



## **THE TRANSFORMATION OF INITIATIONS TO THE BUTT OF UNGUL EDUCATION WITH THE UNDERSTANDED CURRICULUM**

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### **Abstract:**

This research aims to explore the impact of leadership transformation in efforts to achieve superior educational quality through the implementation of an independent curriculum. The focus of the research is on changes in leadership style, managerial strategies, and adaptation to the independent curriculum at Darul Hikmah Vocational School. The research method uses a qualitative approach with in-depth interviews with school leaders, teachers and educational staff. The research results show that leadership transformation has a crucial role in forming an organizational culture that supports the implementation of the independent curriculum. innovative learning environment. In addition, it was found that collaboration between leaders and educational staff was the key to success in implementing the independent curriculum. The implications of these findings stimulate the need for leadership development that is adaptive and responsive to contextual changes, especially in facing the dynamics of an independent curriculum. The place of research was carried out at the Darul Hikmah Paiton Vocational School, Probolinggo. Based on the research results, several results show, including (1) Changes in Leadership Style: School leaders experienced changes in their leadership style, switching from a traditional model to a transformational model. (2) Adaptation to the Independent Curriculum: Identify leaders' strategies for integrating independent curriculum principles in planning and teaching. This research contributes to the understanding of how leadership transformation can be a driver of superior educational quality in the era of the independent curriculum.

**Keywords:** *Transformation, Leadership, Curriculum, Independence*

### **INTRODUCTION**

Education has a strategic role in character formation, skills development, and the preparation of younger generations for the challenges of the future. Darul Hikmah High School (SMK) in Paiton, Probolinggo, understands the importance of leadership transformation in achieving superior education. In this context, an independent

curriculum approach becomes the primary foundation for ensuring that the education provided meets the demands of the times. Leadership transformation in the context of education is a need that cannot be ignored. Effective leadership focuses not only on school administration and management, but also on innovation in the formulation of curricula that are relevant and responsive to the needs of learners. (Yuli and Rusdinal Hade Afriansyah 2018). SMK Darul Hikmah Paiton is committed to making an independent curriculum approach the key in drawing graduates who not only have practical expertise but also ability to think critically and creatively.

The independent curriculum at Darul Hikmah SMK not only covers academic learning, but also provides sufficient space for the development of soft skills, character strengthening, as well as a deep understanding of national values. Through the transformation of leadership, the school aims to create a learning environment that supports the creativity, collaboration, and independence of students. The importance of this leadership transformation is seen not only as a proactive step in the face of global change in education, but also as a concrete effort to improve the quality of learning. (Ulfatin and Triwiyanto 2016). The Merdeka curriculum as the main foundation in this transformation promotes an inclusive approach, provides flexibility and freedom in the learning process, as well as accommodates the diversity of potential and needs of students. In this context, educational leaders play a central role. They are not only administrators, but also catalysts of change that drive innovation and creativity in education. The transformation of leadership towards superior education with the Free Curriculum demands sharp vision, inclusive leadership, and the ability to move and motivate the entire educational community.

In this study will be traced the concrete steps taken by the leaders of education in implementing the Curriculum Merdeka, as applied by the institutions at the Darul Hikmah SMK that the curriculum transformation at Darul hikmah began with adaptation to the demands of the world of industry. Updates are being made to ensure that the learning material reflects technological developments and the needs of the local and global labour markets. The revised curriculum focuses on inclusiveness and diversity. It includes recognition of the diverse talents and interests of the student, providing choices in the selection of subjects, as well as providing a varied exclusive program.

The independent curriculum at SMK Darul Hikmah is designed to develop critical thinking skills of the pupils. Through this approach, they become not only task executors, but also thinkers capable of solving problems and adapting to change. Independent curricula provide more space for learners to take an active role in their learning (Abidin 2020). By empowering learners to organize their own learning, they are expected to develop an intrinsic autonomy and motivation. Through an independent curriculum, SMK Darul Hikmah focuses not only on academic aspects, but also on strengthening national character and values. Moral and cultural education applied to form a young generation that is responsible and loves the homeland (Suasthi, I. G. A., & Suadnyana 2020).

There are several previous studies that discuss related matters, among them; first, the study Windi Megayanti 2022, which discusses the transformation of the leadership style of the head of the school in the application of independent learning whose research results the head is responsible for the maintenance of maintenance and dissemination of school facilities, strengthening of educational resources and also educational activities. The role of the head of school becomes as important as the leader of the company becomes the focus and benchmark for all its employees. Second, Reksa Adya Pribadi, in his research SDN Rawu that the school has made registration as a mobility school in 2021. A mobile school does not mean a big school with complete facilities but a mobile school is a school run by a head of school who has passed the training and supply of the mobile school of course the head of the school wants to make a change in the field of education. Under the leadership of a good head of school, small schools would be advanced, even the schools that researchers visit could be said to be small schools with very limited land. But the school is capable of being an agent of

change that drives parents to educate their children to the school. Thirdly, Riowati Riówati 2023, the search process is carried out using keywords, quality of education, concept of self-learning and teacher motivation. Each article is selected on the basis of a specific question compiled by the author as an initial step. His research questions included; 1) How to portray the quality of education; 2) What are the components that influence the Quality of Education; 3) How the concept of self-learning implementation; 4) What is the role of teachers driving. The results of the literature review show that the problem of education is not free from the role of the teacher as a leader. The teacher's ability as a leader in the concept of self-learning is that the teacher acts as a motivator for fellow teachers in the school environment and motivates students. From some of the results of the above research, the researchers were motivated to investigate the transformation of leadership towards superior education with an independent curriculum at the institute of SMK Darul Hikmah Desa Randutatah, Paiton, Probolinggo.

The novelty of this research is that education plays a central role in shaping a superior and competitive generation. To that goal, leadership in the world of education is the key to directing and motivating the whole element in the educational institutions. (Indryani 2019). One of the concrete examples of leadership transformation efforts is what happened at Darul Hikmah SMK. The Secondary School of Education (SMK) is undergoing significant changes through strong leadership innovations, with a major focus on the implementation of the Free Curriculum. In opening this new chapter, SMK Darul Hikmah pursues a vision of progressive and visionary leadership, facing global challenges in the world of education. This transformation is emphasized through the application of the Merdeka Curriculum, a curriculum approach that provides flexibility and creativity in learning, in accordance with the needs and potential of each student. This approach is directed by the head of the school who has a clear vision and a high commitment to improve the quality of education at SMK Darul Hikmah. The aim of this research is to evaluate the concrete steps taken by the leadership of SMK Darul Hikmah in implementing the transformation towards improving the quality of education. It covers strategies, policies, and structural changes implemented by school leaders. Further analyses the extent to which the independent curriculum at Darul Hikmah SMK can provide an effective response to the needs of learners and the demands of the industry, as well as the degree to which it is relevant to the latest developments. This leadership transformation is not just a change of methods, but also a journey involving all stakeholders in the school, including teachers, students, and parents. (Yuli and Rusdinal Hade Afriansyah 2018). By pursuing the spirit of the Merdeka Curriculum, SMK Darul Hikmah is committed to impress graduates who are not only academically competent but also have the skills and character necessary to face the dynamics of society and the world of work. Through this approach, it is expected that schools can be transformational drivers capable of producing a generation of successors who are superior, characterized, and ready to compete at a global level.

## **RESEARCH METHODS**

This study uses a qualitative method of case study by conducting research intended to describe the problem as well as conduct an analysis of the problem that occurs. Researchers gather data through several stages such as; observation, observation directly at the research site (Sugiyono. 2018). Interviews, interviews with a number of informants at the research site. Observations, visits to the research site. Study documentation, analyze documents related to research. The site of the research was carried out at the institute of SMK Darul Hikmah Village Randutatah, Paiton, Probolinggo. Accuracy data is obtained from some informants who are able to inform and describe events on the ground. (Sugiyono 2018).

Table 1. Research Informer Resource

No	Informant	Amount	Initials
1	Headmaster	1	DW
2	vice principal	1	ST
3	Deputy Head of Curriculum	1	KR
4	Teacher	2	ID, IP

It can be seen from the table above that the source of information received from five informants including the head of school (DW) SMK Darul Hikmah Village Randutatah, Paiton, then deputy head of MI (ST), then waak curriculum and the last teacher-teachers as supervisors. The initial process is the collection of data, then the reduction of the data grafted in the form of a record, then display the data to understand the set of data that is then carried out the conclusion drawing from the data studied (Harahap 2020).

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The transformation of leadership is the key to achieving superior education at Darul Hikmah SMK. In this decade, researchers have focused on implementing independent curricula as a strong foundation for creating learning environments that meet the demands of the times. As the head of the school, I see myself as the primary driving force in every step of transformation. My role involves strategic decision-making, policy development, and ensuring all staff and students are actively involved in the process of change. (Zellatifanny and Mudjiyanto 2018). Besides the team building at the school will successfully implement the transformation, we form a strong leadership team. Close collaboration between the head of the school, the deputy head, and the teachers plays an important role in designing and implementing new policies. Strengthened by the results of interviews by Wakay Kulikulum (KR) in the implementation of our transformation curriculum is not only limited to administrative aspects, but also extends to the application of holistic independent curricula. We recognize that education is not only about providing technical knowledge, but also shaping the character and life skills needed in everyday life. In leading this transformation, we are actively adapting to technological developments. Integrating technology into curricula and teaching methods is an important step towards creating a dynamic and relevant learning environment (Reid 2021). Besides, as a leader, I realize that support for teacher development is very important. We provide routine training and workshops to ensure that our teachers are always ready to implement new approaches and continue to improve the quality of their teaching. This transformation is not just an internal responsibility of the school, but involves the entire educational community. We actively involve parents, local communities, and industry in supporting the vision and mission of the school. The transformation of leadership and the implementation of an independent curriculum at Darul Hikmah SMK is not the ultimate goal, but part of our commitment to continuously improving the quality of education in order to mark a generation that is ready to face the future with confidence and comprehensive skills (Saragih 2019).

The transformation of leadership at Darul Hikmah SMK is reflected in the progressive vision implemented by the head of school. School leaders have a long-term vision that is oriented towards improving the quality of education by making an independent curriculum the primary foundation. The curriculum is designed to integrate academic learning with character reinforcement, practical skills, and national values. It aims to create graduates who are not only technically competent but also have

a strong personality. Leadership at Darul Hikmah understands the importance of changing teaching methods. Teachers are encouraged to apply innovative and responsive learning approaches to the individual needs of learners. This includes the use of technology to enrich the learning experience. (Islam et al. 2018).

### **Active Engagement of Teachers in Curriculum Development**

The active involvement of teachers in curriculum development at Darul Hikmah SMK reflects the school's commitment to ensuring that the curricula designed not only reflect the needs of students, but also describe the contributions and views of educators who interact directly with pupils. SMK Darul Hikmah encourages collaboration between teachers in the formation of teaching teams that are directly involved in the development of curricula (Rahayu, R., Rosita, R., Rahayuningsih, Y. S., Hernawan, A. H., & Prihantini 2022). Through regular meetings and discussion forums, teachers can share experiences, ideas, and insights to create a more holistic and responsive curriculum. Teachers are invited to engage in the preparation of learning materials. This process involves identifying the needs and challenges of learners as well as determining the most effective teaching methods. Thus, the curriculum becomes more relevant and practical-learning-oriented.

To improve teachers' understanding of the philosophy and purpose of the independent curriculum, SMK Darul Hikmah organizes specialized training and workshops. It provides an opportunity for teachers to delve into the concept of an independent curriculum and develop the skills needed to implement it. Teachers are regarded as innovators and creative thinkers in the context of curriculum development. They are encouraged to create new learning approaches, integrate technology, and adapt the material to suit the latest developments and needs of students. (Ningrum, Maghfiroh, and Andriani 2023).

Before the official curriculum was implemented, there was a phase of implementation of experimental teaching. Teachers have the opportunity to try and evaluate the effectiveness of teaching methods, while collecting feedback from learners. This allows necessary adjustments before full implementation. Teacher engagement is also focused on alignment of curricula with applicable competence standards. Teachers work together to ensure that each element of the curriculum supports the achievement of the expected standard of competence. The teachers at Darul Hikmah SMK are directed to use local resources in the development of curricula. This includes incorporating local case studies, inviting guest speakers from the local industry, and organizing field visits relevant to the study programme (Wulandari et al. 2023).

Teachers are actively involved in the process of continuous monitoring and evaluation of curriculum implementation. They provide input based on their field experience, help identify areas of improvement, and together find solutions to improve the quality of learning. Teachers apply a formative approach in evaluating student progress. This involves continuous feedback and learning from each evaluation experience to improve their teaching approach. The active involvement of teachers in curriculum development at Darul Hikmah SMK is not just an administrative step, but reflects a joint effort to create a dynamic, relevant learning environment and support the holistic growth of pupils. (Hidayah et al. 2023). Thus, this approach is the foundation for the superior quality of education in the school.

### **Support for the Professional Development of Teachers**

In addition to the transformation of leadership in an effort to the quality of superior education through the implementation of an independent curriculum. Support for the professional development of teachers at Darul Hikmah SMK is an integral part of the school's strategy in improving the quality of education. By providing strong support, schools create an environment that stimulates growth and innovation in terms of teaching. SMK Darul Hikmah regularly organizes regular training programmes for teachers (Suhermanto, S., & Anshari 2018). This training covers up-to-date understanding of curricula, innovative teaching techniques, as well as aspects such as

the use of technology in learning. Support is not only limited to general training, but also includes dedicated workshops and seminars aimed at deepening certain aspects of education. This allows teachers to continue to sharpen special skills and gain new insights.

The support and mentoring program at Darul Hikmah SMK enables experienced teachers to share their knowledge and experience with newer peers. It creates a strong support network between teachers. Darul Hikmah SMK provides access to online learning resources for teachers, enabling them to continuously deepen their understanding of the latest developments in education, teaching strategies, and latest research. Support is also provided for interdisciplinary collaboration. Teachers from various fields of study are invited to collaborate in developing an interdisciplinary approach that can enrich student learning experience. SMK Darul Hikmah gives recognition to teachers who continue to develop themselves. It can involve awards, awards certificates, or other incentives that provide additional motivation to improve the quality of teaching (Permana et al. 2022).

The school provides research and development facilities for teachers interested in conducting research in the field of education. This support provides room for teachers to explore new innovations and contribute to the development of education. SMK Darul Hikmah promotes a culture of reflection and structured feedback. Teachers have the opportunity to reflect on their teaching, receive constructive feedback, and identify areas of their personal development. Teachers are encouraged to participate in collaborative projects that involve improving the quality of learning throughout the school (Fazira and Mirani 2019). It creates an atmosphere of collaboration and collective involvement in an effort to common goals. With strong support for teacher professional development, SMK Darul Hikmah not only provides opportunities for personal and professional growth of teachers, but also ensures that the education given is always relevant, innovative, and of high quality. It became the primary foundation in realizing the quality of education of excellence in the school.

### **Strengthening Collaboration with Stakeholder**

SMK Darul Hikmah as an educational institution has a strategic role in shaping a superior and qualified young generation. To that goal, strengthening collaboration with stakeholders becomes a must. My stakeholders, whether it's parents of students, industry, local government, and society, have a crucial role in supporting and advancing the quality of education at Darul Hikmah SMK. In strengthening the collaboration at the Darul Hikmah SMK school, involving stakeholders in the educational process can help in determining the actual needs of the industry, ensuring the relevance of the curriculum, and producing graduates who are ready to work. (Maknun 2015). This collaboration brings sustainable benefits for curriculum development and improved teaching quality. Involving the community as a stakeholder can build a sense of ownership towards Darul Hikmah SMK. It can encourage active participation in school activities and support the construction of school facilities and programmes. Collaboration with industry opens the doors to job opportunities for students. Internships, training, and direct engagement with companies can improve students' readiness to enter the world of work. Wismah can ensure that the curriculum is not only theoretical, but also covers the practical aspects necessary in the world of work (Nisa and Rustyawati 2022). It can ensure that graduates have skills that fit the demands of the industry.

Strengthening collaboration with stakeholders at Darul Hikmah SMK is the key to success in improving the quality of education and forming graduates who are ready to compete in the world of work. Engaging parents, industry, local governments, and society in general will create an educational environment that is competitive and relevant to the demands of the times. With the right strategy, SMK Darul Hikmah can establish a positive and lasting relationship with all my stakeholders (Lee 2022).

### **CONCLUSION**

In achieving the vision of superior education, SMK Darul Hikmah has undergone a process of transformation of leadership by applying the concept of Merdeka Curriculum. This transformation is a strategic step to ensure the quality of education that is superior and in line with the needs of the times. By adopting the principles of inclusive and progressive leadership, the school succeeds in creating an environment conducive to the development of the potential of each student. Through the Merdeka Curriculum, SMK Darul Hikmah places students as the main subject of learning, providing flexibility in the selection of subjects, as well as integrating learning with the needs of the world of work. Leadership who are actively involved in designing and implementing this curriculum has an important role in guiding teachers and students towards achieving optimal performance. (Mardiyah, I., & Hardew 2023).

Leadership transformation is also reflected in the efforts to develop the professionalism of teachers and educational staff, ensuring that they are always up to date with the latest developments in the world of education and industry. The active involvement of school leaders in training and guidance helps create a positive atmosphere that stimulates collaboration and innovation (Husna 2021). With this approach, SMK Darul Hikmah not only impresses graduates who have relevant knowledge and skills, but also forms a character that is tough and ready to face global challenges. The transformation of leadership towards superior education with the Merdeka Curriculum at SMK Darul Hikmah is proof of the school's commitment in providing quality and relevant learning to form a generation of qualified successors.

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