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Perceptions of elementary school teachers towards the implementation of the independent curriculum during the COVID-19 pandemic

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Abstract

This research aims to explore elementary school teachers' perceptions of implementing an independent curriculum during the COVID-19 pandemic imposed by the Indonesian government as alternative learning to address the problem of learning loss. Data was collected through semi-structured interviews with 38 teachers in primary schools across 13 different regions in Indonesia. Data analysis using thematic qualitative quasi-analysis. The analysis found four main themes: urgency, challenges, support and teaching strategies in implementing an independent curriculum. The research concludes that the success of the curriculum will be determined mainly by technological readiness, support and collaboration from all stakeholders, both central and local governments, educational quality assurance institutions, universities, schools, teachers, parents and the community. This research contributes to solve the problems faced by the Indonesian government due to the impact of online learning during the COVID-19 pandemic which results in low literacy.

Keywords: COVID-19, Curriculum implementation, Indonesia, Primary schools, Student-centered learning, Teachers.

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Contribution of this paper to the literature

This research contributes to solve the problems faced by the Indonesian government due to the impact of online learning during the COVID-19 pandemic. It can be used as input and literature reference in implementing policies on an independent curriculum that will be executed simultaneously in 2024.

1. Introduction

The COVID-19 pandemic that has affected Indonesia since March 2020 compelled the Republic of Indonesia to implement measures to prevent the spread of the pandemic by implementing large-scale social restrictions that limit public services including educational services. The COVID-19 forbids more than sixty million Indonesian children from attending school and are forced to use distance learning (Yarrow, Masood, & Afkar, 2020). Learning activities that are usually carried out face-to-face must be carried out online. Regional advancement, parents' education levels, household expenses, teacher competence, teacher qualifications (Link & Beatty, 2012) and technological advances all have an impact on how students, parents, teachers and schools respond to online learning activities (Aliyyah et al., 2020).

In-person forced learning activities must use distance learning (Aliyyah et al., 2020). Without being given learning stages and adequate infrastructure, student learning outcomes further deteriorate and result in learning loss (Rythia & Noah, 2021). This is due to a lack of educational interaction between teachers and students (Epps, Brown, Nijjar, & Hyland, 2021), the lack of games that encourage children to cooperate in completing group tasks (Rogers, 2022) and the use of learning with a distance system (Epps et al. (2021) which makes the child bored and not interested in participating in the learning activities provided by the teacher.

In 2020, the World Bank and the "innovation" programme, a partnership program between the Indonesian government and Australia for educational activities conducted various studies to look at the risks of the impact of online learning. According to the findings, four-month distance learning would result in a 25-point decrease in the Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) reading score Yarrow et al. (2020). Moreover, further online learning applications could result in an additional decrease of about 11 points from the PISA score (Rythia & Noah, 2021).

After the COVID-19 pandemic, the government of the Republic of Indonesia provides options for every elementary school to be able to implement an "independent" curriculum as an alternative to learning to ease the learning burden and focus teacher efforts on strengthening essential competencies, namely literacy and numeracy. The "independent" curriculum is intended to encourage better learning outcomes, especially when learning resources are limited such as during the COVID-19 pandemic.

The government of the Republic of Indonesia conducted a study on learning outcomes in which a total of 18,000 (grade 1, 2 and 3) elementary school students from 610 schools were asked to do assessment questions in the field of literacy and numeracy. The results of the study stated that that academic unit that implemented the independent curriculum had higher achievements compared to academic units that were implemented in 2013 curriculum as a whole. The difference in learning outcomes scores is 35 points (0.344 standard deviations) for numeracy and 48 points (0.345 standard deviations) for literacy. This difference is then converted into learning outcomes in the number of learning months to more than four months for literacy and numeracy (Education Endowment Foundation, 2021).

Various studies have examined the curriculum's application during the COVID-19 pandemic. Some of these studies including research related to the application of the curriculum in Finland which was carried out to overcome the learning crisis during the COVID-19 (Hakala & Kujala, 2021). Furthermore, the curriculum implementation during the COVID-19 pandemic was also carried out in the Netherlands which stated that during the COVID-19 pandemic, there was no learning improvement. The study's results stated that in countries with weaker infrastructure or that close schools longer would cause significant losses (Engzell, Frey, & Verhagen, 2021; Jandrić & McLaren, 2021).

On the other hand, several Indonesian researchers have also reviewed the application of the 2013 curriculum, which provides input on the need for curriculum revision by paying attention to ten curriculum models (Akib et al., 2020). Furthermore, the results of the study also stated that the implementation of the 2013 curriculum requires the mental readiness of teachers and students as well as comprehensive socialization by providing a handbook that teachers and students can use as a reference in learning (Hidayah, Wangid, & Wuryandani, 2022; Rumahlatu, Huliselan, & Takaria, 2016). The Indonesian Ministry of Education and Culture has also conducted a 2013 curriculum evaluation which states that students are too heavy to bear much learning.

However, no research has analyzed teachers' perspectives on implementing an independent curriculum during the COVID-19 pandemic in Indonesia. Therefore, this study aims to examine the perspective of elementary school teachers on the application of an independent curriculum. This research is essential because it can provide input to the government of the Republic of Indonesia in implementing a separate curriculum.

1.1. Independent Curriculum in Indonesia

The independent curriculum is a curriculum that has been implemented since February 2022 during the COVID-19 pandemic given a diverse and optimal intracurricular learning design so that students have enough time to explore concepts and strengthen competencies. (Ministry of Education and Culture of the Republic of Indonesia, 2022). The independent curriculum allows teachers to choose various teaching tools to tailor learning to students' learning needs and interests (Ministry of Education Culture, 2022). The independent curriculum strengthens the achievement of the Pancasila student profile which enhances students' character based on specific themes by the Indonesian government (Education Standards Curriculum and Assessment Agency of the Ministry of Education Culture Research and Technology of the Republic of Indonesia, 2022). The independent curriculum is based on student-centred-based learning.

In some countries, student-centered curricula have been implemented ranging from primary education to undergraduate education. Pakistan has implemented a student-centered curriculum from primary education to secondary education (Nawaz & Akbar, 2021) where the teacher will adjust the subjects and materials given

according to the needs of the students. Meanwhile, the Netherlands has implemented a student-centered curriculum up to the undergraduate education stage (Waterval et al., 2017) so that students are allowed to take courses according to their needs. In the United States, a student-centered curriculum is given from the moment the child enters elementary school (Beirnes, 2022) so teachers can identify students' talents and interests from the start.

1.2. The state of COVID-19 in Indonesia

Indonesia has the highest number of COVID-19 victims in the world (Utunen et al., 2020). Therefore, the Indonesian government has made a policy on the implementation of learning activities during the COVID-19 by using the implementation of restrictions on community activities through levels with level 4, 3 and 2 categories for the provinces of Java and Bali which are the most victimized areas and detected COVID-19 (Joint Decree of 4 Ministers of the Republic of Indonesia, 2021; Ministry of Home Affairs of the Republic of Indonesia, 2021).

The information for each level category in the implementation of restrictions on community activities at the elementary school level during the COVID-19 period in Indonesia is given in Table 1.

Table 1. Level categories for activities during the COVID-19.

No	Level	Information
1	4	The implementation of learning activities is carried out 100% through distance learning.
2	3	The implementation of learning activities is carried out through limited face-to-face learning with a maximum capacity of 62% using distance learning.
3	2	The implementation of learning activities is carried out through limited face-to-face learning with a maximum capacity of 62% distance learning.

Source: Joint Decree of 4 Ministers of the Republic of Indonesia (2021); Ministry of Home Affairs of the Republic of Indonesia (2021).

Furthermore, based on data from the COVID-19.go.id information center, a website that provides information about the current state of the COVID-19 pandemic situation by taking data and information from the Ministry of Health of the Republic of Indonesia states that COVID-19 in Indonesia in September 2022 is still at level 2. Schools in Indonesia should continue to use the COVID-19 health protocol for face-to-face learning activities.

2. Methodology

2.1. Research Design

This research used quasi-qualitative research with a simple research design. Quasi-qualitative research is research with the primary objective of describing a situation according to the problem (Cropley, 2019). Quasi-qualitative research is influenced by the positive influences used in presenting theories. (Bungin, 2021). This research cannot be entirely qualitative. One type of qualitative research is simple research design (SRD). The SRD is a research design used by a researcher to reflect findings in the field using theory to solve the problem. The SRD research procedure is carried out with five main steps, namely (1) choosing a social context and determining a research question (social context and research question). (2) Conducting a literature review. (3) Conducting research methods and data collection. (4) Analyzing data (Data analysis). (5) Reporting of research results (reporting).

2.2 Participants

Participants in this study were 38 elementary school class teachers in 13 cities and districts in Indonesia consisting of Sukabumi regency, Sukabumi city, Karawang district, Indramayu regency, Bandung city, Cianjur regency, West Bandung regency, Sumedang regency, Bekasi regency, Bogor regency, Bogor city, Depok city and Special Capital Region (DKI) Jakarta. The purposive sampling technique is used by conducting surveys and interviews online with elementary school class teachers in 13 cities and districts through national seminars on implementing an independent curriculum. The selection of the 13 cities and districts is based on data from the Ministry of Education, Culture, Research and Technology in 2022 which states that thirteen cities and districts are the areas with the most independent curriculum implementation in Indonesia. Descriptive data on demographic characteristics including gender, length of teaching and level of education are shown in Table 2.

Table 2. Respondent profile.

Respondent profile	Frequency	Presented (%)
Gender		
Woman	30	79
Man	8	21
Years of teaching		
4-5 Years	6	16
6-10 Years	6	16
11-15 Years	8	21
16-20 Years	14	37
20 Years and above	4	10
Education level		
Bachelor	30	79
Magister	8	21
Doctor	0	0

2.3. Data Collection

Data was collected through in-depth interviews with 38-grade teachers in elementary schools in thirteen cities in district areas in West Java and Jakarta Provinces. It consists of 10 teachers in schools who have implemented an independent curriculum and 28 teachers who are still implementing the 2013 curriculum.

The interview guide was based on the concept of exploration (Kumar, 2011) and the acquisition of meaning about applying the independent curriculum in Indonesia. Four aspects were asked in the interview: the urgency, challenges, support and teachers' strategies in implementing an independent curriculum. The interview instructions used in primary school have been validated by education specialists.

Semi-structured interviews were conducted for 28 days starting from 01 to 28 September 2022 for 1-2 hours on 38 respondents through the Zoom meeting application. Researchers conduct interviews every day with 1-3 respondents. At the time before the interview began, the researcher conveyed a statement to the respondent that the answers from the respondents would be guaranteed confidentiality.

Furthermore, the interview results were written and a transcript was made from each respondent to create other initial codes based on the similarity of themes (Braun & Clarke, 2019). Interviews were conducted to obtain more in-depth and meaningful data (Miles, Huberman, & Saldana, 2014).

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2.4. Data Analysis

Data were analyzed using deductive and thematic analysis. Deductive and thematic analysis is used to identify, validate and create themes (Braun & Clarke, 2019; Miles et al., 2014). The NVivo 12 program facilitates the coding and categorization of research. The interview data is entered into nodes and cases are grouped into specific codes. Thematic maps show the organization of concepts according to various levels and potential interactions between concepts are then developed. The analysis team then discusses all the code and categorization and integrates between the codes to simplify each code. This deductive technique makes it easier to identify the themes respondents provide in response to researchers' questions (see Figure 1).

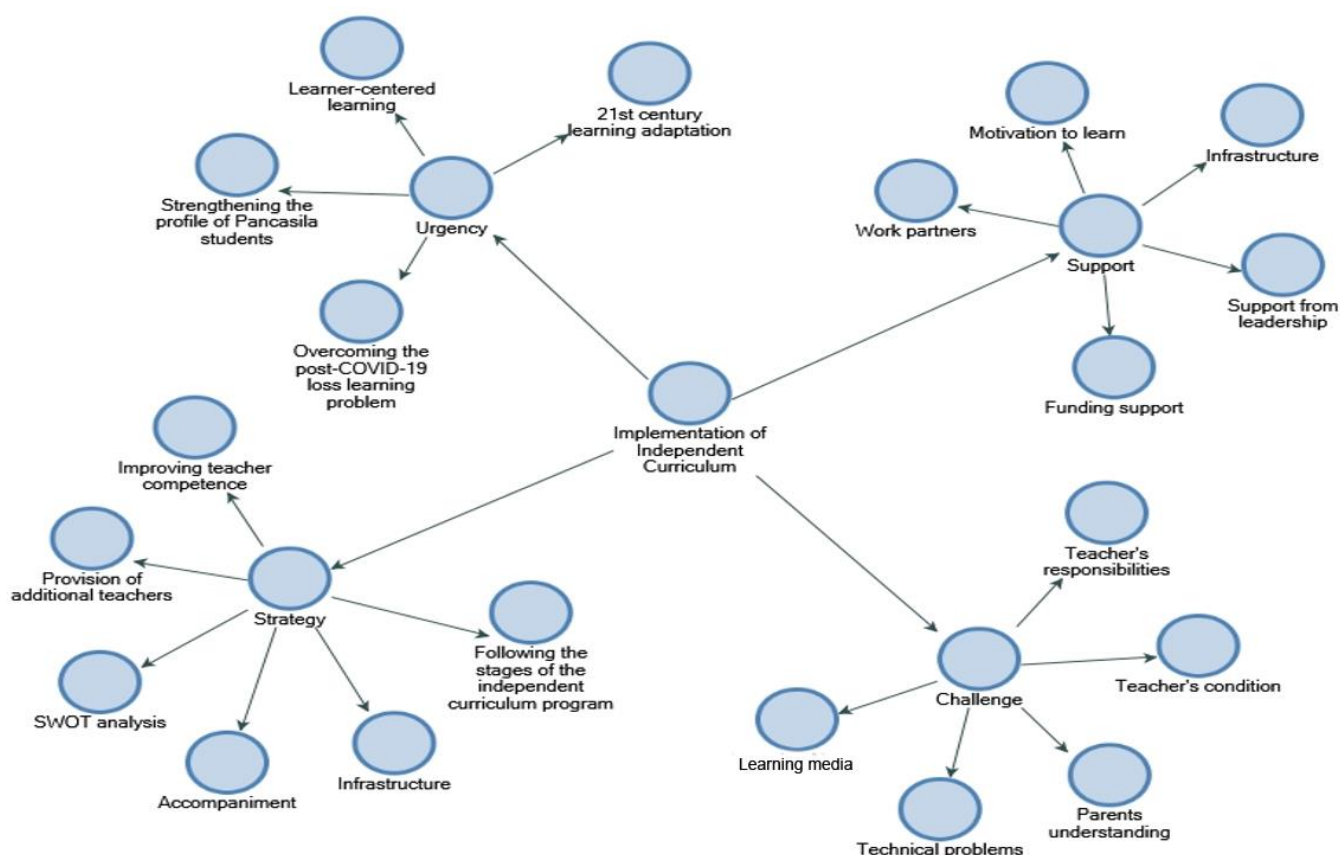


Figure 1. Results of data analysis of teacher perceptions of the application of the independent curriculum during the COVID-19 pandemic (use NVivo 12).

Researchers examine credibility during research. They start by creating data collection instruments based on the review of relevant literature. After the data is collected, member-checking is carried out (Miles, Huberman, & Saldaña, 2014) to check the credibility of the data. The use of triangulation was carried out by involving four researchers to reduce bias in the results of data analysis (Hester & Adams, 2018) by cross-examining the results of the researcher's responses (Simmons, 2014). Furthermore, the involvement of four researchers in investigating the same problem brings different perspectives to the investigation to support the integrity of the research findings.

3. Result

3.1. Urgency of Independent Curriculum

Four sub-themes of the urgency of curriculum changes in Indonesian society are overcoming the problem of learning loss after COVID-19, student-centered learning, strengthening the profile of Pancasila students (strengthening student character) and adjusting 21st-century learning. Figure 2 illustrates the urgency of implementing an independent curriculum.

Based on Figure 2, the application of an independent curriculum is given so that students can implement the learning outcomes in three phases such as flexible learning, learning by student readiness and developing learning plans in the form of collaborative teaching modules with a period of 1-3 years each phase. Teachers can help provide literacy and numeracy understanding to students through a learning approach based on the abilities of each student. Differences in the place of residence and geographical area of students make a gap in the educational outcomes of rural and urban areas.

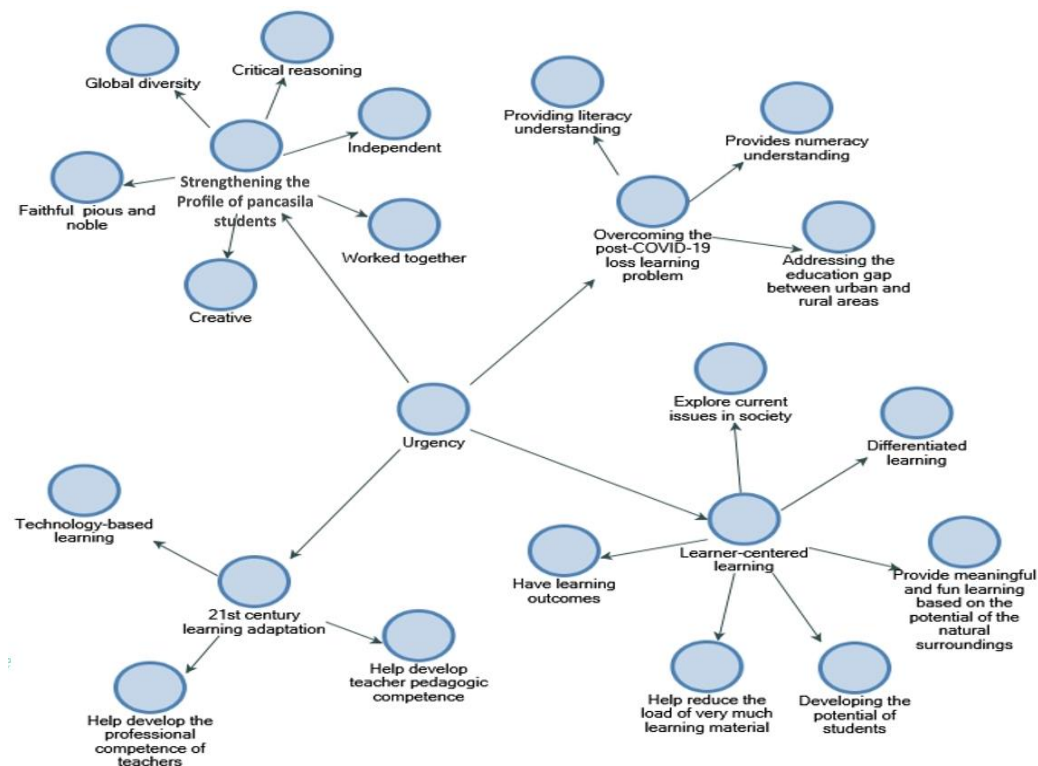


Figure 2. The urgency of implementing an independent curriculum.

The absence of signals and internet, classrooms that are used interchangeably in morning and afternoon classroom learning, a lack of class teachers and difficulty accessing roads to school locations are problems in learning in rural areas. Some teachers state as follows:

It is necessary to simplify the curriculum to overcome learning loss in children's education at the elementary school level. (Teacher 3)

Teachers can focus on understanding students' literacy and numeracy through an independent curriculum. (Teacher 14)

The educational gap between urban and rural areas makes the government think about ways to solve the low results of curriculum implementation. (Teacher 25)

Student-centered learning is needed by providing only a few learning materials that students must complete daily. The provision of many learning materials makes students tired and need more motivation to succeed. Teacher 10 said:

The content of learning materials in the new curriculum (independent curriculum) is less than the content of learning materials in the previously used curriculum namely the 2013 curriculum. (Teacher 10)

Students need meaningful learning that they can observe from the surrounding as a source as well as a natural and contextual learning environment from the surrounding nature that they always experience daily. Through direct observation of the surrounding nature, students will better understand life's real and pleasant meaning. Teacher 13 said:

Students look happy and excited when I provide learning by taking them directly to the surrounding nature such as gardens, rice fields, residential housing, sub-district offices and other learning resources they always experience daily. (Teacher 13)

Students can easily explore actual issues that occur in society. So there is continuity between the concepts given in schools and the actual implementation in the community. When students can solve problems in society, the teacher will quickly observe the talents and interests possessed by each student to be further developed according to their respective potentials. Each student has different talents and interests. The second opinion of teachers is on the importance of developing the potential of learners and providing differentiated learning is similar to the following opinions of teachers 17 and 26:

When the teacher provides the surrounding natural environment as a learning resource, the student will explore themselves to find solutions to the problems that are being observed. On that occasion, the teacher can identify the talents and interests of each student. (Teacher 17)

Each student has different talents and interests, so teachers must be able to map their abilities and potential through differentiated learning. (Teacher 26)

The implementation of the independent curriculum also aims to strengthen the profile of Pancasila students. Pancasila students demonstrate Indonesian students as lifelong students who have global competence and behave by the values of Pancasila as an Indonesian ideology open to new developments. The six main characteristics of Pancasila students are a noble character, global diversity, independence, cooperation, critical reasoning and creativity. Some teachers state as follows:

Pancasila needs to be instilled in elementary school so that students can implement Pancasila values in everyday life. (Teacher 7).

A noble character, global diversity, independence, cooperation, critical reasoning and creativity are tangible manifestations of the nature of Indonesian students. (Teacher 30)

Changes in curriculum in Indonesia are also significant given in the context of adjusting to 21st-century learning where teachers must be able to adjust their pedagogic and professional competencies by using technology

as a medium of learning and sustainable professional development. It was conveyed by teachers 29 and 36 as follows:

The development of science and technology is a challenge and opportunity for teachers to develop themselves and have better careers. (Teacher 29)

Implementing the independent curriculum provides opportunities for teachers to develop their pedagogic and professional competencies because in the independent curriculum, teachers must use technology-based learning media. (Teacher 36)

3.2. Challenges

The challenges faced by teachers in implementing an independent curriculum include five sub-themes: technical constraints, teacher obligations, teacher conditions, parental understanding and learning tools. Figure 3 shows the challenges faced by teachers.

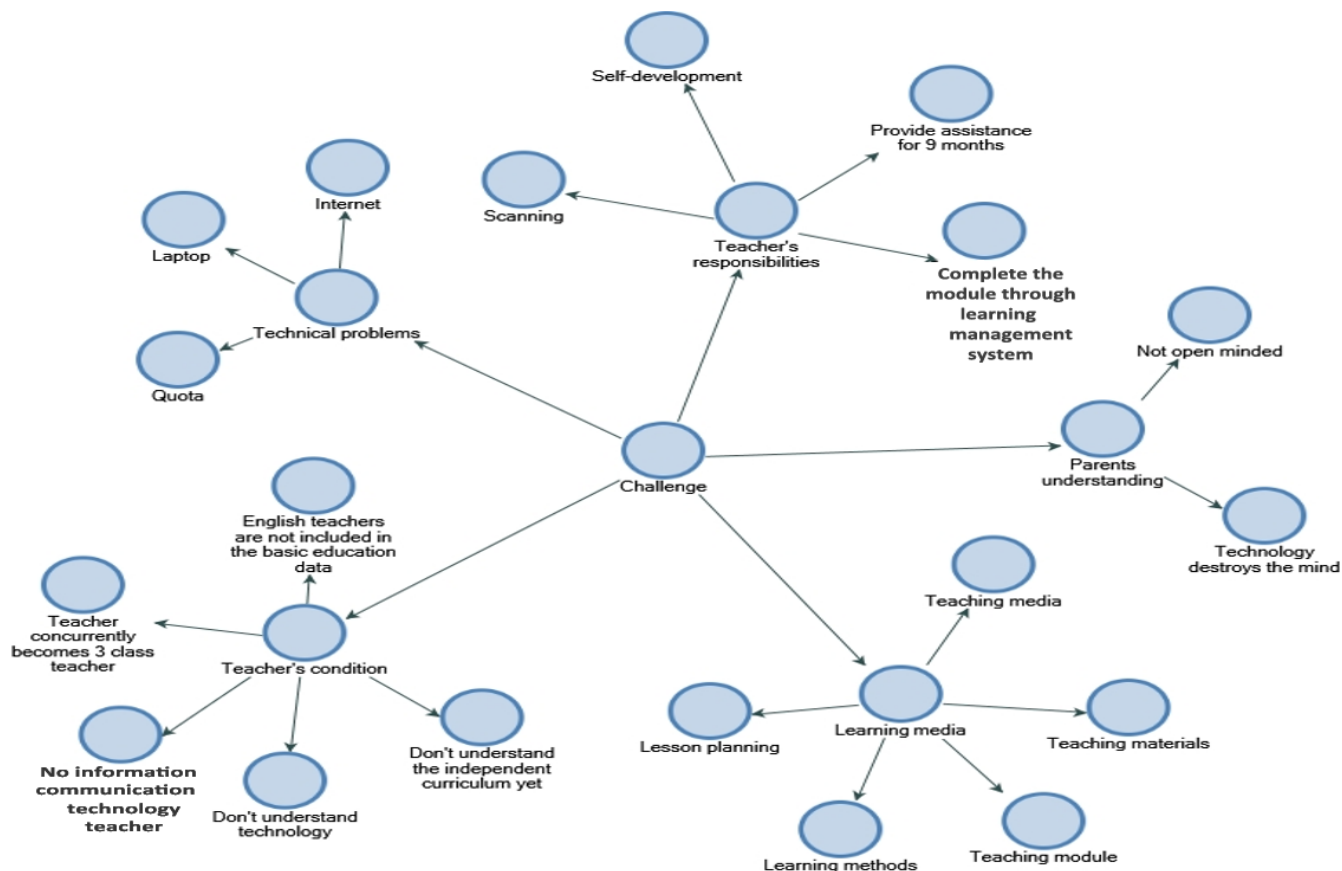


Figure 3. Challenges faced by teachers in implementing an independent curriculum.

Teachers face several challenges related to technical constraints. Not all teachers have laptops, quotas and internet to use in participating in mentoring activities while following the stages of curriculum implementation which are carried out online for nine months to be declared graduated as certified teachers and driving schools as one of the requirements for the implementation of the independent curriculum.

The obligation to complete tasks and modules through the Learning Management System (LMS) makes the burden on teachers increase because teachers also have to make new learning plans and learning media according to the curriculum that is being implemented. Teacher 24 says:

Teachers must have a large quota and strong internet as they have to complete tasks through the LMS and conduct online meetings with facilitators through zoom meeting accounts. Meanwhile, the school needs to facilitate quotas and have Wi-Fi that teachers can use to complete the tasks of prospective teachers.

Teachers are also required to participate in various training activities, discussions and seminars and be active with learning organizations to develop themselves and conduct training on teachers and other schools that have not implemented an independent curriculum. Teacher 11 states that:

After the teacher is declared to have graduated as a driving teacher, there is an obligation to mobilize which requires the teacher to be able to implement knowledge and experience while being a prospective driving teacher who has not participated in the teaching and driving school programs. (Teacher 11)

Meanwhile, another challenge arises in schools that need help in understanding the independent curriculum and have not been given socialization from the government, in this case, they are the education office, school supervisors and professional organizations. English subject is used as an elective subject and it must be taken by schools, even though English teachers were not included in the data collection system. It is a dilemma for teachers and principals in choosing English as elective subjects that schools must implement.

English must be taught as one of the subjects in the independent curriculum. However, English teachers are not included in the primary education database as in junior high schools and high schools. (Teacher 5)

The absence of information and communication technology makes it difficult for teachers and principals to follow the stages and assistance of the independent curriculum (new curriculum in Indonesia) whose activities are all technology-based. In addition, many teachers are aged so they do not have high motivation to understand technology. The results of interviews with 12 teachers stated that:

Many elementary school teachers are old and do not understand technology. They can only teach using simple media that does not use technology. The independent curriculum requires teachers to understand technology well. (Teacher 12)

Another situation was found that there was a teacher who concurrently became the homeroom teacher for three different classes (grades 1, 2, and 4). The difficulty of students in three classes with different characters makes teachers overwhelmed and time-consuming because they have to make different learning plans and learning media for each class. Teacher 26 states that:

I teach in grades 1, 2 and 4 because of the unavailability of teachers in the school. So in the morning, I teach to grades 1 and 2, while in the afternoon, I teach to grade 4. (Teacher 26)

Furthermore, parents need to understand the benefits of using technology to make it easier for teachers to use information technology-based learning media. Parents think mobile phones can only damage students' character because they can only be used to play games. Less open thinking makes it difficult for teachers to implement an independent curriculum in remote areas. Teacher 3 states that:

Many parents disagree when teachers use mobile phones and laptops as learning media because they think they are not learning but just playing. (Teacher 3)

Many teachers need help in making teaching materials, media and learning methods according to the material taught. Learning planning is made only as a condition of teacher administration without analyzing the content that must be present in the components of the lesson plan. Teachers also need help in understanding the teaching module because the teaching material differs from the previous curriculum's theme (2013). Teacher 20 said:

I need help in making media and learning methods that will be used and written in learning planning as a reference while using an independent curriculum. There are many changes and differences in material from the 2013 curriculum that was previously used. For example, the accretion material in mathematics subjects is given in the initial theme of the 2013 curriculum. In the independent curriculum, the accretion material is given after the division theme. (Teacher 20)

3.3. Support

Support in implementing an independent curriculum consists of five sub-themes, namely: support from leaders, partners, learning motivation, funding and infrastructure. Figure 4 describes support for implementing curriculum changes.

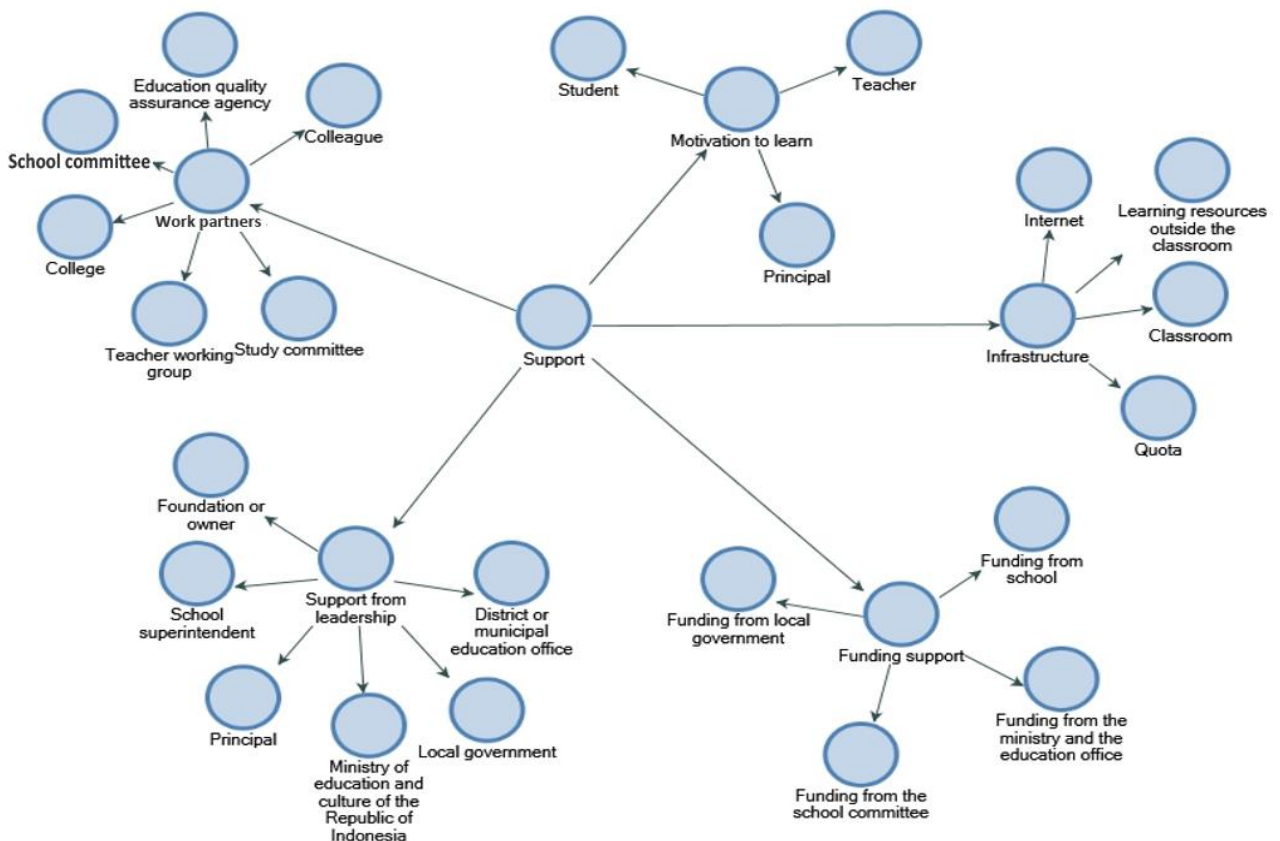


Figure 4. Support for the implementation of the independent curriculum.

Support from leaders ranging from school principals, foundation chairpersons, owners, supervisors, city and district education offices, ministries of education and culture as well as central and local governments is crucial because it will be a decision-maker on policies on the continuity of implementing an independent curriculum. Teacher 21 said:

It needs strong support from leaders ranging from school principals, supervisors and education offices in helping teachers implement the independent curriculum.

Partners ranging from teachers and principals to conduct discussions, sharing sessions and external benchmarking must always be carried out to obtain information and comprehensive experience in implementing the independent curriculum. Teacher 22 said:

The independent curriculum can be appropriately implemented while teachers can cooperate and partner with various educational organizations including universities.

The number of changes both in the aspects of learning and in the technology used means that all stakeholders must have a high commitment and enthusiasm for implementing an independent curriculum. Teacher 31 said:

Teachers are required to have high motivation and enthusiasm in implementing the independent curriculum.

Furthermore, financial assistance from schools, school committees, education offices, ministries of education, central and local governments and the business world is immediately needed in implementing curriculum changes. Internet, quotas, learning classrooms and learning resources (both inside and outside the classroom) require high costs for schools that still need adequate infrastructure. The existence of high funding makes it difficult for schools to implement an independent curriculum quickly. Teacher 29 said:

The independent curriculum uses technology-based learning, schools must have partners who can contribute funds for the completeness of their infrastructure.

3.4. Strategy

Schools can implement strategies to implement an independent curriculum: conduct strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats (SWOT) analysis, complete infrastructure follow the stages of the independent curriculum program, improve teacher competence and provide assistance and procurement of additional teachers. Figure 5 explains the strategy for implementing an independent curriculum.

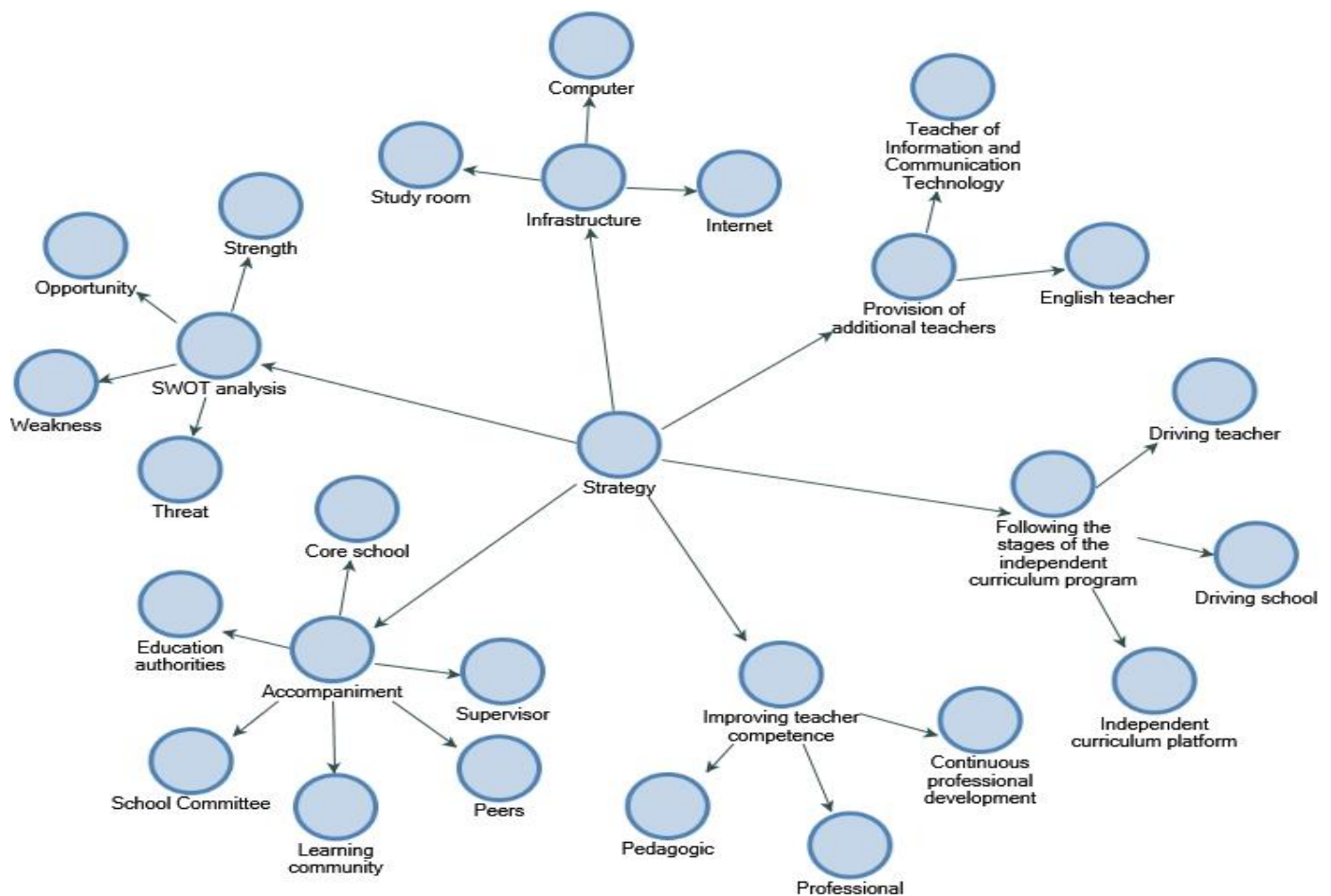


Figure 5. Strategies for implementing the independent curriculum.

The initial strategy that teachers and principals must do to implement an independent curriculum is to conduct a SWOT analysis. Schools need to analyze the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and challenges of the circumstances that are being faced. Schools can use the SWOT analysis results to map out what steps, strategies, support and challenges will be faced while implementing the independent curriculum.

Furthermore, the analysis of infrastructure mapping starts from the existence of a solid and adequate internet coverage or technology helps the process of implementing learning activities and teacher self-development such as working on modules and tasks through learning system management, training and seminars conducted online. In addition, the possession of a computer and a learning space to practice technology-based learning activities is an important infrastructure in schools. Several teachers said:

SWOT analysis helps map the initial conditions of schools to find further the root of the problem and solutions that schools must do in implementing the independent curriculum. The strategies developed through a SWOT analysis are beneficial for determining what support to have for the school's challenges. (Teacher 17)

The existence of adequate infrastructure starting from a learning space well connected to the internet network and owned by a laptop or computer for each teacher is a supporting factor in implementing the independent curriculum. (Teacher 28)

The following strategy must be carried out: teachers and schools must participate in the activities of the teacher program and drive schools in the initial stage of implementing an independent curriculum. After the school registrations the school must use an independent curriculum according to the independent teaching platform on account of the Ministry of Education, Culture, Research and Technology of the Republic of Indonesia which will be massively implemented by all schools in 2024. Some teachers said:

The independent curriculum can be implemented if the school has registered and becomes a driving school through the independent teaching platform. (Teacher 4)

Driving schools aim is to share good practices with various communities is the initial stage that must be carried out when schools implement the independent curriculum in Indonesia. (Teacher 8)

For schools to quickly understand the independent curriculum correctly, it is necessary to assist the curriculum implementation from the education office which is an extension of the curriculum policyholder from the Ministry of Education, Culture, Research and Technology of the Republic of Indonesia. In addition, the role of school committees, learning communities and parents is crucial in assisting schools in facilitating decision-making and partners in implementing the curriculum. The role of supervisors and peers is important for joint discussions about learning in the independent curriculum. Teacher 24 said:

The existence of assistance from stakeholders ranging from education offices to supervisors is essential and indispensable for schools that will implement the independent curriculum.

To implement the curriculum well, schools need to improve teachers' pedagogic and professional competence through continuous professional development.

Schools must have a strategy for procuring additional teachers in both subjects using various alternatives. This need to be done considering that the implementation of the independent curriculum requires technology and informative teachers. The results of the interview with the teacher stated that:

Teachers must develop themselves through continuous professional development to improve pedagogic and professional competencies. (Teacher 14)

A principal strategy is needed to procure additional primary school English teachers and information technology. (Teacher 26)

4. Discussion

Curriculum changes implemented by the Indonesian government since February 2022 as an effort to overcome the problem of learning loss after COVID-19 are urgently needed by the community. This needs to be done because students need a curriculum that is adaptive to the development of science and technology. The decline in student learning outcomes during the COVID-19 pandemic also occurred in Canada (Aurini & Davies, 2021) and China (Xie, Xiao, Hou, Liu, & Liu, 2021).

The Indonesian government issued a policy for schools to implement an independent curriculum with a student-centered learning design (Hidayah et al., 2022) to enhance students' talents and interests (Aurini & Davies, 2021; Morel, 2021) and provide strengthening of Pancasila values to introduce the national identity (Masrukhin, Anwar, & Sriyanto, 2021). Finland's government also refines the primary school curriculum (Hakala & Kujala, 2021) during the COVID-19 pandemic in anticipation of strengthening the nation's character because learning uses information technology so that it is possible for children to know global information (Meeter, 2021).

The implementation of the independent curriculum is a challenge for teachers in remote areas (Hidayah et al., 2022) due to the absence of an internet signal (Lalduhawma, Thangmawia, & Hussain, 2022; Meeter, 2021) (Fan et al., 2021; Xie et al., 2021). Thus creating learning gaps in urban and rural areas (Hidayah et al., 2022; Juwita & Usodo, 2020).

The government's lack of socialization (Hidayah et al., 2022) makes teachers even more confused with the learning that must be given to learners. Unlike education in Jordan, teachers and parents are satisfied with the new curriculum that uses an online learning system (Hamaidi, Arouri, Noufal, & Aldrou, 2021).

Considerable support from the central and local governments (Cui, Lei, & Zhou, 2018) is needed (Cui et al. (2018); Onyishi and Sefotho (2020) (Chien, 2020a) that can help to facilitate the implementation of an independent curriculum. Schools must provide adequate funding (Aliyyah et al., 2020) and facilities (Carol & Jodie, 2021) for the implementation of learning according to the content of the independent curriculum centered on students (Akib et al., 2020; Aurini & Davies, 2021) and differentiated (Onyishi & Sefotho, 2020).

It is necessary to conduct a SWOT analysis in an independent curriculum (Guo, 2021) to know the challenges and obstacles. Next, training should be given to the teachers (Aliyyah et al., 2020; Chien, 2020b) to improve pedagogic competence (Asari, Fauziyah, & Uchtiawati, 2018; Haron, Zalli, Othman, & Awang, 2021; Syahrial et al., 2019) and professional competence (Chien, 2020a; Widodo, Gustari, & Chandrawaty, 2022; Zakirova, 2016) (Ngema & Lekhetho, 2019; Tanang & Abu, 2014; Thaine, 2010).

Furthermore, elementary school teachers also need to participate in mobilizing teacher activities (Kin, Omar, & Khalip Musa, 2022; Luhmann, 2021) as a stage in implementing an independent curriculum in Indonesia.

5. Conclusion and Recommendations

From a teacher's point of view, an independent curriculum is implemented when the COVID-19 pandemic is necessary to sustain children's education in Indonesia. Support from the central and local governments, education offices, universities, education quality assurance agencies, learning communities, school committees and school superintendents is urgently needed for teachers and schools to implement new curriculum policies. The results of this study are expected to be the basis for government to improve curriculum socialization and facilitate adequate infrastructure so that by 2024 all schools will be ready to implement the independent curriculum.

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