Application of Independent Curriculum in Improving Islamic Religious Education Learning

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ABSTRACT

This exploration examines the operation Independent Curriculum in improving the learning to education of religion students class V scholars at SDIT Al- Adzkia Tembelang Jombang. This exploration uses a qualitative exploration approach with a descriptive qualitative exploration type. The data from this exploration uses 2 types of data, videlicet primary data and secondary data. The data collection fashion uses 3 styles, videlicet observation, interviews, and attestation class. The independent class is a new class launched by the Minister of Education and Culture, Nadiem Anwar Makarim, on February 11, 2022. The independent class is a literacy class that refers to an approach to scholars' bents and interests. This independent class was created with the end of perfecting education in Indonesia. The literacy process is the most important thing in education, where the commerce process between preceptors and scholars gets changed. The independent class helps in perfecting the literacy process of scholars because in this independent class, the literacy process is concentrated on the requirements of the scholars. At SDIT Al-Adzkia the literacy process by enforcing an independent class adapts to the requirements of scholars so that literacy is more meaningful and pleasurable. so that the literacy process can run well and scholars can admit literacy material more snappily.

Keywords: Independent Curriculum; Improve Learning; Education of Religion

INTRODUCTION

Education is the most important factor in shaping the quality of the nation's society and forming a superior generation for the progress of the nation (Nurfatimah et al., 2022). In the educational process, provides creative, innovative knowledge and ideas regarding changing times (Ambarwati et al., 2022). The benefits and references of education are none other than developing desires and building children's character, as well as advancing the quality of the nation in order to produce the nation's successors (Widodo, 2020). According to Law No. 20 years (2003) "curriculum is a set of learning plans related to objectives, content, teaching materials and methods used and used as a guideline in organizing learning activities to achieve a national education goal" (Rahayu et al., 2022).

The Indonesian government, through the education and culture department, continues to be committed to always developing the curriculum. In 2024, the government will develop a competency-based curriculum (KTSP). In 2006, the curriculum was redeveloped into a unit-level curriculum (KTSP). In 2013, the government through the Ministry of Education and Culture formulated changes called the 2013 curriculum (K13) 2 years ago, at the beginning of 2020 around February, the whole world was attacked by the Covid 19 outbreak. Where Indonesia had to experience a lockdown from all daily activities. During the Covid-19 pandemic, the education process in Indonesia was greatly reduced, due to the lockdown due to the Covid-19 pandemic. The teaching and learning process in the era of the COVID-19 outbreak was carried out online or from the students' homes. With the decreasing level of learning experienced by students, the government developed an emergency curriculum. Changes in the learning curriculum are a dynamic educational process that responds to the needs of developments in science and technology as well as structural changes in globalization.

The implementation of the emergency curriculum developed during the COVID-19 pandemic was the seed for the development of an independent curriculum. Based on a Ministry of Education and Culture survey, 70% of schools in Indonesia have implemented an independent curriculum in the 2023/2024 academic year. This implementation is based on the Decree of the Ministry of Education and Culture of the

Republic of Indonesia Number 56/M/2022 concerning "guidelines for implementing the curriculum in the context of learning recovery" (Herdiansyah, 2022). With the development of this independent curriculum, there is recovery and improvement of the teaching and learning process after the Covid-19 pandemic.

Based on the National Education Standards Agency (BSNP), the Independent Learning Curriculum is a learning curriculum that is based on a reference approach to students' abilities and talents (Yani et al., 2023). The lessons that will be taken by students (pupils or college students) get a choice of lessons proportional to their interests and talents. The *Merdeka Belajar* curriculum provides new enthusiasm for improving and restoring the teaching and learning process in the post-pandemic period and into the coming year.

The essence of the independent curriculum is to create a student's *Pancasila* profile. The Ministry of Education and Culture itself deliberately created a special structure in formulating the independent learning curriculum. More conducive learning conditions do not force students, previously it was thought that education forced students. The philosophy in the independent learning curriculum is to focus on the nature of Pancasila students, using Project Best Learning abbreviated as PBL, bringing learning with projects or projects where students can find their own way of reasoning, having different learning concepts, and implementing the concept of independent learning. In accordance with Ki Hajar Dewantara's philosophy, namely that students are equated with their respective interests and talents, the effectiveness of the curriculum in special conditions highlights changes in the structure and design of comprehensive curriculum implementation. There is no coercion in this curriculum, curriculum choices: "First, the 2013 Curriculum. Second, the Emergency Curriculum. Third, Independent Curriculum". The implementation can be implemented in stages, according to the individual preparation of each school (Zainuri et al., 2023).

With the development and changes to an educational curriculum, it is hoped that it will encourage a paradigm shift in the world of education in Indonesia. The development of a new paradigm leads to, among other things: "strengthening the independence of teachers as controllers of the teaching and learning process, releasing control of binding standards and uniform learning processes in educational units, and strengthening Student Agency, namely looking at the ability of students to determine their learning through determining learning objectives, considering their abilities, also providing appropriate steps in taking responsibility for success for students.

From what has been explained above, the author is interested in carrying out deeper research on the independent curriculum, where this curriculum will only be officially implemented at the start of the 2023/2024 learning period. Curriculum changes were also accompanied by various changes, including changes in education and teaching in schools. Where the field of Islamic Religious Education in the independent curriculum refers to guidance for students, to express spiritual worship, have a noble character, and apply loving and tolerant attitudes as a guide to their lives.

METHOD

The approach to this research uses a qualitative approach. The purpose of this research is a scientific research method to generate an event by describing data and events through words as a whole regarding the research subject (Fiantika et al., 2022). The type used is qualitative descriptive research. The purpose of this type is to describe existing events or symptoms, both natural and human in nature. This research focuses on attention to quality, characteristics, and relationships between activities (Hendrianto & Laura, 2021). This type provides interpretation and explanation of written data and the reality in the field.

In this study, the researcher used the following data collection method. According to Yani Balaka, research data is "all forms of pretexts and numbers capable of being an indication in forming information". In the research there are 2 data sources, namely (Yani Balaka, 2022):

• Primary data

Data is obtained by taking spontaneous efforts from sources or through intermediaries. Primary data sources were taken from the Principal and Head of Curriculum at SDIT Al-Adzkia Tembelang Jombang.

• Secondary Data

This is data taken indirectly through intermediary media or obtained through the writing of previous researchers. Secondary data in this research is from books and researchers' notes that support this research, namely the independent curriculum

- Data Collection Techniques

These are structured and basic steps in finding the information needed in preparing research. Meanwhile, data is a form of information from research objects taken at the research location and from previous research writing (Mamik, 2015). The data collection technique in this research is using observation at school, followed by interviews, and finally documentation.

Observations were carried out at SDIT Al-Adzkia Tembelang Jombang, in order to obtain the first information on the research. Followed by an interview with the school principal, and head of curriculum. Documentation is carried out to obtain evidence of the implementation of the data collection process at the destination location.

- Data Analysis Techniques

Data Analysis is a procedure for exploring and organizing information obtained from a collection carried out in a structured manner. This involves organizing information into categories, dividing it into points, using synthesis, arranging it in patterns, determining what information is important and what needs to be studied, and determining conclusions so that researchers and readers can understand them (Hardani, 2020).

In this section, the data processing that has been obtained during data collection is then developed into a narrative and the final conclusions are drawn from the research. Data analysis must be done well and easily understood by researchers and other people.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The curriculum is considered the heart of education, just like humans, if a human has a heart, then the whole body also has problems. According to Soedijarto, an education expert from UNJ stated that curriculum is the planning and composition of all students' skills and learning activities, to achieve educational goals in determining the mission of educational institutions (Samsudin, 2014). And its function is to make the material taught to students easy to understand.

In 2019, all countries experienced an extraordinary pandemic problem called the COVID-19 pandemic. The long pandemic has caused a decline in all sectors of the state system especially education. With the emergency conditions for post-pandemic education, the government from the Ministry of Education and Culture developed a curriculum, namely the Merdeka curriculum. According to Nadiem Anwar Makarim, "Independent Curriculum means that the curriculum components are increasingly flexible, focus on essential material, provide simplicity in the use of teaching materials for teachers, adapt to the needs and characteristics of students" (Hadiansah;, 2022).

The independent curriculum was inaugurated by Nadiem Anwar Makarim as the Ministry of Education and Culture, on Friday, February 11, 2022. From the research results, the Ministry of Education and Culture stated that the research results from the implementation of the independent curriculum in all schools in Indonesia reached 70% of schools that had implemented the independent curriculum.

One of them is at SDIT Al-Adzkia Tembelang Jombang which has implemented an independent curriculum. The implementation carried out at SDIT Al-Adzkia is almost comprehensive so the teachers have implemented an independent curriculum. The implementation of the Merdeka curriculum is very flexible and focuses on essential material so that it can improve education in an educational institution. The following is the implementation of the independent curriculum in improving Islamic Religious Education learning at SDIT Al-Adzkia Tembelang Jombang.

- **Independent Curriculum Competencies in Learning Islamic Religious Education**

The development of a new curriculum with the theme of independence in learning, namely, aims to improve the education system in Indonesia. Islamic Religious Education is a field that includes conscious efforts, preparing students to believe, understand, absorb, and practice the values of Islamic teachings through educational activities and instructions based on the Al-Qur'an and Hadith (Latief et al., 2021).

The learning process in the field of Islamic Religious Education contains 3 related components, namely: "learning conditions, teaching strategy models, and teaching and learning outcomes" (Nasih & Kholidah, 2009). With this, teachers must always pay attention to these 3 components in the implementation of learning, so that learning can run optimally.

Learning outcomes (CP) in Perpes No. 8 of 2012 concerning the Indonesian National Qualifications Framework, it is stated that CP is "ability obtained through the internationalization of knowledge, attitudes, skills and work accumulation" (Hanafie & Khojir, 2023). In the field of Islamic Religious Education, learning outcomes are aimed at forming students with a spiritual attitude, noble character, and having an understanding of the roots of the Islamic religion as well as implementing daily behavior (Fauziah et al., 2021).

Learning outcomes in the field of Islamic Religious Education contain 5 elements, namely: "Al-Qur'an and Hadith, *Aqidah,* Morals, Fiqh, and History of Islamic Civilization". In these 5 elements, there are learning outcomes that must be achieved by students. And here are the learning achievement competitions for these 5 elements, namely (Novita & Sinulingga, 2018):

- Al-Qur'an and Hadith

    Students have the ability to read the Al-Qur'an with correct recitation, memorize it, write correctly, and understand and apply the message of the verses of the Al-Qur'an.

- *Aqidah*

    Students become more familiar with Allah SWT, through practicing the 99 names of Allah SWT and understanding the 5th and 6th pillars of faith.

- Morals

    Students can understand and apply the importance of religious unity, understand the role of humans as God's caliphs on earth, to spread love and not cause damage to the world.

- Fiqh

    Students can understand and practice *Zakat, infaq,* alms, and gifts, understand the provisions of the Hajj, distinguish between halal and haram, and practice *sunnah* fasting.

- History of Islamic Civilization

    Students experience the *Isra'* and *Mi'raj* events of the Prophet Muhammad SAW. As well as the story of Khulafa Al-Rasyidin. With the learning achievements from these elements, students are able to understand and apply them in everyday life.

- **Implementation of the Independent Curriculum in Improving Islamic Religious Education Learning**

    Education is a conscious and structured effort to realize the nuances and activities of teaching and learning, to actively develop the potential of students in mastering religious spiritual attitudes, self-control, good personality, broad knowledge, noble character, and skills by themselves and society (Pristiwanti et al., 2022). Learning is communication between students and teachers along with learning resources in the nuances of the learning environment (Inah, 2015).

    The curriculum in a learning process is the heart of the learning process in the scope of education. In Indonesia itself, the curriculum is always changing with the aim of improving the teaching and learning process. In 2022 the government has changed and modified the curriculum from the 2013 curriculum to the independent curriculum. With this, all schools have started implementing an independent curriculum in the learning process.

    At SDIT Al-Adzkia Tembelang Jombang, the independent curriculum has been implemented with a percentage of 80%. The independent curriculum has brought many changes to education in Indonesia, with this, schools always support curriculum changes. According to the principal, this change to the independent curriculum "must have its own purpose. As long as these changes bring many positive impacts and progress for education in Indonesia, we will always support this" (Diyah, 2023).

    Before implementing the independent curriculum, teachers receive training provided by the supervisors of each school from the education department, to help the process of implementing the curriculum so that it can run well. The principal explained that "in the training on implementing the independent curriculum, we received several materials, namely: first, material on preparing operational curricula in educational units (KOSP), training on the independent curriculum and technicalities in changing the independent curriculum" (Diyah, 2023). This means that this change will receive good support to change the education system in Indonesia for the better.

With this curriculum change, teachers are required to prepare the teaching and learning process seriously and in a planned manner. From the interview with the Head of Curriculum that: "In the process of implementing the Independent Curriculum, teachers prepare strategies in the learning process, and teacher preparation, namely: Teachers must first understand the Independent Curriculum in the learning and assessment process so that the implementation goes well and prepare infrastructure for the process. learning" (Diyah, 2023). So, in the process of implementing the independent curriculum, you have to be extra careful in understanding so that it can run well.

The process of implementing a good curriculum is the result of good educational change in a school. At SDIT Al-Adzkia school, the implementation of the independent curriculum has gone well. According to the school principal's interview, "the independent curriculum is running quite well, but it still needs to be continuously improved, especially in designing learning that is fun and able to develop student character according to the Pancasila student profile" (Diyah, 2023). The learning process must always be improved with fun methods and strategies for students so that learning can be carried out perfectly.

According to Talambanua, learning tools are "components implemented by a teacher, before carrying out learning activities" (Talambanua et al., 2023). According to this presentation, learning devices can improve the learning process of students. The learning tools in the independent curriculum include learning outcomes, learning objectives, and the flow of learning objectives.

Planning goals in learning according to the teacher's curriculum vitae interview "observes students, because they are the center of the learning process, so they observe class conditions and also formulate operational verbs (KKO). After the learning objectives have been formulated, the next step is to formulate the flow of educational objectives (ATP). Here's how to formulate the flow of learning objectives (ATP), namely: first, know the CP and TP first. Second, apply postscripts in every lesson. Third, explaining each element in the field of Islamic Religious Education. Next, compile the learning module, here are the steps in compiling the learning module, namely: First, determine the CP, TP, and ATP. Second, designing postscripts, methods, and steps in learning. Third, planning the media/*sapras* needed" (Diyah, 2023).

Learning in the field of Islamic Religious Education is not just about mastering the material, but also about the implications for society. "The steps in learning at SDIT Al-Adzkia are adapted to the needs of students in terms of abilities, social and daily life." With this, teachers always teach and apply learning values to students' daily activities. This learning activity is appropriate in independent curriculum learning, namely when interviewing the head of the curriculum "The independent curriculum is a teaching component that frees students to develop their potential and interests, talents so that tomorrow they can be applied in everyday life" (Diyah, 2023).

A learning implementation is categorized as running perfectly if students receive a transformation in the value of intelligence, feelings, and freshness of activity. The learning process must be made so interesting that students enjoy the learning process so that children can easily understand the lesson. With this, the teachers at SDIT Al-Adzkia school to improve Islamic Religious Education learning, according to the results of interviews "the teachers design designs that are student-oriented so that learning is more meaningful and uses a fun learning model" (Diyah, 2023). In accordance with the independent curriculum, all learning models and methods are adapted to students, so that students are more practical and happy during the learning process.

- **Inhibiting and Supporting Factors for Implementing the Independent Curriculum**
The implementation of the independent curriculum has had a big impact on the learning process in schools in Indonesia. The application of the independent curriculum also has shortcomings compared to the previous curriculum. So the independent curriculum must always be improved and developed in order to improve education in Indonesia. And the following are the advantages and disadvantages of implementing the independent curriculum, according to the school principal's interview, namely (Diyah, 2023):
- **Lack of implementation of the independent curriculum:**
- Requires interaction between students and teachers when implementing learning.
- Teachers always upgrade their knowledge of the independent curriculum.
- Teachers need more time and infrastructure to prepare for learning.
- **The advantages of implementing an independent curriculum:**
- Learning is tailored to the needs of students.
- Teachers are allowed to choose the perfect method of teaching.
- Students excel in independence, activeness, and creativity when learning.

- Students keep up with developments through IT.
- Learning is more varied so that learning is more fun, interesting and meaningful.

CONCLUSIONS

The Ministry of Education and Culture in improving the quality of education in Indonesia developed a new curriculum called independent learning. The field of Islamic Religious Education is a field of study that is based on conscious effort, preparing students to believe, understand, absorb, and practice the values of Islamic teachings. There are 5 elements in the field of Islamic Religious Education, namely: Perrama, Al-Qur'an, and Hadith. Second, *aqidah*. Third, morals. Fourth Fiqh. Fifth, the history of Islamic culture.

The learning process is a conscious and planned effort between teachers and students to achieve learning goals. The independent curriculum provides a pleasant learning feel directed at the authority of the students. The teachers have prepared their respective learning tools to improve the learning process. In accordance with the objectives of the independent curriculum, the learning process is adjusted to the needs of the students. The teachers at SDIT Al-Adzkia always change and make learning interesting and fun so that students can easily grasp the material and learning runs perfectly.

There are certainly inhibiting factors in implementing the independent curriculum in learning at SDIT Al-Adzkia. So teachers always learn and change as best they can so that learning activities run smoothly. In implementing an independent curriculum in learning, there are also supporting factors which are always maintained and revised as perfectly as possible, so that learning activities always improve and are carried out perfectly and optimally.

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