

Analysis of Teachers' Understanding in the Implementation of the Independent Curriculum at Sd Negeri 9 Mamboro



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ABSTRACT: This study aims to analyze the level of teachers' understanding at SD Negeri 9 Mamboro in the implementation of the Independent Curriculum for the 2024/2025 school year. The method used is descriptive qualitative research with data triangulation techniques through observation, interviews, and documentation studies. The results of the study show that teachers' understanding of the implementation of the Independent Curriculum is quite good, although it is not even in all aspects. Based on four main indicators, it was found that: (1) teachers began to integrate educational theory with teaching practice, although method innovation is still limited; (2) efforts to adjust learning to the needs of students have been made, but differentiated learning has not been optimal; (3) the creativity of using simple media has been seen, but the use of technology-based media is still limited; and (4) adaptation to changes in education policies shows a positive attitude, but is still faced with technical obstacles and lack of training.

KEYWORDS: Teacher Understanding, Implementation of the Independent Curriculum, Elementary School Students

INTRODUCTION

Since 2019, the Ministry of Education and Culture has launched the Merdeka Learning program as part of the national education transformation that aims to create an independent, fun, and relevant learning system to the times (Dimmera et al., 2022). This program provides a space for students to learn according to their interests and abilities, as well as encourage the development of soft skills and technical skills as a provision for the future (Nurhayani et al., 2020). In its implementation, teachers have a key role as facilitators as well as policy implementers, so they are required to be able to innovate and adapt in the learning process (Ratna Widyaningrum, 2018; Sadewo & Purnasari, 2021). The Independent Curriculum focuses on learning flexibility, the application of formative assessments, and the integration of the Pancasila Student Profile Strengthening Project (P5). Therefore, teachers need to have a comprehensive understanding of the curriculum structure, teaching tools, student-centered learning approaches, and the use of digital technology in teaching and learning activities (Fifani et al., 2023). However, several studies show that teachers' understanding of the Independent Curriculum is still low, especially at the elementary school level (Syaripudin et al., 2023). Many teachers have not received adequate training and still face difficulties in implementing these curriculum principles in the classroom (Pertiwi et al., 2023). Research conducted by Pertiwi et al. (2023) at SD Negeri 1 Ampel revealed that there is a gap between teachers' theoretical understanding and practice in the field. Heryahya et al. (2022) also emphasized that teacher readiness is influenced not only by individual competence, but also by infrastructure and policy support at the school level. In addition, Pertiwi et al. (2023) emphasize additional challenges in certain areas such as mathematics, which require more appropriate learning approaches and learning resources.

Findings from observations and interviews conducted on August 1, 2024 at SD Negeri 9 Mamboro indicate that teachers face various obstacles, such as a lack of independent learning experience, a lack of understanding of the structure of the Independent Curriculum, difficulties in implementing P5, and the use of the Independent Teaching platform that is not optimal. Although some teachers have attended the training independently, they still face obstacles such as limited reference resources, less effective time management, and limited information and communication technology skills. Some teachers still apply a teacher-centered approach to learning, which has an impact on low student active participation and less effective learning. Fifani et al. (2023) stated that without a deep understanding of the substance of the Independent Curriculum, teachers will have difficulty in designing authentic and contextual assessments. In addition, the limitations in mastery of digital technology among teachers exacerbate this situation, considering the importance of adapting to technology-based learning media in the digital era

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(Heryahya et al., 2022). Therefore, administrative support and ongoing training are needed to improve teachers' competence in facing these challenges (Mawarni et al., 2023).

Based on this background, it shows that teachers' understanding of the Independent Curriculum is one of the main factors that affect the quality of curriculum implementation in elementary schools. Therefore, the researcher is interested in researching related to teacher understanding which focuses on analyzing teacher understanding in the implementation of the Independent Curriculum of SD Negeri 9 Mamboro for the 2024/2025 school year.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The independent curriculum is an educational framework that provides freedom and flexibility to schools and teachers to tailor learning according to local needs and students' potential (Bustari & Putri, 2023). The curriculum encourages innovation and participation, as well as student-centered learning. Suryaman (2020) stated that this curriculum emphasizes the independence of teachers and students in setting learning strategies. Understanding this concept is important so that teachers are able to develop learning that develops students' potential and creativity (Junaidi et al., 2023). Although flexible, its implementation faces challenges such as limited resources, but it is expected to be able to encourage innovative solutions in education. The Merdeka Curriculum functions to update the student-centered learning system, giving freedom to teachers and students in determining the direction of learning (Alimuddin, 2023; Ahmad Dhomiri et al., 2023). Another function is to foster student independence and facilitate adaptive and relevant teaching. Teachers are required to be innovative and responsive to student needs. In addition, this curriculum encourages collaboration between schools, students, teachers, and parents to optimize the learning process and transform education more inclusively.

The Merdeka curriculum has the main characteristics of flexibility, contextual learning, and activity-based projects (Fianingrum et al., 2023). Its emphasis on basic competencies and Pancasila student profiles makes education more holistic (Vhalery et al., 2022). Teacher professionalism is improved through continuous training, and collaboration between schools, parents, and the community is an important element in supporting the effectiveness of the curriculum. Teacher understanding refers to the teacher's ability and awareness in interpreting information and applying educational principles according to the context. Hafizha et al., (2022) stated that teacher understanding includes mastering students' learning styles to increase teaching effectiveness. This emphasizes sensitivity to class dynamics and adaptability. The mastery of knowledge is not only theoretical but also practical, influencing the design of effective and inclusive learning, especially in the context of the Independent Curriculum. Wibawa et al. (2022) emphasized the importance of interactive training to strengthen teachers' understanding of the curriculum. Adaptation and reflection on teaching strategies are an important part of this understanding, encouraging teachers to become active learners to face today's educational challenges. Teachers' understanding in the context of curriculum implementation reflects the extent to which teachers are able to internalize, adapt, and implement curriculum policies in learning practices. According to various studies, indicators of teacher understanding can be seen through the following aspects.

Teachers who understand the content of the curriculum well will be able to connect educational theory with its application in the teaching-learning process. This includes understanding learning outcomes, Pancasila student profiles, and active learning methods. According to Azizah et al. (2021), teachers who understand the essence of the curriculum will be able to design project-based learning and differentiation in accordance with the principles of the Independent Curriculum. This understanding is also evident from the teacher's ability to compile their own teaching modules or modify the available ones as needed. Understanding the curriculum includes the ability to adapt learning approaches to the background, abilities, and needs of students. As explained by Netri & Ramadan (2023), teachers who understand the differentiation approach in the Merdeka Curriculum will provide space for students to learn according to their learning styles and interests. This reflects teachers' awareness of the importance of *student-centered learning*. Teachers' understanding is also reflected in their ability to choose and use appropriate learning media to achieve learning goals. Teachers who understand well will use a variety of learning resources, including digital technology, to facilitate meaningful learning activities. According to Kuntarto (2018), teachers who are technologically literate and have a strong understanding of the curriculum will find it easier to innovate in learning. Teachers who understand the philosophy and direction of the latest education policy can adapt quickly to curriculum changes, such as the transition from the 2013 Curriculum to the Independent Curriculum. This includes mental readiness, openness to change, and willingness to learn. Azizah et al. (2021) stated that teachers' understanding of curriculum dynamics is closely related to participation in training and professional discussions in the school environment.

RESEARCH METHODS

This study uses a qualitative method to analyze the level of teachers' understanding in the implementation of the independent curriculum at SD Negeri 9 Mamboro. According to Sugiyono, qualitative research methods are an approach based on

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the philosophy of postpositivism that emphasizes a deep understanding of complex social situations (Sugiyono, 2013). In this qualitative research process, researchers become the main instruments, allowing flexibility in data collection and analysis to uncover the hidden meanings of social interactions.

The approach used in this study is qualitative descriptive, in accordance with the explanation given by Sanjaya, this approach is intended to provide a comprehensive and in-depth picture of the social reality and phenomena that occur in the student learning environment (Sanjaya, 2015). The location of this research is at SD Negeri 9 Mambo, Jl Manthilayo no. 53 Mambo, North Palu District, Palu City, Central Sulawesi and the research will be carried out during the even semester of the 2024/2025 school year, from March 11 to March 27, 2025 with a total of 6 classroom teachers as informants. Informants were selected using Purposive Sampling, this technique allows researchers to determine informants based on certain standards that are considered to be able to provide data that is highly relevant to the research being conducted. In this research situation, the standard is people who have a deep understanding or are directly involved in reading learning activities at the elementary school level. The data collection technique was carried out in a triangulation manner using interviews, observations, and documentation. The data analysis technique used in this study is the Interactive Model developed by Miles, this model does not wait until all the data is collected for analysis, but the analysis is carried out continuously from the beginning of data collection until the analysis process is completed. This model consists of three main parts, namely data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion drawing (Miles et al., 2014).

RESULT

The results of this study show that the level of teachers' understanding in implementing the Independent Curriculum at SD Negeri 9 Mambo focuses on four main indicators, namely the integration of theoretical knowledge and teaching practice, adjustment to student needs, skills in using appropriate learning media, and adaptation to changes in education policies. In the aspect of integrating theoretical knowledge and teaching practice, teachers at SD Negeri 9 Mambo have generally understood the importance of associating educational theory with practice in the classroom. They apply the theory of behaviorism through giving praise to encourage positive behavior in students, as stated by Mrs. NZ (*"I have always connected the theories I have learned, such as the theory of behaviorism, in the practice of learning in the classroom"*) and Mrs. FFN (*"I try to connect the educational theories I have learned, such as the theory of constructivism, with learning in the classroom"*), which attempts to connect the theories of behaviorism and constructivism with classroom learning. In addition, some teachers also use humanistic and problem-solving approaches to increase student engagement, as explained by Ms. NZ (*"I try to connect educational theories such as humanism, and behaviorism in classroom learning"*) and Ms. SM (*"in learning, I use more problem-based approaches and group discussions"*). However, many teachers still rely on the lecture and group discussion method because it is considered more practical and easier to implement, as Mrs. RSN said (*"I am used to using the method of lectures and group discussions"*). Although this method is quite effective, the variety of learning strategies is still limited and does not fully reflect the spirit of the Independent Curriculum, which encourages more student-centered and contextual learning.

In adjusting to student needs, teachers consistently try to adapt the material to students' abilities through observation, practice questions, informal discussions, and formative assessments. Mrs. SM (*"to identify the learning needs of each student, I use several methods. First, I make direct observations of their learning process in class, I also often do questions and answers to see how well they understand the material. In addition, I give small tests or quizzes periodically to assess their comprehension more objectively"*) explains that he uses a variety of approaches to assess students' comprehension more objectively, including direct observation and periodic quizzes. However, the main challenge faced by teachers in the lower grades, grades I to III is the difference in students' basic abilities, limited time, and resources, as expressed by Mrs. NZ (*"Yes, I feel that there are difficulties in adapting the subject matter to the learning needs of students. In my class, the students' abilities are very diverse, some are quick to understand the lessons, but some are still slow, especially in reading and arithmetic"*) and Mrs. RN (*"yes, sometimes I find it difficult. The development of the second-grade students is not evenly distributed. Some are already fluent in reading, some are still spelling. So when delivering the material, I have to really adjust and repeat often"*). Meanwhile, in the high classes of grades IV to VI, material adjustments are more possible because students already have stronger basic skills, as Mrs. FFN said (*"so far I have not found it difficult to adjust the subject matter to the development of students. I am familiar enough with the characteristics and abilities of students in the classroom"*). However, the implementation of differentiated learning is still not optimal, especially in the lower grades and by new teachers, such as Mrs. HN (*"I have not fully implemented differentiated learning"*) and Mrs. RSN (*"so far I have not implemented differentiated learning, because I am still new to teaching in this school and have not fully understood the interests and learning needs of each student"*), due to limited understanding and high workload. However, some teachers, such as Mrs. FFN (*"yes, I have implemented differentiated learning, I adjust the approach in teaching to accommodate the differences in ability, background, and character of each student"*) and Mrs. SM (*"I have implemented differentiated learning, I*

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also ensure that the learning materials are easily accessible to all students, including those with limitations or special needs"), has begun to adapt teaching methods to accommodate the different abilities and character of students.

In terms of skills in using learning media, most teachers at SD Negeri 9 Mamboro use simple media, such as props, pictures, and number cards, due to the limitations of digital facilities. Mrs. NZ (*"I usually only use makeshift learning media, such as simple props, pictures, and number or letter cards. I make this media myself or use it from materials that are easy to get. Due to limited facilities, I have not been able to use digital-based media"*) explaining that he uses media that is easy to get, although simple, to help students understand the material. Some more experienced teachers, such as Mrs. FFN (*"I use a variety of learning media, depending on the material being taught"*), have tried to vary the use of media according to the needs of the material. However, limited infrastructure, such as electricity and internet networks, are the main obstacles, as experienced by Mrs. RN (*"I sometimes have difficulties in using learning media, especially technology-based media such as learning videos or projectors. Because there is no electricity installation in my classroom, nor can the school waifi network be used for access."* In addition, some senior teachers feel less proficient in using digital technology, as Ms. SM expressed (*"I do find it difficult to use digital-based learning media, because I feel less proficient in operating digital technology"*), even though they are aware of the importance of technology to increase learning effectiveness. Therefore, the development of skills in using digital media and creativity in making simple media are important recommendations to improve the quality of learning.

In adapting to changes in education policy, the results of interviews show variations in teachers' readiness to implement the Independent Curriculum. Some teachers, such as Mrs. SM (*"I often follow the development of education policies, especially related to the Independent Curriculum, because I am the first teacher to implement this curriculum in schools"*), actively participate in training and seek information related to curriculum changes, while others, such as Mrs. NZ (*"I have never participated in trainings related to the Independent Curriculum. I get information about this curriculum only from what I read or hear from other fellow teachers"*) and Mrs. HN (*"I have never directly participated in training or official activities related to the development of the Independent Curriculum. Not because I don't want to, but because there has been no direct socialization at school"*), has never participated in formal training, so it only relies on information from colleagues. This shows the importance of equitable access to training to ensure a more equitable understanding among teachers. In addition, some teachers faced difficulties in compiling Mrs. NZ's teaching modules, (*"I feel that there are difficulties in implementing the Independent Curriculum, especially in the preparation of teaching modules"*), applying Ms. FFN's holistic assessment, (*"yes, there are some difficulties in implementing the Independent Curriculum, especially when conducting student assessments"*), and using Ms. SM's digital technology, (*"So far I feel there are some challenges, especially during the learning process that demands the use of digital-based media"*), although they show a willingness to adapt. Most teachers hope to receive more in-depth training, supporting facilities, and direct mentoring to improve their understanding and skills in implementing the Independent Curriculum. Overall, although the teachers at SD Negeri 9 Mamboro have shown a commitment to implementing the Independent Curriculum, various challenges such as lack of training, limited facilities, and high workload are still the main obstacles. For this reason, more structured support is needed from the government and the education office, including continuous training, the provision of digital facilities, and direct assistance to ensure the success of this education reform.

DISCUSSION

The results of the study show that teachers at SDN 9 Mamboro have begun to integrate educational theory with teaching practice in the implementation of the Independent Curriculum, although the level of understanding still varies. In this context, teachers who have a deep understanding not only understand educational theory cognitively, but are also able to apply it in the management of daily learning. In line with the opinion of Hafizha et al. (2022), this kind of understanding reflects the teacher's ability to relate learning theory to contextual and effective teaching strategies. The findings of the study show that teachers at SD Negeri 9 Mamboro have tried to associate educational theory with teaching practice. Like Mrs. NZ who connects learning theories, such as behaviorism theory, in classroom learning practices. This statement shows the internalization of behaviorism theory applied through the provision of rewards as a positive reinforcement of student learning behavior. This supports the opinion of Kuntarto, (2018) who states that teachers who understand theory will be better able to implement teaching strategies that are in accordance with students' responses. Furthermore, the integration of constructivism theory was also found by Mrs. FFN. This is in line with the thinking of Wibawa et al. (2022) that teacher training should emphasize teaching strategies that build meaningful learning experiences through student participation. Other teachers such as Mrs. SM and Mrs. NZ also showed the application of humanistic theory and group discussions in learning. This approach is in accordance with the principles of the Independent Curriculum which emphasizes the development of students' potential in a holistic and personal manner. This practice supports the idea of Netri & Ramadan (2023) who considers that integrating theories such as humanistic is essential to create inclusive and responsive learning. However, some teachers still dominate using the lecture and group discussion method for efficiency reasons.

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As expressed by the RSN mother. This condition shows that the integration of theory is not completely evenly distributed in teaching practice, as explained in the research by Faadhilah & Indayati (2023) that most teachers experience confusion in dealing with curriculum changes and tend to stick to conventional approaches.

The findings of the study show that adjustment to student needs is one of the fundamental aspects internalized by teachers in the implementation of the Independent Curriculum at the elementary school level. At SD Negeri 9 Mambo, this is reflected in various strategies used by teachers in adapting learning to the characteristics and needs of students. One form of this adjustment is through the initial identification of students' learning needs which is carried out systematically through direct observation, formative assessment, and informal interaction in the classroom, as conveyed by Mrs. SM. This process helps teachers in recognizing students who need assistance or additional challenges. This adjustment is in line with the opinion of Hafizha et al. (2022) who stated that teachers' in-depth understanding of students' learning styles and needs is the main basis for developing effective and targeted learning strategies. The results in the study also reveal the challenges faced by teachers, especially in lower grades. The difference in students' basic abilities and limited time and resources are obstacles in making optimal learning adjustments, as experienced by Mrs. NZ, the same thing is also felt by Mrs. RN. This condition reflects that although the Independent Curriculum provides room for flexibility, its implementation requires high pedagogical competence and effective management of time and resources. Bustari & Putri (2023) stated that curriculum flexibility provides freedom for teachers to adjust materials, methods, and learning assessments. However, this freedom needs to be supported by the readiness of teachers, both in terms of understanding concepts and practical skills. On the other hand, in grades IV to VI, teachers showed better ability to make learning adjustments, as experienced by Mrs. FFN, a grade IV teacher. This ability is greatly influenced by the teacher's experience and closeness to the student. However, new teachers like Mrs. RSN still face challenges. Differentiated learning is a concrete form of adjustment to student needs, but it has not been optimally applied at all levels. Teachers in the lower classes and teachers who are new to teaching admit that they have not fully implemented it. Mrs. HN stated that she had not implemented differentiated learning, while Mrs. RSN conveyed her limited understanding of student character as the main reason. This shows that the implementation of differentiated concepts requires time, mature understanding, and adequate experience. However, some teachers have shown the application of a concrete differentiated approach such as Mrs. FFN. Likewise, Mrs. SM has implemented differentiated learning in teaching. These two quotes reinforce the argument of Netri & Ramadan (2023) that the ability to adapt learning to students' needs is an important indicator of teachers' understanding in the Independent Curriculum. All teachers show a commitment to creating an inclusive and welcoming learning environment for all students. This supports the findings of previous research by Silaswati (2022), that the implementation of the Independent Curriculum provides flexibility for teachers to develop a contextual and responsive curriculum. Despite the initial confusion as revealed in the study by Faadhilah & Indayati (2023), teachers showed real efforts to adjust their teaching strategies to answer students' learning needs. Research conducted by Safitri & Nisak Aulina (2022) even noted that at the PAUD level, most educators have shown high ability to adapt learning to the character of students. Thus, the success of learning adjustment to the needs of students at SD Negeri 9 Mambo is greatly influenced by the integration between theoretical understanding, teaching practice experience, and teachers' adaptive capacity in reading classroom dynamics. In line with the study of Hafizha et al. (2022), as well as the support of previous research, the implementation of the Independent Curriculum becomes more effective when teachers are able to position themselves as facilitators of learning that are responsive, reflective, and contextual to the needs of students.

The main findings in this study show that teachers' skills in using the right learning media are a central indicator of the success of the implementation of the Independent Curriculum in SD Negeri 9 Mambo. This skill includes the ability to select, utilize, and adjust various types of media, both conventional and digital to support an effective, interactive, and contextual learning process that meets the needs of students. Most of the teachers at SD Negeri 9 Mambo have shown active efforts in using learning media creatively, although limitations in mastering digital technology and infrastructure are still a challenge. For example, a low-grade teacher like Mrs. NZ. This indicates the creativity and initiative of teachers in creating contextual media even though it is limited in technology. Meanwhile, more experienced teachers such as Mrs. FFN show flexibility and variety in the selection of media, both conventional and technology-based. This is in line with the view of Netri & Ramadan (2023) who states that the skill of choosing the right media reflects the teacher's pedagogical understanding in converting abstract material into more concrete and easy to understand by students. The ability to integrate media into learning strategies is also seen from Mrs. HN's statement that adapts media to the learning material and objectives. The media used is not only to attract attention, but also to make it easier for children to understand the material. This statement affirms the role of media as a pedagogical tool, not just entertainment, that supports students' conceptual understanding, in line with the findings of Hafizha et al. (2022) that effective media must be built on the basis of in-depth knowledge of the material, the context of the student, and the learning objectives. However, obstacles such as limited facilities were also found, as revealed by Mrs. RSN, who used makeshift media from the school, such as whiteboards, package books, pictures, and simple props. This underscores the importance of increased infrastructure

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support and teacher training. In fact, the challenges of digital infrastructure are very real, as explained by Mrs. RN, that classrooms where there are no electrical installations, as well as school waifi networks cannot be used and limited digital competencies, as experienced by Mrs. SM. Despite facing various obstacles, teachers still show a spirit of learning and adaptation. This fact strengthens the statement in Silaswati (2022) research that although teachers' initial understanding of the Independent Curriculum is not yet fully strong, there is a tendency to increase teachers' creativity and flexibility in adapting the media to classroom conditions. This condition is also consistent with the findings of the research of Faadhilah & Indayati (2023), which shows that curriculum changes often cause confusion in choosing learning media. However, in the context of SD Negeri 9 Mamboro, teachers are actually able to get around these limitations with an adaptive and contextual approach. This reflects the principles of the Independent Curriculum which emphasizes the flexibility and independence of teachers in the learning process. As stated by Wibawa et al. (2022), skills in the use of media must continue to be honed through appropriate training, so that teachers are able to develop strategies that are in harmony with class dynamics and student character. Thus, the findings of this study strengthen the crucial role of the skills of using appropriate learning media as one of the main pillars of the implementation of the Independent Curriculum. Teachers' efforts in combining simple media with a creative approach not only support material understanding, but also open up space for strengthening digital literacy, critical thinking, and collaboration in line with the Pancasila Student profile which is the final goal of this curriculum (Safitri & Nisak Aulina, 2022).

Important findings in this study show that adaptation to changes in education policy, especially in the implementation of the Independent Curriculum at SD Negeri 9 Mamboro, is the main challenge for teachers in carrying out their professional duties. This adaptation includes the process of adjusting to new policies, starting from understanding concepts, preparing learning plans, to classroom practices. Hafizha et al. (2022) state that teachers' understanding must include not only theoretical aspects, but also the ability to adapt teaching strategies to students' needs contextually. The results of the interviews showed that teachers' levels of adaptation varied widely, influenced by training experience, access to information, and personal readiness. Teachers who have prior experience in the implementation of the Independent Curriculum, such as Mrs. SM, show enthusiasm and proactivity. This statement indicates a professional awareness of the importance of following the dynamics of education policy, as emphasized by Kuntarto (2018) that professional teachers are those who are reflective and continue to develop their knowledge. However, some other teachers have never participated in official training, so they obtain information in a limited and unsystematic manner. Mrs. NZ said that she had never participated in trainings related to the Independent Curriculum and got information about this curriculum only limited to what I read or heard from other fellow teachers, while Mrs. HN revealed that she had never directly participated in formal training or activities related to the development of the Independent Curriculum, not because she did not want to, but because there had been no direct socialization in schools. This finding is strengthened by the results of research by Faadhilah & Indayati (2023), which noted that the lack of training causes confusion among teachers in interpreting and implementing curriculum policies in a concrete way. Another challenge faced by teachers is related to the technical aspects of implementation. Mrs. NZ admitted that she had difficulties in preparing teaching tools. This is strengthened by the statement of Mrs. FFN who stated difficulties in the assessment aspect. Mrs. SM also added that she felt that there were several challenges, especially during the learning process that demanded the use of digital-based media, which showed that limitations in digital literacy were a significant obstacle. Bustari & Putri (2023) stated that teachers in the Independent Curriculum are required to not only understand the content of the curriculum, but also have the skills to manage relevant technologies and learning methods locally and contextually. Teachers also hope for further training and facility support. Mrs. SM said emphatically that teachers need support in the form of training in the use of digital media in a sustainable manner, because it is still difficult to operate digital devices. In addition, there is also a need for learning facilities such as projectors or other supporting devices in the classroom. The request illustrates the importance of institutional support as stated by Wibawa et al. (2022), that teachers' adaptation to new policies can only be effective if supported by continuous training, technical assistance, and adequate learning facilities. Facing these challenges, teachers still positively welcome the spirit of the Independent Curriculum. Mrs. RN revealed that she supports the implementation of the Independent Curriculum because it provides more space for teachers to be creative in designing learning. This attitude is in line with the findings of Silaswati (2022) research which shows that although understanding is still low, teachers value freedom and flexibility in designing learning that is more in line with the context of students. Meanwhile, new teachers such as Mrs. RSN feel that they are still facing confusion in their implementation. This indicates that the transition from the previous curriculum to the Independent Curriculum requires special assistance, especially for teachers who do not have long enough teaching experience. Research from Safitri & Nisak Aulina (2022) also states that teachers' understanding of the Freedom of Learning policy varies depending on their background and teaching experience. Overall, the results of this study reinforce the view that teachers' adaptation to changes in education policy is highly dependent on individual readiness and systemic support. Adaptation is not only a matter of accepting new policies, but also a reflective process to transform learning practices to be more relevant, contextual, and responsive to the needs of students and society. Therefore, the success of the implementation of the

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Independent Curriculum will be largely determined by the continuity of training, equitable distribution of information, and the active involvement of educational institutions in providing concrete support for teachers.

CONCLUSION

Based on the results of the research on teachers' understanding of the implementation of the Independent Curriculum at SD Negeri 9 Mamboro, it can be concluded that the understanding of teachers at SD Negeri 9 Mamboro on the implementation of the Independent Curriculum is quite good, although it is not even in all aspects. Teachers' understanding of the new curriculum has been reflected in their efforts to integrate educational theoretical knowledge with classroom learning practices. Teachers try to apply various theories in the teaching process as a form of adjustment to the principles of the Independent Curriculum. However, the implementation of this theory is not completely even, considering that there are still teachers who are more dominant in using the lecture and group discussion method for reasons of efficiency and old habits. The ability of teachers to adapt learning to the needs of students has been carried out through the systematic identification of student learning needs, but the limitations of time, resources, and differences in basic abilities between students, especially in lower grades, are obstacles in the optimization of these adjustments. Teachers' skills in using appropriate learning media are also the main support in supporting the implementation process of the Independent Curriculum at SD Negeri 9 Mamboro. Teachers have made creative efforts to use the media, although obstacles such as limited infrastructure and the ability to use digital technology are still often faced. Experienced teachers are better able to vary the use of media, while the biggest challenges are experienced by new teachers or those with minimal access to training. Ultimately, this study found that adaptation to changes in education policy, both in terms of concept understanding, planning, and learning implementation, depends on the level of individual readiness of teachers and the support of the existing system. Although some teachers show high enthusiasm and motivation to adapt, the limitations of training, lack of socialization, as well as technical and infrastructure obstacles are factors that still need attention so that the implementation of the Independent Curriculum can run optimally in the SD Negeri 9 Mamboro.

CONFESSION

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