, 2) What are the problems of implementing the independent curriculum in the subjects of Islamic Religious Education and Character Education at SMP Nahdlatul Ulama 2 Gresik, and 3) What are the efforts to overcome the problems of implementing the independent curriculum in the subjects of Islamic Religious Education and Character Education at SMP Nahdlatul Ulama 2 Gresik. This study is a descriptive qualitative approach that takes SMP Nahdlatul Ulama 2 Gresik as the object through data collection through interviews, observation, and documentation. The informants in this study were the principal, the vice principal of curriculum, the Islamic Religious Education and Character Education teacher, and grade VII students. The study results showed that 1) The implementation of the Independent Curriculum, which includes training, the creation of teaching modules, and P5 activities outside of school hours, shows the school's commitment to creating a better learning experience for students. 2) The implementation of the problem-based learning method and clear steps in learning activities show that teachers have understood and implemented the principles of the Independent Curriculum well. 3) The advantages and disadvantages of implementing the Independent Curriculum are widespread, especially during the transition from traditional teaching methods to more modern approaches—the existing advantages, such as fun and varied learning. Additional training or collaboration between teachers to share best practices may be possible to overcome shortcomings, such as the use of lecture methods and understanding of diagnostic assessments.

Keywords: *Curriculum, PAI, Character.*

INTRODUCTION

Education is indeed a process that continues throughout life. Since humans are born, they begin to learn from their environment, family, and surrounding community. This learning process does not only occur in formal environments such as schools, but also through daily life experiences, social interactions, and challenges faced. Even into old age, humans continue to learn and develop themselves. Over time, education has become increasingly complex and comprehensive, covering intellectual, emotional,

social, and spiritual aspects. This shows that education is an important foundation in shaping an individual's character, skills, and perspective on the world. Until the end of life, humans always seek and acquire new knowledge, both consciously and unconsciously (Syukurman., 2020) According to the National Education System Law No. 20 of 2003, which contains national education aims to develop the potential of students to become human beings who believe in and fear God Almighty, have noble character, are knowledgeable, healthy, independent, creative, and become democratic and responsible citizens (Law. RI No. 1 2023).

Islamic Religious Education and Character Education do play an important role in shaping the character and personality of students. By instilling Islamic values based on the Qur'an and Hadith, this education not only focuses on theoretical knowledge, but also on the formation of good morals and ethics (Mundiri & Manshur, 2020). Through this learning, students are taught to understand, appreciate, and practice Islamic teachings in everyday life. Islamic Religious Education seeks to create individuals who are not only intellectually intelligent, but also have strong spirituality, and are able to respect and live side by side with others, including those who adhere to different religions or beliefs. This guidance and teaching process helps students internalize Islamic religious values, which are then reflected in their attitudes and behavior, both in their relationship with God (*hablum minallah*) and with fellow human beings (*hablum minannas*)

Thus, Islamic Religious Education and Character Education serve as an important foundation for forming individuals who are noble, tolerant, and responsible, who are ready to face the challenges of life with strong religious principles. (Siti Muhayati., 2021). The development of the curriculum in Indonesia has continuously changed until now, approximately 14 times. The Curriculum Development Policy 13 Revisions to the Independent Curriculum is based on the decree of the Minister of Education, Culture, Research and Technology Number 56/M/2022 dated February 10, 2022 concerning guidelines for implementing the curriculum in the context of learning recovery, including: 1. In the context of recovering learning lags that occur in special conditions, 2. The implementation of the Independent Curriculum is carried out in stages, 3. The independent curriculum will come into effect in the 2022/2023 academic year (Independent Curriculum., 2022).

The explanation of the differences between the 2013 Curriculum (K13) and the Independent Curriculum can be described more clearly as follows:

1. Main Foundation:
 - a) The 2013 Curriculum (K13), is based on the objectives of the National Education System and National Education Standards. This curriculum is designed with an integrated approach, integrating the competency standards that must be achieved by students at all levels of education.
 - b) The Independent Curriculum, is more flexible and gives schools more autonomy to design learning that suits the needs of students. The focus is on character development and competency according to the individual abilities of students.
2. Targeted Competencies:
 - a) In K13, the competencies targeted are Basic Competencies (KD), which include four Core Competencies (KI) which are the main pillars: 1) KI-1: Spiritual attitude, 2) KI-2: Social attitude, 3) KI-3: Knowledge, 4) KI-4: Skills. Core Competencies KI-1 and KI-2 are only emphasized in certain subjects, such as Islamic Religious Education and Character Education and Citizenship Education, while KI-3 and KI-4 apply to all subjects.
 - b) Independent Curriculum, on the other hand, emphasizes essential competencies and no longer divides competencies into Core Competencies (KI). The focus is more on developing competencies that are relevant to future needs, such as critical thinking skills, creativity, collaboration, and communication.
3. Learning Approach:
 - a) K13 uses a scientific approach for all subjects. This approach integrates five

steps in the learning process: observing, asking, trying, processing, and communicating. The main focus of learning is on face-to-face and curricular activities have a strictly regulated time allocation.

- b) The Independent Curriculum is more flexible in its learning approach. The approach can be more diverse, adjusted to the needs and characteristics of students. Learning activities are not only limited to face-to-face, but also encourage the development of projects and activities based on student interests. This curriculum provides more space for teacher creativity and active student participation.
4. Assessment:
- a) Curriculum 2013 (K13): Assessment is carried out through two methods: Formative assessment: Carried out during the learning process to provide feedback for learning improvement. Summative assessment: Carried out at the end of learning to measure students' overall competency achievement, such as a final exam. Assessment in K13 includes cognitive (knowledge), affective (attitude), and psychomotor (skills) aspects.
 - b) Independent Curriculum: Assessment is more flexible and emphasizes formative assessment and authentic assessment. The focus is more on measuring individual development and the application of relevant skills through projects, portfolios, and competency-based assignments, not just written exams.

Overall, the Independent Curriculum offers more freedom and focuses on developing individual potential, while the 2013 Curriculum is more structural with stricter standards in terms of competency achievement. (Faradilla., 2023)

RESEARCH METHODS

The researcher in this study used a qualitative research method with a descriptive approach. Descriptive research is a research strategy in which the researcher investigates events, phenomena of individual lives and asks a person or group of individuals to tell their lives. Descriptive qualitative research displays data as it is without manipulating the existing data (Rusnandi., 2010). Using qualitative research, because the scope of this research is social, so very complex details are needed. In this study, the Correlation of the Independent Curriculum in Islamic Religious Education Learning and Character Education is expected to be able to describe the data comprehensively and accurately. In taking data samples, the researcher used purposive sampling, namely by taking samples from data sources with certain considerations from the research results by the principal, curriculum vice principal, teachers and students.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Independent Curriculum

The independent curriculum is a curriculum with diverse intracurricular learning, the content will be more optimal so that students have enough time to explore concepts and strengthen competencies. then teachers also have the freedom to choose various teaching tools so that learning can be adjusted to the needs and interests of students (Khoirurrijal., 2022) The learning policy is implemented to improve the quality of human resources so that they have advantages over foreign countries by improving noble character and having high reasoning, especially in literacy and numeracy. There are three reasons why the independent policy must be implemented. First, education has been rigid and binding, for example, regulations related to the National Examination, RPP, users of BOS funds and so on. These regulations are not effective in achieving national education goals. Second, the achievement of national education goals is not effective as seen in student learning outcomes in international test comparisons, this shows that students in Indonesia are still weak in terms of high reasoning, especially in terms of numeracy and literacy. Third, the independent learning policy is not rigid but flexible, it is hoped that it can overcome different conditions, challenges, and problems

between schools by implementing different strategies.

Independent Curriculum Structure

The curriculum structure at the junior high school/Islamic junior high school level consists of 1 phase, namely phase D. Phase D is for grades VII, VIII, and IX. The junior high school/Islamic junior high school curriculum structure is divided into 2, namely: Intracurricular Learning, The Pancasila Youth Profile Strengthening Project is allocated around 25% of the total JP per year.

The implementation of the Pancasila youth strengthening project is carried out flexibly, both in terms of content and implementation time. In terms of content, the profile project must refer to the achievements of the Pancasila youth profile according to the student phase, and is not linked to learning achievements in the subject. In terms of implementation time management, the project can be implemented by adding up the allocation of project teaching hours from all subjects and the total implementation time for each project does not have to be the same (Education & Research., 2022)

Islamic Religious Education and Character

Education etymologically comes from the Greek language, namely taken from the word "pais" which means someone, and "again" which means to guide. In general, education is conscious guidance by educators towards the physical and spiritual development of students towards the formation of the main personality. Therefore, education is very important for all generations to form a good personality (Nor Mubin., 2023)

Character is a value that underlies all behavior starting from ethics, norms, and manners. According to Kickpatrick, a person's character can be developed through the abilities and habits of the individual based on the norms that apply in the community environment (Utami Dionisia., 2022) thus the instillation of character can be obtained through education or learning at school so that students or each individual is able to understand the norms or rules that apply in society. From the discussion statement, it can be concluded that Islamic Religious Education and Character Education is an effort to prepare students to want to continue learning to deepen the teachings of Islam and be able to practice them well in everyday life.

Characteristics of Islamic Religious Education and Character Education learning

Developing students' abilities in understanding Religious Education material. Furthermore, they can develop a balanced spiritual attitude, knowledge, and skills. And can apply it in their lives both personally and in society, such as being able to make habits in the school or community environment (Faisol.,2022) There are 5 elements in Islamic Religious Education and Character Education learning, namely: Al-Qur'an and Hadith, Akidah, Morals, Jurisprudence, and Islamic Civilization.

Implementation of Independent Curriculum in Islamic Religious Education and Character Education Subjects at SMP Nahdlatul Ulama 2 Gresik

The preparation carried out by teachers at SMP Nahdlatul Ulama 2 Gresik, such as following guidance from the supervisor, is very important to ensure that the implementation of the Independent Curriculum runs well. Considering that it has only been implemented for one year, this is a good step to continue learning and adapting. Are there any suggestions or further support expected from the supervisor or principal to support teachers in implementing this curriculum?

In the independent curriculum, teachers are expected to be more creative in preparing materials and learning methods that are in accordance with the interests, talents and abilities of students. At SMP Nahdlatul Ulama 2, several teachers have implemented this (creative learning) and made learning more meaningful for students. although there are still some who use the classical learning method, because teachers also adjust to the material to be delivered, but students can learn well. Then, in this independent curriculum, there is also character development in the Pancasila Youth Profile Strengthening Project (P5) which is expected to be able to develop the character of students to be better (Mrs. Fatimah., 2024) Preparation at SMP Nahdlatul Ulama 2

Gresik in facing the Independent Curriculum seems comprehensive, by participating in offline and online training, as well as socialization to students and guardians. This shows the readiness of schools and teachers in adopting the new curriculum, including the implementation of modules and learning in the classroom. This step will certainly have a positive impact on the quality of learning. The stages of learning planning (Chumi Zahroul., 2023) in the independent curriculum are: Teacher preparation in learning by conducting diagnostic assessments, Making teaching modules, Preparing operational curricula, Preparing project modules to strengthen the profile of Pancasila youth. The next preparation is to create teaching modules, from the results of the analysis of teaching modules compiled by Islamic Religious Education and Character Education teachers at SMP Nahdlatul Ulama 2 Gresik, it is in accordance with the components of the teaching modules listed by the Ministry of Education and Culture (Sufyadi., 2021) which are divided into 3 stages, including:

1. General information, consisting of the identity of the module author, initial competencies, the profile of Pancasila youth, facilities and infrastructure, target students, and the learning model used
2. Core components, consisting of learning objectives, assessments, meaningful understanding, trigger questions, learning activities, student reflections.
3. Attachments, consisting of student worksheets, enrichment and remedial, reading materials for educators and students, glossary, bibliography.

Problems in Implementing the Independent Curriculum in Islamic Religious Education and Character Education Subjects at SMP Nahdlatul Ulama 2 Gresik

The researcher analyzed that the problem that occurred in the independent curriculum in the Islamic Religious Education and Character Education subjects was the lack of enthusiasm of teachers in studying the independent curriculum, because Islamic Religious Education and Character Education teachers in grade VII have busy hours outside of school hours so that understanding and implementing the independent curriculum is limited. The inhibiting factor in implementing the independent curriculum lies in the enthusiasm of teachers in studying the new curriculum and having to continue to renew themselves. This enthusiasm will of course affect teachers' understanding of implementing the independent curriculum, so the most difficult thing is to encourage teachers to want to continue learning.

The challenges in changing conventional learning habits and adapting to various forms of assessment in the Independent Curriculum can indeed interfere with the teaching and learning process. Limitations in the application of diagnostic assessments, as well as reliance on lecture methods, can make students feel uninvolved. Every new policy, including the Independent Curriculum, is usually faced with various problems and challenges. These changes often require adjustments from all parties, from teachers to students and parents. Open dialogue and feedback from all stakeholders are essential to identify problems and find effective solutions. The challenges for teachers in implementing the independent curriculum are:

1. Teachers are expected to be able to master digital technology and be able to apply the results of training in institutions with the hope of optimizing students' thinking intelligence, so that they can learn both in digital space and in the real world
2. Teachers must be observant in determining designs, strategies, and learning methods that can optimize students' thinking intelligence
3. Teachers are required to always hone their creativity, so that they can carry out creative learning.

Efforts to Implement the Independent Curriculum in Islamic Religious Education and Character Education Subjects at SMP Nahdlatul Ulama 2 Gresik

Efforts to participate in training and discuss with fellow teachers are very positive steps to improve understanding of the Independent Curriculum. Discussion and

collaboration can enrich perspectives and provide more innovative solutions in facing existing challenges. Are there any particular training or workshops that are very impressive or have a positive impact on teachers at SMP Nahdlatul Ulama 2 Gresik? Efforts to increase creativity in learning and conduct more innovative assessments are very important in implementing the Independent Curriculum. Using media such as projectors or laptops and group learning can create a more interactive and enjoyable learning atmosphere.

Teachers must continue to have the awareness to continue to develop by participating in offline or online training and discussing with colleagues to deepen their knowledge related to the independent curriculum as an application of lifelong learning. Like the motto of Tut Wuri Handayani which means teachers must provide direction, teachers must have ideas, and teachers must have good examples and role models for their students.

To overcome the problems in implementing the independent curriculum, changes are needed in educational units, including the following:

1. Educators minimize their role as learning material providers
2. Educators become inspirations for the growth of student creativity
3. Educators act as facilitators, tutors, inspirers and true learners who motivate students to "Learn Independently"

CONCLUSION

Conclusions from the study on the implementation of the Independent Curriculum in Islamic Religious Education and Character Education learning at SMP Nahdlatul Ulama 2 Gresik: The implementation of the Independent Curriculum in the subject of Islamic Religious Education and Character Education at SMP Nahdlatul Ulama 2 Gresik has been implemented well, seen from the preparation of teachers in implementing learning, namely by participating in training from within or outside the school and being able to compile teaching modules, and have carried out P5 activities well and smoothly. The understanding of teachers at SMP Nahdlatul Ulama 2 Gresik about the Independent Curriculum can be said to be good because they have succeeded in managing learning systematically, starting from providing motivation to concluding the material. The application of the Problem Based Learning method also encourages active discussions and presentations, while closing activities with conclusions help students understand the material comprehensively, so that learning takes place effectively. Disadvantages in the implementation of the Independent Curriculum in Islamic Religious Education subjects at SMP Nahdlatul Ulama 2 Gresik include the tendency for teachers to still use the lecture method and have not implemented differentiated learning or diagnostic assessments. However, there are advantages, namely teachers have implemented varied learning, not only focused on LKS, but also using methods such as discussions, presentations, project-based learning, demonstrations, and Q&A. Assessment in learning has also included summative and formative assessments, which are applied during the learning process.

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