

IMPLEMENTATION OF PROJECT LEARNING (PAI) WITH INDEPENDENT CURRICULUM IN ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS

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Abstrak: This study examines the independent curriculum based on differentiated learning with the perspective of Islamic Education. The method used involves interviews and observations of 4 respondents. The results of the study show that obtaining diverse and in-depth perspectives on the implementation of the curriculum from various parties directly involved in the education process. This research aims to find out the application of PAI learning using the independent curriculum at SD Negeri Sampang 01. The findings of the study show that student learning by using the independent curriculum learning model shows an increase in better understanding with direct practice provided by teachers. With this, students are more active and learning becomes more interactive. This study provides knowledge to researchers about the application of project learning (PAI) with the Independent Curriculum in Elementary Schools. By focusing on the effectiveness of project-based learning methods in improving students' understanding of PAI materials and their impact on the development of critical thinking skills, creativity, and collaboration.

Keywords: Implementation, Learning Model, Independent Curriculum, Elementary School

Introduction

Based on data from the Ministry of Education and Culture (Kemendikbud), it is stated that there are 84,034 elementary school level education units in Indonesia that have implemented the Independent Curriculum (Erwin, 2023). This curriculum was introduced as an effort to provide more flexibility and creativity in the learning process, emphasizing on the development of students' competencies and character. (Martatiana, D. R., Derlis, A., Aviarizki, H. W., Jurdil, R. R., Andayani, T., & Hidayat, 2023) The Independent Curriculum is designed to replace the 2013 Curriculum, with the aim of improving the quality of education through a more holistic approach and relevant to today's needs. The implementation of the Independent

Curriculum at the elementary level includes various aspects, including project-based learning, technology integration, and an emphasis on building student character. The implementation of this curriculum is also supported by various training and technical guidance for teachers, so that they can adopt more innovative and interactive teaching methods. Data shows that schools that implement the Independent Curriculum tend to experience an increase in student participation and motivation to learn, as well as strengthening literacy and numeracy competencies (Raihan, 2024). With this significant number, it is hoped that the implementation of the Independent Curriculum can bring positive changes in the national education system, create a generation that is better prepared to face global challenges and actively contribute to nation building.

This study shows significant results in the development of student competencies. (Arwitaningsih, R. P., Dewi, B. F., Rahmawati, E. M., & Khuriyah, 2023) explained that the Independent Curriculum provides space for innovation and creativity in learning Islamic Religious Education (PAI). This curriculum allows for the integration of project learning that focuses not only on the cognitive aspect, but also on the development of students' character and skills. In addition, (Achmad, G. H., Ratnasari, D., Amin, A., Yuliani, E., & Liandara, 2022) emphasized the importance of authentic assessment in the Independent Curriculum for PAI, which provides a more comprehensive picture of students' abilities. This assessment includes an evaluation of the projects that students undertake, reflecting their understanding of the material and its application in daily life. (Hidayati, Z., & Nurdi, 2023) also noted that teachers in elementary schools have a positive perception of the implementation of the Independent Curriculum in learning PAI and Ethics. They assessed that this approach encourages active participation of students and increases their involvement in the learning process. The implementation of project learning in PAI with the Independent Curriculum not only improves students' academic competence, but also strengthens moral and ethical values, and equips them with relevant skills for the future. These studies collectively show that the Independent Curriculum with a project learning approach is effective in improving the quality of education in elementary schools (Khadafe, 2023).

Looking at the Implementation, this study aims to explore and analyze the implementation of project learning (PAI) with the Independent Curriculum in Elementary Schools. The main focus of the research is to understand how the Independent Curriculum approach is applied in PAI learning, as well as to evaluate the effectiveness of this learning model in improving students' understanding of PAI materials (Fauzi, 2023). This study will also examine whether teachers apply an approach that is in accordance with the principles of the Independent Curriculum in teaching PAI and how the implementation is

implemented. In addition, the study will identify the learning models used in PAI learning with the Independent Curriculum and evaluate students' responses to the learning (Purnama Sari, D., & Amrullah, 2023). This research will also reveal the challenges or obstacles faced in implementing the Independent Curriculum learning model in the context of PAI learning, as well as the solutions provided by teachers to overcome these obstacles.

This study is based on the argument that the effectiveness of the implementation of Project Learning (PAI) with the Independent Curriculum in Elementary Schools is very relevant when analyzed through Benjamin Bloom's Bloom Taxonomy theory (Aeni, 2014). This theory (Purwowododo, A., & Zaini, 2023) maps the student learning process in six cognitive levels, from knowledge to evaluation, thus allowing researchers to evaluate the extent to which the curriculum used is able to develop student understanding. The implementation of the Independent Curriculum, which emphasizes project-based learning and student empowerment in the learning process, is expected to optimize student achievement at a higher cognitive level. By utilizing this theory, this study will also (Mubarokah, 2023) explore how this approach can stimulate students' critical thinking and analytical abilities in understanding and applying PAI learning in their daily lives. Thus, this study also provides a strong foundation to assess the positive impact of the Independent Curriculum on PAI learning at the primary level, which is relevant for the development of a more adaptive and responsive educational curriculum to the needs of today's students.

Research Methods

To achieve the research objectives, this study uses a qualitative method with a narrative inquiry approach and a case study to explore the implementation of project learning (PAI) with the Independent Curriculum in elementary schools (Widyandini, 2021). This approach was chosen because it allows researchers to uncover the experiences, perceptions, and narratives of teachers, students, and related parties in depth and contextually. Data was collected through in-depth interviews, observations, and documentation. In-depth interviews were conducted to obtain detailed information about teachers' experiences and views regarding the implementation of the Independent Curriculum in PAI learning. Observations were made to directly observe the learning process in the classroom, the interaction between teachers and students, and how the project learning model was applied in daily practice. Documentation is used to collect written data, such as lesson plans, teaching notes, and student evaluation reports, which provide additional evidence about curriculum implementation. The data collection mechanism includes scheduling interviews with teachers and students, conducting class observations at agreed times, and collecting relevant documents from the school. This approach (Nur, 2023) provide a comprehensive overview of how the

Independent Curriculum is implemented in the context of PAI learning, as well as identify the challenges and successes experienced by education.

Seeing the need for research data, this study uses the data triangulation technique used including source, method, and time triangulation (Susanto, D., & Jailani, 2023). Source triangulation involves collecting data from various informants, such as teachers, students, and principals, to ensure consistency of information (Putra, E. H., Sesmiarni, Z., & Ilmi, 2024). Triangulation methods involve the use of various data collection techniques, namely in-depth interviews, observations, and documentation, to obtain a comprehensive and in-depth picture of curriculum implementation (Sinta, L., Malaikosa, Y. M. L., & Supriyanto, 2022). Time triangulation is carried out by collecting data at various times to see stability and changes in the implementation of the curriculum (Mutiani, M., Abbas, E. W., Syaharuddin, S., & Susanto, 2020). The reason for using this triangulation is to increase the validity and reliability of research findings, reduce bias, and ensure more accurate and in-depth data. (Chandra, 2023) The data analysis technique used is the Miles and Huberman model, which involves three main stages: data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion drawn/verification. In data reduction, data obtained from interviews, observations, and documentation are sorted, selected, and simplified to focus on information relevant to the research. Data presentation involves organizing data in the form of matrices, tables, or graphs to facilitate analysis. Drawing conclusions and verification is carried out by identifying patterns, themes, and relationships in the data, then confirming the findings through triangulation to ensure the accuracy and validity of the conclusions produced (Nartin, S. E., Faturrahman, S. E., Ak, M., Deni, H. A., MM, C., Santoso, Y. H., ... & Eliyah, 2024). This approach ensures systematic and in-depth data analysis, providing comprehensive insights into the implementation of Project Learning (PAI) with the Independent Curriculum in Elementary Schools.

This research took place at SDN Sampang 01, the reason for choosing SDN Sampang 01 as the location of the research is because this school has adopted the Independent Curriculum and is active in implementing project-based learning, especially in Islamic Religious Education (PAI) subjects. In addition, SDN Sampang 01 has a strong commitment to educational innovation and the development of learning quality, making it an ideal place to observe and analyze the implementation of this new curriculum. The research respondents consisted of 4 people including 1 principal, 1 PAI teacher, and 2 students. The selection of respondents aims to obtain diverse and in-depth perspectives on the implementation of the curriculum from various parties directly involved in the education process. The research time is scheduled from May to July 2024, which provides enough time to collect data through in-depth interviews, observations, and documentation. This research is important to be conducted

at SDN Sampang 01 because the results are expected to provide valuable insights into the effectiveness of the Independent Curriculum in increasing students' understanding of PAI materials, as well as identifying challenges and obstacles faced in the implementation process. The findings of this study can be a reference for other schools that want to apply a similar approach in PAI learning. Participant profiles are presented in table 1

Table 1: Participant Profiles

It	Initials	Profile
1	KP	Principal
2	G1	Teacher
3	M1	Pupil
4	M2	Pupil

In-depth interviews were conducted with the informants to dig up research data (Rahardjo, 2017). This research can provide a holistic picture of the dynamics and needs of the group in the local context. The selection at SDN Sampang 01 also offers good accessibility for researchers to carry out detailed and structured field studies. Thus, through this research, it is hoped that a deeper understanding of the challenges faced by teachers and students in this school will be obtained and can produce a generation of gerda and dignity.

Results and Discussion

A. Implementation of the Independent Curriculum in Elementary Schools

The implementation of the Independent Curriculum in Elementary Schools has great potential to change the educational paradigm in Indonesia. By providing greater flexibility to teachers in designing and implementing learning that suits the needs and interests of students, the Independent Curriculum encourages the adoption of innovative and relevant learning methods to daily life. This approach not only focuses on the development of academic competence, but also considers the development of character and soft skills that are important for the future of students. Through the integration of project-based learning, discovery learning, and a variety of other active learning techniques, the curriculum allows students to develop critical thinking, creativity, and collaboration skills naturally. However, the successful implementation of the Independent Curriculum requires strong support from various parties, including schools, teachers, parents, and local governments. The provision of adequate resources, training for teachers, and active participation of all stakeholders are key in maintaining the quality and sustainability of this implementation. As such, the Independent Curriculum has the potential to create a dynamic and inclusive learning environment in

primary schools, preparing students to face global challenges with comprehensive and sustainable capabilities.

In this study, the implementation of the Independent Curriculum approach at SD Negeri Sampang 01 shows a strong commitment in optimizing the school habituation program and strengthening cooperation with students' parents. One example of a habituation program is a morning pick-up activity scheduled from 06.30–07.00 by picket teachers, which not only ensures on-time attendance but also creates an orderly and disciplined atmosphere in the school. In addition, the application of the 5 S principles (smile, greeting, greeting, politeness, and courtesy) when interacting in the school environment aims to form the character of students who have good ethics. Before starting the lesson, students are invited to line up to count the number of people present, pray together, and memorize asmaul husna and short letters, which support their spiritual and academic development. Cooperation with parents and local religious leaders is also an integral part of the school's efforts to improve religious education, such as teaching ngaji jus amma, iqra, and the Qur'an. With this holistic approach, SD Negeri Sampang 01 not only focuses on the academic aspect but also on the formation of students' character and spiritual values, in accordance with the values of the Independent Curriculum which emphasizes comprehensive and sustainable education.

The principal emphasized, "The importance of encouraging the adoption of innovative and relevant learning methods to daily life is increasingly important in facing today's educational challenges. Methods such as project-based learning and discovery learning have been shown to be effective in stimulating students' critical thinking, creativity, and collaboration. By utilizing projects that reflect real-life situations, students not only learn theory but also experience direct application of their knowledge, which makes learning more meaningful and in-depth. In addition, this method prepares students to face global challenges by developing practical skills such as problem-solving, communication, and teamwork. The adoption of this method also increases students' interest in learning by making learning more fun and engaging. This is important because students who are active in learning tend to have higher motivation and achieve better learning outcomes. Therefore, educators need to support the use of these innovative learning methods with teacher training and development and the provision of the resources necessary for successful integration in the classroom. Thus, education can remain relevant and beneficial for students in preparing them for an ever-changing world."

Based on the data obtained, it can be seen that the Implementation of the Independent Curriculum at SD Negeri Sampang 01 shows great potential in

improving learning approaches, especially in PAI subjects. This curriculum provides more space for teachers to design learning that suits the needs and interests of students, creating a more personalized and meaningful learning experience. With a focus on developing basic competencies, such as those applied in the Project Based Learning (PjBL) Learning Model for date or history materials, students in this elementary school are actively involved in seeking information, discussing, and emulating the commendable traits of the prophet. PjBL not only enhances students' creativity and social skills, but also fosters their critical and analytical thinking skills, in line with the values of the Independent Curriculum that emphasizes character building and holistic competency development. However, this implementation faces several obstacles, including limited PAI learning time and challenges in using technology in the classroom. Internal factors such as student motivation and interest, as well as parental support, also affect the effectiveness of this implementation. Through a constructivism and social learning approach, PjBL at SD Negeri Sampang 01 is not only relevant but also essential in preparing an adaptive and characterful generation to face the future.

B. Challenges and Obstacles in the Implementation of PAI Learning Using the Independent Curriculum in Elementary Schools

Challenges and obstacles in the implementation of PAI learning using the Independent Curriculum in Elementary Schools include several crucial aspects. First, teacher readiness and competence are the main factors that affect success. Although the Independent Curriculum offers flexibility in learning design, not all teachers have adequate training or understanding to implement it effectively. In addition, the project-based learning advocated by this curriculum requires the use of adequate technology and resources, which are not always available in every primary school. Another challenge is the lack of support or understanding from parents and the community on the concept and benefits of the Independent Curriculum, which can hinder successful implementation. In addition, limited learning time and tight schedules are also obstacles in integrating diverse approaches in accordance with the principles of the Independent Curriculum. Finally, assessments that are in line with this new learning approach are also a challenge, as they must be able to reflect project-based learning and the development of students' holistic competencies. Addressing these challenges requires commitment and collaboration between teachers, schools, parents, and related parties to create a conducive and supportive learning environment for all parties involved.

Teachers' readiness and competence have a central role in determining the success of the implementation of the Independent Curriculum in Elementary Schools. Although this curriculum offers flexibility in learning design, not all teachers have adequate training or understanding to implement it effectively.

This can limit their ability to adapt learning strategies that are in accordance with the principles of the Independent Curriculum, such as project-based learning that requires the use of adequate technology and resources. In some elementary schools, limited infrastructure and access to technology are real obstacles in maximizing the potential of this curriculum. Teachers need to be supported with continuous training and adequate access to support resources to improve their understanding and ability to implement this approach effectively. This support is not only from the school, but also from the government and the community at large, so that teachers can take advantage of the flexibility of the Independent Curriculum to create meaningful and relevant learning experiences for students.

"The readiness and ability of teachers greatly determines the success of the Independent Curriculum in elementary school. Not all teachers have enough training and understanding to apply it effectively, especially in project learning that requires technology and resources. There are infrastructure constraints in several schools that hinder the potential of this curriculum. Teachers need adequate training and access to implement this approach. Support from schools, the government, and the community needs to be strengthened so that teachers can maximize with the Independent Curriculum, creating meaningful and relevant learning for students."

The implementation of PAI (Terj - Pendidikan Agama Islam) learning with the Independent Curriculum at SDN Sampang 01 Semarang faces several challenges that need to be overcome to maximize its effectiveness. One of them is the limitation of PAI learning time which is only 4 hours per week, which affects the depth of material that students can achieve. The use of technology such as LCDs is also an obstacle because it has to alternate between teachers, reducing the continuity of consistent learning. In addition, internal factors such as students' motivation and interest in PAI as well as varying parental support can affect participation rates and learning quality. In this context, strategies are needed to increase student motivation, such as the use of learning methods that are more interesting and relevant to daily life. In addition, continuous education and training for teachers in implementing the Independent Curriculum effectively is also important to overcome this challenge. Active support from schools and parents in creating a conducive learning environment is also needed to ensure the successful implementation of the Independent Curriculum in PAI learning. By identifying and overcoming these challenges effectively, SDN Sampang 01 Semarang can better utilize the potential of the Independent Curriculum to improve the quality of education and character development of students.

C. Students' Responses to PAI Learning Using the Independent Curriculum Model

Students' responses to PAI learning using the Independent Curriculum model in elementary schools tend to be positive and encouraging. They respond enthusiastically to a more active and relevant learning approach to daily life. Students love the use of project-based learning methods and discovery learning that encourage them to actively participate in the learning process. By engaging students in practical and contextual activities, the Independent Curriculum allows them to develop critical thinking, creativity, and collaboration skills naturally. In addition, this approach also helps students to better understand life values, including character and soft skills that are important for their future. This positive response is also reflected in higher levels of motivation in attending PAI lessons, as well as better interaction between students, teachers, and fellow students in learning. Nonetheless, challenges such as time constraints and technological resources may affect their learning experience. Therefore, continuity in support and improvement in learning facilities from schools and the active participation of parents is essential to maintain the success of the Independent Curriculum model in meeting the educational needs and expectations of students in Primary School.

Students respond enthusiastically to a more active and relevant approach to daily life. Students really like the use of project-based learning methods and discovery learning that allow them to be actively involved in the learning process. In this context, students not only receive information from teachers, but they also engage in the discovery and application of knowledge through interesting projects. The project-based method allows them to apply theory into hands-on practice, which makes learning more meaningful and relevant to everyday life. As such, they can develop practical skills, such as problem-solving, teamwork, and creativity, which are indispensable in the real world. In addition, this approach also increases students' motivation to learn because they feel actively involved in building their own understanding. By facilitating a stimulating and supportive learning environment, this method not only enhances academic achievement, but also prepares students to face future challenges with the necessary confidence and skills.

"They are very excited about learning that is more active and relevant to daily life. Students really like the project and discovery learning method because they can be directly involved in learning. They not only listen to teachers, but also actively discover and apply knowledge through interesting projects. The project method helps them apply theory into practice, which makes learning more real and relevant. With this, they can develop practical skills such as problem-solving, teamwork, and creativity, things that are very useful in the real world. Students are also more motivated because they feel directly involved in the building of

their own understanding. With a fun and supportive learning environment, this method not only improves academic achievement, but also prepares students to face future challenges with the confidence and skills needed."

Students respond enthusiastically to a more active and relevant approach to daily life. They really like the use of project-based learning methods and discovery learning that allows them to be actively involved in the learning process. With the project-based method, students not only receive information from teachers, but also engage in the discovery and application of knowledge through engaging projects. This makes learning more meaningful and relevant to their daily lives. They can develop practical skills such as problem-solving, teamwork, and creativity, which are essential for real-world experience. Additionally, this approach increases students' motivation to learn because they feel actively involved in building their own understanding. By facilitating a stimulating and supportive learning environment, this method not only enhances academic achievement, but also prepares students to face future challenges with the necessary confidence and skills. Nonetheless, challenges such as time constraints and technological resources may affect their learning experience. Therefore, the continued support of schools and the active participation of parents is essential to maintain the success of the Independent Curriculum model in meeting the educational needs and expectations of students in Primary School.

Conclusion

The implementation of the Independent Curriculum in Elementary Schools has great potential to change the educational paradigm in Indonesia. By providing flexibility to teachers in designing learning according to the needs of students, the Independent Curriculum encourages the adoption of innovative learning methods that are relevant to daily life. The integration of project-based learning and discovery learning allows students to develop natural critical thinking, creativity, and collaboration skills, while strengthening important character and soft skills. The success of this implementation depends on the support of all relevant parties, including teachers, schools, parents, and local governments, in providing training, resources, and a conducive learning environment. Although students respond positively to this active and contextual approach, challenges such as time constraints and technology affect their learning experience. Therefore, continuous efforts in supporting and improving learning facilities and the active participation of parents are the key to maintaining the success of the Independent Curriculum in meeting the educational expectations of students in elementary schools.

Research on the Implementation of Project Learning (PAI) with the Independent Curriculum in Elementary Schools makes an important contribution in the current context of Indonesian education. Through this approach, this study reveals the great potential of project-based learning methods in improving students' understanding of PAI materials, as well as the development of critical thinking skills, creativity, and collaboration. The implementation of the Independent Curriculum proves that active and contextual learning not only increases student motivation but also strengthens important character values and soft skills. The results of this study also provide in-depth insights into the challenges faced in adopting this curriculum, such as teacher readiness, resource availability, and support from parents and the community. By analyzing these factors, this study provides valuable guidance for the development of more inclusive and effective education policies at the primary school level. It is hoped that the findings of this study can inspire further efforts to improve the implementation of the Independent Curriculum so that it can further stimulate students' learning potential and prepare them to face future educational and social demands.

The limitation of the research on the Implementation of Project Learning (PAI) with the Independent Curriculum in one elementary school with only four respondents is that the generalization of the results may be limited geographically and demographically. With a small sample, representation of various student backgrounds and school conditions can be incomplete. Future research needs to expand the scope of the sample to include more schools and respondents so that the results obtained can better represent the variation and complexity in the implementation of this curriculum in various primary school contexts in Indonesia. In addition, future research must also pay attention to better data quality by using various data collection instruments and more varied analysis methods. This will help in providing a deeper understanding of the factors that affect the success or challenges in implementing the Independent Curriculum, such as teacher preparation, resource support, and student response. Thus, future research can provide more comprehensive and applicable insights for education policymakers to improve the success of the implementation of the Independent Curriculum in all primary schools in Indonesia.

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