

# Level of Readiness for Implementation of the Independent Curriculum in Senior High Schools in Depok City, West Java

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**Abstract:** The Independent Curriculum is a curriculum with diverse intra-curricular learning where the content will be optimized so that students have enough time to explore concepts and strengthen competencies. The purpose of this study was to identify and obtain information about the level of readiness of education units in Depok City in implementing the independent curriculum. The research method used is the descriptive qualitative method, which describes the subject the situation, and data obtained during observations and questions so that it becomes useful information and is easily understood by readers. The results of this study indicate that the level of readiness for implementing an independent curriculum in schools in high school education units in Depok City, West Java, is still not optimal. Two of the three schools have not implemented an independent curriculum, although the school has received socialization and understanding related to the independent curriculum. The key to the success of implementing an independent curriculum is good collaboration between school principals and teachers. In addition, the principal as a leader must be able to change the mindset of the Human Resources in the school to want to make changes so that the independent curriculum can be applied. Likewise, in the project of strengthening the profile of Pancasila students, it is still limited and has not led to a local culture-based learning model.

**Keywords:** Independent curriculum; Local culture-based learning; Pancasila student profile strengthening project

## Introduction

The education unit needs to consider the accomplishment of students' competence within special circumstances when implementing the curriculum. The Covid-19 pandemic period is one of the special conditions that cause different learning losses in the achievement of student competencies. To overcome learning loss, a learning recovery policy is needed for a certain period of time-related to the implementation of the curriculum by the education unit (Barron Rodriguez et al., 2021; Jena, 2020). The implementation of the curriculum by education unit can use a curriculum that is in accordance with the learning needs of students and must pay attention to the achievement of student competencies in the education unit in the context of

learning recovery. Then the Education unit is given the option of implementing a curriculum that is in accordance with the learning needs of students. The three curriculum options are the 2013 Curriculum, the Emergency Curriculum (i.e. the 2013 Curriculum simplified by the Ministry of Education and Culture), and the Independent Curriculum.

The Merdeka Curriculum is an inclusive curriculum that incorporates various intra-curricular learning methods. The content will be carefully optimized to provide students with ample time to delve into concepts and enhance their competencies (Mawaddah Islamiyah et al., 2022). Teachers are granted the freedom to select from a range of instructional resources in order to tailor learning experiences to suit the unique needs and interests of students. Projects

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aimed at enhancing students' understanding of the Pancasila student profile are designed around specific themes established by the government. These projects are not intended to meet specific academic performance targets and therefore are not bound by subject matter constraints (Basri et al., 2021; Wasimin, 2022).

Teachers are granted the freedom to select from a range of instructional resources in order to tailor learning experiences to suit the unique needs and interests of students. Projects aimed at enhancing students' understanding of the Pancasila student profile are designed around specific themes established by the government. These projects are not intended to meet specific academic performance targets and therefore are not bound by subject matter constraints (Tabroni et al., 2022). The research findings additionally indicate a significant disparity in education among different regions and social groups within Indonesia. This situation has been further aggravated by the emergence of the Covid-19 pandemic. In order to address these crises and confront the multitude of challenges, systemic transformations are required, one of which pertains to the curriculum. The curriculum determines the subject matter taught within the classroom, as well as influencing the pace and teaching methodologies employed by educators to cater to the needs of students. Hence, the Ministry of Education and Culture has developed the Independent Curriculum as a crucial component of efforts to revitalize learning following the protracted crisis we have endured (Latief et al., 2021).

This policy is driven by two primary goals. Firstly, the Ministry of Education and Culture aims to underscore that schools possess the autonomy and accountability to design curricula that align with their specific needs and contexts. Secondly, by implementing this curriculum option policy, the government hopes to facilitate a smooth and gradual transition in the national curriculum. The alterations within the curriculum framework necessitate adaptation from all components of the education system (Buffone, 2021). To achieve the desired outcome of enhancing the quality of learning and education in Indonesia, it is crucial to meticulously handle this process. Hence, the Ministry of Education, Culture, Research, and Technology (Kemendikbudristek) offers curriculum alternatives as part of their efforts in managing and implementing change.

National curriculum changes will only occur in 2024. At that time, the Merdeka Curriculum has gone through 3 years of improvement iterations in various schools and regions. In 2024 there will be quite a number of schools in each region that have studied the Independent Curriculum and later can become learning partners for other school (Utami et al., 2022). By

adopting a gradual approach, it allows teachers, principals, and education offices ample time for learning. The learning process of these essential individuals holds significant importance as it forms the bedrock of the educational transformation that we strive for (Agung et al., 2022; Firmansyah et al., 2021).

In this regard, it is important to analyze the readiness of the education unit or school in implementing this independent curriculum. Meanwhile, research related to this is still limited, considering that this independent curriculum is still in the socialization stage and its implementation is not yet mandatory for all schools. Schools have the right to apply it or not until 2024. The criteria for schools that may apply the Independent Curriculum are those who are interested in implementing the Independent Curriculum to improve learning (Krishnapatria, 2021; Qurtubi, 2021). According to Kemendikbudristek, the crucial factor for success lies in the willingness of principals and teachers to comprehend and adjust the curriculum to their specific circumstances. As a result, the Independent Curriculum can be implemented in all schools, regardless of their infrastructure quality or geographical location. Therefore, we conducted research related to school readiness in implementing an independent curriculum in several schools in the city of Depok, West Java. The aim is to evaluate the level of school readiness in implementing an independent curriculum as a whole which includes the learning model used and the project to strengthen the Pancasila student profile.

## Method

The research was conducted using qualitative research techniques with a descriptive approach. Qualitative research is research that produces information or information about descriptive data in the form of written data and oral data. This study also uses a purposive sampling technique, which is a sample that focuses on selected informants because the informants have rich knowledge or sources to explore and research. This research was conducted in three senior high schools in the city of Depok, West Java, namely SMA Perjuangan Terpadu, SMAIT Nururrahman, and SMA Muhammadiyah.

In this research, two data sources are used, namely primary and secondary data sources. First, primary data include; observations, and interviews. In this study, the informants needed in data collection include teachers, school principals and vice principals. The teacher referred to in this study is a teacher who teaches Physics subjects. The two secondary data sources are data collected through the existing literature which includes books, articles or scientific journals that are relevant to

the issues discussed. The time used is in a period of three months, namely August to October 2022, starting from digging in depth data collection information without the need for engineering or data manipulation, to the stage of compiling research reports with the expected results that researchers get a clear picture of school readiness in implementing independent curriculum.

analytic approach. The approach is carried out in three stages: first, a critical analysis of the information or data collected, the information or data collected having relevance to the theme and object of the research material. Second, critical interpretation of the information or data collected and described in order to provide a conclusion to the formulation of the problem that has been determined. Third, drawing conclusions. Based on the purpose of the content analysis method used to describe and conclude the data found, after the data is analyzed then conclusions are made. The flowchart of the research conducted can be seen in Figure 1.

### Result and Discussion

The results of interviews that have been conducted with teachers and principals at the high school level in Depok City, West Java, analyzed indicators of the application of the independent learning curriculum and learning models based on local culture as a strengthening of the character profile of Pancasila students. In the indicators of the implementation of the independent learning curriculum, the information obtained from the teachers is as shown in Table 1. The results of the analysis of the indicators of the implementation of the independent learning curriculum show that of the 3 schools analyzed, 2 schools have not implemented the independent curriculum, and 1 school has implemented the curriculum is independent but the preparation is still lacking. Although the schools have received socialization either directly from the Ministry of Education and Culture or directives from their supervisors, some have even attended MGMP training. The main assumption of independent learning is giving trust to teachers so that teachers feel independent in carrying out learning.

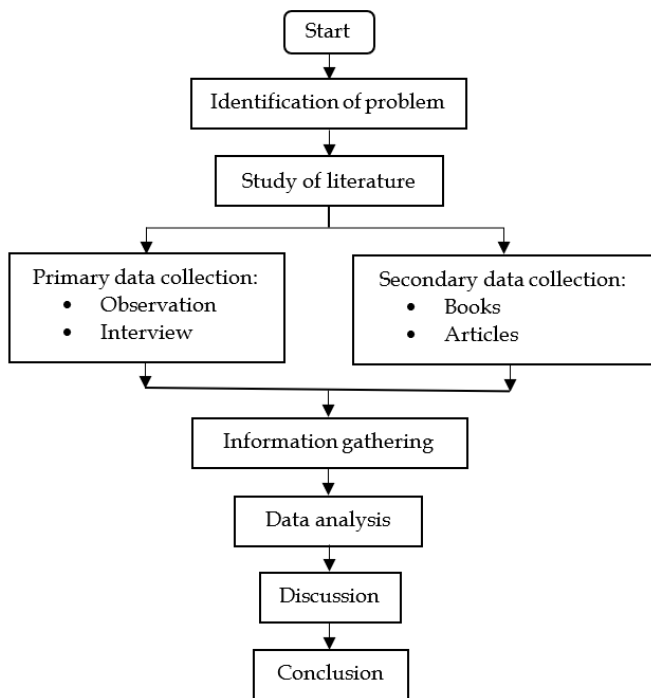


Figure 1. The flowchart of the research

Information collection techniques used are first, research to find information and collect information about the problem. Second, data analysis used content analysis method. The research method is carried out by identifying information objectively and systematically. In the data analysis technique, after the relevant data has been collected, the data is analyzed using a descriptive-

Table 1. The Results of Interviews with Teachers for Indicators of the Implementation of the Independent Learning Curriculum

No	Questions	1 <sup>st</sup> School Teacher Answers	2 <sup>nd</sup> School Teacher Answers	3 <sup>rd</sup> School Teacher Answers
1	Has the school implemented independent curriculum?	Already implemented in an class 10	Not yet	Haven't implemented an independent curriculum yet
2	How do you feel about the independent curriculum policy?	Disagree, due to lack of preparation	In accordance with school conditions because it must be supported by students' abilities, the number of projects, and presentations that students must do	Regarding the policy of an independent curriculum that does not lead, it has advantages and disadvantages, namely, the disadvantages are that it cannot focus on one goal in choosing a PTN major, unlike when K13 was already majoring in science and social studies. The advantage is that you can choose a PTN major without having to cross

No	Questions	1 <sup>st</sup> School Teacher Answers	2 <sup>nd</sup> School Teacher Answers	3 <sup>rd</sup> School Teacher Answers
				majors because it is only seen from the value of report cards
3	How is the readiness of schools with the implementation of an independent curriculum?	Like it or not, you have to be ready, because you have received instructions from the supervisor	There is no information yet to prepare an independent curriculum	In physics subjects, it is ready for the enactment of an independent curriculum
4	Has there been any socialization/training on the independent curriculum and its tools?	There is already socialization	Already there but from outside the school	Have attended MGMP training for physics teachers which was conducted online for 3 days regarding the independent curriculum (for Mrs. Annisa only 1 day).
5	What are the obstacles that you face in implementing the independent curriculum?	Incomplete teaching materials such as textbooks and teaching modules and learning tools	The majority of teachers only teach at this school, so there is limited information on the implementation of the independent curriculum	Barriers in dealing with the application of an independent curriculum are in terms of the material, where in the independent curriculum a lot of material is trimmed or reduced.
6	What do schools need to implement an independent curriculum?	teaching materials such as textbooks and teaching modules as well as clear learning tools	Training, creative ideas for projects, sharing more information about the independent curriculum, and habituation of students to carry out projects	What is needed is more time to do practicum or project activities, as well as complete tools to carry out activities and students can explore theory or material independently.

This result is supported by the results of interviews conducted with school principals, as shown in Table 2. On average, schools convey that there is still a need for as many outreach as possible to schools and that there are schools that have implemented an independent curriculum that can be used as an example. The more sample schools, the more pilot schools will be for schools

that have not implemented an independent curriculum. And there must be a public test before it is implemented in schools, by curriculum experts before it is given to schools. In the independent curriculum students are given the freedom to explore their knowledge (Agung & Ratna Kumala, 2022; Rachman et al., 2022).

**Table 2.** Results of Interviews with School Principals for Indicators of Implementing the Independent Learning Curriculum

No	Questions	1 <sup>st</sup> Principal's Answer	2 <sup>nd</sup> Principal's Answer	3 <sup>rd</sup> Principal's Answer
1	Has the school implemented an independent curriculum?	Already	Haven't applied	Haven't applied
2	How do you feel about the independent curriculum policy?	Don't understand because there is no training but they are forced to apply	There needs to be as much outreach as possible to schools and model schools. The more sample schools, the piloting for schools that have not implemented an independent curriculum. And there must be a public test before going to school, in curriculum experts before it is given to schools. And in my opinion, this independent curriculum is running to independence, yes, it is not connected with the notions made by teachers and schools. So students are given the freedom to explore their knowledge.	Good
3	How is the readiness of schools with the implementation of an independent curriculum?	Very minimal because there is no further information	First, in terms of human resources, they are preparing for a year to prepare the socialization of their mgmp-mgmp. The second is the preparation of good facilities, namely the book. From students also become learning objectives.	Not ready yet and do a consultation

No	Questions	1 <sup>st</sup> Principal's Answer	2 <sup>nd</sup> Principal's Answer	3 <sup>rd</sup> Principal's Answer
4	Has there been any socialization/training on the independent curriculum and its tools?	Already conducted the introduction of the independent curriculum	Yes, from schools that have held it yet, but have designed the program this year by inviting a team of experts from the service or supervisor.	Not yet, just an online seminar
5	What are the obstacles that you face in implementing the independent curriculum?	Really need training	The first is definitely the preparation of human resources, teachers, and facilities.	Mindset and timing
6	What do schools need to implement an independent curriculum?	Training for Preparing teaching materials, cp, and projects	One is for sure supporting books, student and teacher handbooks are definitely needed. The second is guidance from the Ministry of Education and the center. Furthermore, there is a comparative study to schools that have implemented an independent curriculum.	Socialization and training

**Table 3.** Interview Results for Indicators of Local Culture-Based Learning Models as Strengthening the Character Profile of Pancasila Students

No	Questions	1 <sup>st</sup> School Answer	2 <sup>nd</sup> School Answer	3 <sup>rd</sup> School Answer
1	Have you implemented a local culture-based learning model? If so, what culture is applied in learning?	There is no plan yet, but for the even semester there is a plan	Not yet	Maybe several times, local culture-based learning models have been applied, such as applying physics learning in everyday life
2	What is your response to the local culture-based learning model?	Good, because students are required to know the local culture	Good because it can invite students to explore Indonesian local culture	If in physics it may be less needed for a local cultural learning model
3	What are the obstacles faced in implementing the local culture-based learning model?	The difficulty of students' thinking to reason because of the changing conditions due to the pandemic	Children's ideas and creativity	There are no obstacles because the local culture-based learning model has not or has not been often applied in learning
4	What is needed in implementing a local culture-based learning model?	Sufficient time, clear teaching materials, and learning tools	Knowledge of culture, socialism, as well as more information about local culture-based learning models	Nothing is needed in the local culture learning model because it has not been applied in learning, maybe what is needed if the local cultural learning model is applied, such as learning modules and seminars
5	What do schools need to improve literacy, numeracy, learning modules and character skills of tools Pancasila students?	Facilities such as learning modules and character skills of tools	Literacy: wants to deposit readings or articles that students read Numeration: has applied maple clinic (additional study hours according to material that is considered difficult) Pancasila character: information like posters	What is needed to improve students' literacy skills by adding or increasing the number of books in the library
6	What habits have been carried out by schools in improving literacy, numeracy, and student character of Pancasila students?	1. Tadarus when entering class 2. search for literacy material on the internet before learning to find out the benefits of studying the material	Literacy: literacy corner Numeration: maple clinic Pancasila Character: Ceremonies and celebrations of the big day	Habits in improving literacy, numeracy, and student character of Pancasila students such as doing recitations every morning and KIR (Adolescent Scientific Work)

Regarding the local culture-based learning model as a strengthening of the Pancasila student profile character, the evaluation results show that the schools in Indonesia do not have a local culture-based learning model design as shown in Table 3. The learning model that is currently being applied is a learning model that can be applied in everyday life. The local culture-based learning model is important to implement because it is a strategy for creating a learning environment and designing learning experiences that integrate culture as part of the learning process (Mujahidin et al., 2023). Culture-based learning is based on the recognition of culture as a fundamental (fundamental and important) part of education as an expression and communication of an idea and the development of knowledge.

Purnomo et al. reveal that culture-based learning makes students not only imitate and accept the information conveyed but students create meaning, understanding, and develop the knowledge gained. The culture-based learning process not only transfers culture and cultural embodiment but uses culture to make students able to create meaning, penetrate the limits of imagination, and be creative in achieving a deep understanding of the subjects being studied (Purnomo et al., 2023).

Some of the obstacles faced in implementing local culture-based learning models include the difficulty of students' thinking to reason due to the transition of conditions due to the pandemic, limited ideas and creativity of children. Some solutions that can overcome some of the problems in implementing local culture-based learning models are that it takes sufficient time, clear teaching materials, and complete learning tools, knowledge of culture, socialism, and further information about local culture-based learning models.

The implementation of an independent curriculum can improve students' ability to solve problems. Students will try to find out information and put it into practice, so that students will be seen learning independence and active learning (Daniyarovna et al., 2021; Rachman et al., 2022).

Every teacher must be prepared for the changes in the existing curriculum. Teachers become educators who are able to adapt to changes in education for the better. The independent learning curriculum requires teachers to be active in learning administration (Hadi et al., 2023; Sunaryo et al., 2022). But in reality not all teachers understand the implementation of the independent curriculum, because they have not received a workshop. Not all schools have also implemented an independent curriculum, because the socialization of the independent curriculum has not been comprehensive to all schools. School readiness in implementing an independent curriculum must be balanced with the

ability of competent human resources in each field (Sulistiani & Yulianto, 2019). Implementing the program is inseparable from five interventions, namely, consultative and asymmetrical assistance, strengthening school human resources, learning new paradigms, data-based planning, and school digitization (Mawaddah Islamiyah et al., 2022; Pratikno et al., 2022).

The learning models applied in schools vary according to the teacher's ability to implement learning strategies. Based on the observations that have been made, learning in schools is still widely carried out in the midst of discussion, lecture, and PBL models. Existing learning models have not been associated with scientific or cultural events that exist in the area. The Pancasila student profile has six competencies consisting of faith, fear of God Almighty, noble character, global diversity, cooperation, independence, critical reasoning, and creativity. The Pancasila Profile strengthening project is cross-disciplinary learning with a Project-Based learning approach and differs from project-based learning in the classroom (Agung S. & Ratna Kumala, 2022a; Dasmana et al., 2022). Whereas with the existence of learning that is associated with culture students will better understand the concept well and be able to animate cultural diversity (Hidayati et al., 2020; Marhayani, 2016; Rukiyati Sugiyono & L. Andriani Purwastuti, 2017). In addition, it will also grow the profile of Pancasila students, because in the profile of Pancasila students there are several traits related to cultural elements (Nurhayati et al., 2022).

## Conclusion

Based on the results of research that has been carried out on senior high schools in the city of Depok, West Java, it shows that the level of readiness for implementing the independent curriculum is still not optimal. Two out of three schools have not implemented an independent curriculum. Likewise, in the project of strengthening the profile of Pancasila students, it is still limited and has not led to a local culture-based learning model. The participation of all relevant parties, to participate more in socializing and assisting schools intensively in implementing an independent curriculum.

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### Author Contributions

Conceptualization, Dasmo; methodology, Neng nenden Mulyaningsih; validation, Indica Yona Okyranida; formal analysis, Irnin Agustina Dwi Astuti.; investigation, Andri Fitriani, Indica Yona Okyranida, and Fita Widiyatun.; data curation, Andry Fitriani.; writing—original draft preparation, Neng Nenden Mulyaningsih.; writing—review and editing, Irnin Agustina Dwi Astuti and Fita Widiyatun.; supervision, Dasmo.

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### Conflicts of Interest

The authors declare no conflict of interest.

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