

Analysis of Education Policy and Management in “Kurikulum Merdeka” Development

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ABSTRACT: Education Policy is an important instrument in directing curriculum development that aligns with contemporary needs. Independent curriculum is an initiative aimed at granting autonomy to schools in designing relevant and contextually responsive curricula. This research aims to analyze educational policies and management supporting the implementation of independent curriculum. The research employed policy analysis and data collection through interviews and documentation studies. Findings indicate that successful implementation hinges on factors such as a profound understanding of educational autonomy, availability of high-quality human resources, and support from various stakeholders. Effective education management is crucial to ensure policy implementation at the school level, involving coaching, training for education managers, and establishing continuous monitoring and evaluation mechanisms. These insights are valuable for policymakers and educators striving to enhance independent curriculum implementation and disseminate best practices in developing pertinent, adaptable curricula.

Keywords: “kurikulum merdeka”, management, policy.

Abstrak: *Kebijakan Pendidikan adalah alat penting dalam mengarahkan pengembangan kurikulum yang sesuai dengan kebutuhan zaman. Kurikulum mandiri adalah inisiatif yang bertujuan memberikan kemandirian kepada sekolah dalam merancang kurikulum yang relevan dan responsif terhadap konteks lokal. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menganalisis kebijakan pendidikan dan manajemen yang mendukung implementasi kurikulum mandiri. Metode penelitian yang digunakan adalah analisis kebijakan serta pengumpulan data melalui wawancara dan studi dokumentasi. Temuan menunjukkan bahwa keberhasilan implementasi sangat bergantung pada faktor seperti pemahaman mendalam terhadap konsep kemandirian pendidikan, ketersediaan sumber daya manusia berkualitas, dan dukungan dari berbagai pihak terkait. Manajemen pendidikan yang efektif sangat penting untuk memastikan implementasi kebijakan di tingkat sekolah, termasuk pembinaan, pelatihan bagi pengelola pendidikan, serta pembentukan mekanisme pemantauan dan evaluasi yang berkelanjutan. Temuan ini memberikan wawasan penting bagi pembuat kebijakan dan praktisi pendidikan dalam upaya meningkatkan implementasi kurikulum mandiri serta menyebarkan praktik terbaik dalam pengembangan kurikulum yang relevan dan dapat disesuaikan.*

Kata kunci: kebijakan, kurikulum merdeka, manajemen.

INTRODUCTION

Education is one of the key aspects in the development of a nation. Curriculum development is important in ensuring that the education provided is in line with the demands of the times and the needs of society. Amid the dynamics of rapid social, economic, and technological change, education policies must be able to adapt to ensure the relevance and quality of the education produced, (Depdikbud, 2022).

The Independent Curriculum is an effort to provide independence to schools in designing a curriculum that is appropriate to the local context and student needs. By providing autonomy to schools, it is hoped that the implemented curriculum will be more responsive to student needs and be able to improve the quality of learning.

However, the implementation of the Independent Curriculum is not without challenges. A deep understanding of the concept of educational independence is required, as well as support from various related parties, from the central government to the school level. Therefore, analysis of education policy and management is important to understand the factors that influence the implementation of the Merdeka Curriculum and identify strategies to increase its effectiveness.

Through this background, this research will examine further the educational policies and management that support the development of the Independent Curriculum, with the aim of providing in-depth insight into the challenges, opportunities, and strategies for increasing the implementation of an independent curriculum that is relevant to local realities.

Formulation of the problem

What is the analysis of educational policy and management in the development of an independent curriculum?

Research purposes

Analyzing education policy and management in developing an independent curriculum?

RESEARCH METHOD

In the development of the Independent Curriculum, several research methods can be employed in policy analysis and education management. Policy analysis involves in-depth study of relevant policies, including documents, regulations, and guidelines issued by governments (Creswell, 2015). Literature studies search and analyze scientific literature to gain a deeper understanding of educational policy, theories, and management concepts. Interviews with stakeholders, such as government officials, policy makers, school principals, teachers, parents, and community members, provide insights into their experiences and perspectives on the curriculum's implementation. Case studies of schools that have adopted the Merdeka Curriculum offer an understanding of best practices, challenges, and successes. Both

quantitative and qualitative data analysis are utilized, including surveys and statistical analysis for quantitative data, and content analysis or interview transcriptions for qualitative data. Focus group discussions with specific groups, such as teachers or students, and field observations in selected schools provide additional insights. A combination of these methods offers a comprehensive understanding of education policy and management in the context of the Independent Curriculum, helping identify challenges, opportunities, and recommendations for improvement.

Various types of research can be used, including descriptive research to describe characteristics or phenomena related to the curriculum's implementation, and qualitative research to gain in-depth understanding of stakeholders' perceptions and experiences. Quantitative research collects numerical data, while mixed-methods research combines qualitative and quantitative approaches for a more holistic understanding. Action research involves collaboration between researchers and practitioners to improve educational management practices. Data collection techniques include interviews, documentation studies, surveys, observations, focus group discussions, and secondary data analysis. The choice of technique depends on the research objectives, population, and context.

After data collection, the next step is data analysis, starting with data processing and structuring. Data description involves understanding basic characteristics through descriptive statistics or summarizing qualitative findings. Thematic or content analysis is used for qualitative data to identify patterns and themes, while statistical analysis tests hypotheses for quantitative data. Data integration combines qualitative and quantitative data for a comprehensive understanding. Interpretation of results identifies key findings and discusses their implications. The final step is report creation, summarizing findings, analysis, interpretations, and recommendations, providing a clear narrative supported by evidence. Careful and systematic data analysis produces meaningful findings to inform educational policy, practice, or further research.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Independent Curriculum Concept

The Independent Curriculum is an educational approach that grants schools the freedom to design, develop, and evaluate their curricula based on the local context, student needs, and current developments (Suparno, 2021). Key points of this concept include providing school autonomy to tailor curricula to the characteristics and potential of their communities and students. It emphasizes responsiveness to the social, cultural, and economic realities of the surrounding environment. Stakeholder involvement is crucial, with active participation encouraged from teachers, parents, students, and local communities. The curriculum aims for holistic competency development, focusing not only on academics but also on social skills, creativity, and character. Project-based learning is promoted, allowing students to learn through

real-life experiences and applications. The curriculum is designed to be flexible and adaptable to quickly meet changing educational needs and environmental dynamics. Continuous monitoring and evaluation are emphasized to ensure the effectiveness and quality of the learning outcomes. Understanding these principles, schools can develop curricula that are more relevant, effective, and capable of creating a motivating learning environment that enables students to reach their maximum potential.

Education Policy Theory

Educational Policy Theory provides a conceptual framework for understanding the processes involved in creating, implementing, and evaluating educational policies. Several theories relevant to this context include Systems Theory, which views the education system as a complex entity with interrelated elements, helping to understand the interactions between policies, actors, and their overall impact. Policy Implementation Theory emphasizes the factors influencing policy implementation, such as policy characteristics, organizational context, and external factors, aiding in understanding the implementation at the school level. Rational Decision Theory assumes policymakers evaluate policy options rationally based on available information, goals, and expected outcomes, providing insight into the decision-making process. Social Constructivist Theory highlights the role of social processes, interpretation, and meaning construction in policy formation, illustrating how social norms, values, and interests shape and are interpreted by various actors. Critical Theory focuses on the political and ideological dimensions, inequalities, and conflicts of interest in the policy-making process, revealing how educational policies can reflect and reinforce existing power structures. Applying these theories to education policy analysis offers a deeper understanding of the dynamics, factors, and implications of educational policies, including those supporting the development of the Independent Curriculum (Prasetyo, 2020).

Education Management Concept

Educational management involves a series of activities designed to manage, organize, and direct educational resources to achieve desired goals. Key concepts include educational planning, which involves setting goals, developing strategies, and allocating resources efficiently for long-term and short-term plans. Organizing entails establishing structures, dividing tasks, and regulating relationships within institutions, forming work teams, and ensuring effective communication and responsibility assignment. Direction or leadership focuses on inspiring and motivating stakeholders through effective communication and staff development. Monitoring and evaluation involve tracking performance, collecting, and analyzing data, providing feedback, and implementing corrective actions when necessary. Human resource management covers recruiting, selecting, training, developing, evaluating, and compensating staff to ensure they have the necessary skills and motivation. Financial management

involves planning, managing, and supervising educational funds with transparent budgeting and reporting. Building partnerships and communication with stakeholders like parents, the community, and other institutions strengthen support for educational goals and enhance service quality. By effectively applying these concepts, educational institutions can manage resources better, maximize goal achievement, and improve education quality.

Discussion

Independent Education Policy and Curriculum

Education policy plays a crucial role in facilitating the successful implementation of the Independent Curriculum by providing a supportive framework and necessary resources. Central and regional governments can enact policies that empower schools with autonomy to design curricula aligned with local needs and student contexts. These policies also foster the development of a national curriculum that embodies key principles of the Independent Curriculum, such as contextual and project-based learning, aiming to enhance students' holistic competencies. Moreover, education policies can prioritize the professional development of teachers, equipping them with the skills and knowledge needed to effectively implement innovative teaching methods under the Independent Curriculum. This includes training in curriculum development, project-based learning approaches, and competency-based assessment strategies. Policies that empower schools by granting them autonomy in resource management and promoting partnerships with local communities further support the curriculum's implementation.

Evaluation and monitoring mechanisms embedded in education policies are essential for assessing the impact of the Independent Curriculum on student learning outcomes and overall educational quality. These mechanisms ensure accountability and continuous improvement, guiding adjustments as necessary to enhance the curriculum's effectiveness. Additionally, fostering collaboration among government bodies, schools, universities, industries, and society is crucial. Such collaboration can enrich the curriculum through shared resources, internship opportunities, and collaborative projects, thereby enhancing its relevance and sustainability. By aligning education policies with the principles of the Independent Curriculum, Indonesia can foster an educational environment that is more responsive, equitable, and of higher quality, meeting the diverse needs of students and preparing them effectively for future challenges.

Understanding and Philosophy of the Independent Curriculum

The Independent Curriculum represents an innovative approach to educational development, emphasizing autonomy for schools in designing, developing, and evaluating curricula tailored to local contexts and student needs. This philosophy is underpinned by several fundamental principles.

Firstly, school independence is central to the Independent Curriculum, allowing educational institutions the freedom to customize educational programs based on community characteristics and student potentials. This autonomy fosters a curriculum that is not only academically rigorous but also culturally and socially relevant. Contextual relevance is another key principle, ensuring that the curriculum resonates with the social, cultural, and economic realities of the students' environments, thereby enhancing its practical applicability and meaningfulness.

Holistic competency development is a cornerstone of the Merdeka Curriculum, aiming to nurture students' comprehensive skills, including academic prowess, social aptitude, creativity, and character building. This approach moves beyond traditional subject mastery to encompass broader personal growth and development.

Project-based learning is actively promoted within the Independent Curriculum, encouraging students to engage in hands-on, real-world projects that enhance their practical skills and deepen their understanding through experiential learning. This method not only reinforces academic knowledge but also cultivates critical thinking and problem-solving abilities.

Flexibility and adaptability are crucial aspects of the Merdeka Curriculum, enabling it to swiftly respond to evolving educational needs and global dynamics. This adaptability ensures that the curriculum remains relevant and effective amid societal changes, technological advancements, and shifting educational paradigms. Continuous monitoring and evaluation play a vital role in the Merdeka Curriculum, ensuring ongoing assessment of curriculum implementation to gauge its impact on student learning outcomes. This iterative process allows for adjustments and improvements based on evaluation findings, thereby enhancing the overall quality and efficacy of the educational experience.

In essence, the Independent Curriculum stands as a forward-thinking educational framework that empowers schools to tailor education to their unique contexts, fosters comprehensive student development, promotes innovative learning methodologies, and adapts dynamically to meet evolving educational demands.

The Role of Education Policy in the Development of an Independent Curriculum

Education policy plays a pivotal role in facilitating the development and implementation of the Independent Curriculum, providing essential frameworks and guidelines that support its effective integration within educational systems. Firstly, policies serve to articulate and disseminate the fundamental concepts and philosophy of the Independent Curriculum to diverse stakeholders, including schools, educators, and the community. By establishing clear guidelines and principles, these policies enhance understanding and commitment to key principles such as school autonomy, contextual relevance, and holistic competency development. Moreover, education policies empower schools by providing legal and regulatory frameworks that grant autonomy in curriculum design, adaptation, and evaluation. This autonomy fosters

innovation and flexibility, enabling educational institutions to tailor educational programs that meet local needs and student contexts effectively.

Furthermore, policies contribute significantly to enhancing the professional capacity of educators through targeted training programs, workshops, and technical support aimed at equipping them with the requisite skills and knowledge to implement the Independent Curriculum's innovative teaching methodologies and assessment practices. Additionally, policy initiatives drive the development of a responsive national curriculum that aligns with the Independent Curriculum's core principles, including contextual learning and project-based approaches. This national framework serves as a foundational guide, ensuring consistency and coherence in curriculum implementation across diverse educational settings. Moreover, education policies play a critical role in developing robust evaluation and monitoring systems tailored to assess the efficacy and impact of the Independent Curriculum. By establishing appropriate performance indicators, evaluation tools, and monitoring mechanisms, policies enable continuous assessment of student achievement and curriculum effectiveness, facilitating ongoing improvements and optimizations in curriculum delivery. Lastly, policies foster collaboration and partnerships among governmental bodies, educational institutions, industry stakeholders, and communities to support curriculum implementation. This collaborative approach promotes resource sharing, facilitates internship opportunities, and encourages joint projects that enrich curriculum development and implementation processes. In essence, education policies that support the Independent Curriculum contribute to creating a more inclusive, responsive, and relevant educational environment, advancing educational quality and equity goals across educational landscapes.

Challenges and Opportunities for Implementing the Independent Curriculum

Education policy plays a pivotal role in facilitating the development and implementation of the Independent Curriculum, ensuring its effectiveness and relevance within educational systems. Firstly, policies serve to articulate and communicate the foundational concepts and philosophy of the Independent Curriculum to stakeholders such as schools, teachers, and communities. This clarity enhances understanding and commitment, crucial for aligning educational practices with principles like school autonomy and contextualized learning approaches.

Education policies establish the legal and regulatory frameworks necessary to empower schools with the autonomy to innovate and customize curricula according to local needs and contexts. By providing guidelines and regulations that support flexibility in curriculum design and evaluation, policies enable schools to adapt educational strategies effectively. Additionally, policies promote continuous professional development for educators by fostering training programs and technical support tailored to the methodologies and objectives of the Independent Curriculum. This investment in teacher readiness ensures that educators possess the skills and

competencies needed to implement dynamic teaching methods and assessment practices aligned with curriculum goals.

Education policies drive the development of a cohesive national curriculum that integrates the principles of the Independent Curriculum, such as holistic competency development and project-based learning. A unified national framework ensures consistency in educational standards while accommodating diverse regional contexts and student demographics. Education policies foster collaboration and partnerships among governmental agencies, educational institutions, industry stakeholders, and communities to bolster the implementation of the Independent Curriculum. This collaborative approach enhances resource sharing, promotes innovative educational initiatives, and strengthens community engagement in educational processes.

In conclusion, education policies play a critical role in creating an enabling environment for the Independent Curriculum, ensuring that educational practices are responsive, inclusive, and aligned with evolving societal needs. By supporting autonomy, professional development, curriculum coherence, evaluation frameworks, and collaborative partnerships, policies contribute to enhancing the quality and relevance of education provided to students.

Navigating Challenges and Embracing Opportunities: Implementing the Independent Curriculum in Education

Implementing the Independent Curriculum involves navigating through a range of challenges while capitalizing on numerous opportunities to enhance educational outcomes. One of the foremost challenges is the need for a cultural shift within educational institutions. Traditional educational practices often resist change, posing significant hurdles in adopting new learning approaches and management styles advocated by the Independent Curriculum. Overcoming this challenge requires comprehensive professional development for educators and effective leadership that promotes and supports innovation in teaching and learning.

Limited resources present another critical challenge. Many schools face constraints in funding, facilities, and staffing, which are essential for implementing a curriculum that prioritizes diverse and relevant learning experiences. Addressing these resource gaps is imperative to ensure equitable access to quality education and to support the holistic development of students as envisioned by the Independent Curriculum.

Teacher readiness emerges as a pivotal factor in successful curriculum implementation. Educators must possess deep understanding and proficiency in the curriculum's principles, methodologies, and strategies to effectively facilitate learning experiences aligned with the curriculum's goals. Continuous professional development programs and ongoing support mechanisms are essential to equip teachers with the necessary skills and confidence to navigate and implement these new educational paradigms effectively.

Establishing robust monitoring and evaluation systems poses a challenge yet remains crucial for assessing the impact of the Independent Curriculum on student learning outcomes. Effective assessment practices are essential for identifying strengths, weaknesses, and areas for improvement in curriculum delivery and student achievement. Poorly coordinated evaluation efforts can undermine the effectiveness of the curriculum and hinder its ability to achieve intended educational goals.

Despite these challenges, implementing the Independent Curriculum offers significant opportunities to transform education. By tailoring educational experiences to students' individual needs, interests, and local contexts, the curriculum promotes personalized learning approaches that enhance student engagement and motivation. This approach not only fosters academic achievement but also cultivates essential life skills such as critical thinking, creativity, and social competence, preparing students for success in a rapidly changing global landscape.

Education Management to Support the Independent Curriculum

Education management plays a critical role in fostering the successful implementation of the Independent Curriculum, requiring strategic approaches to support schools and educators effectively. Education managers can initiate several key strategies to facilitate this process.

Providing comprehensive support and training to teachers and school staff is essential. Education managers should offer training programs that deepen understanding of the Independent Curriculum's philosophy and methodologies, including project-based learning and holistic competency development. This ensures educators are equipped with the necessary skills to implement innovative teaching practices aligned with curriculum goals.

Encouraging collaboration and partnerships among diverse stakeholders is another crucial strategy. Education managers can facilitate connections between schools, government agencies, universities, industries, and community organizations. Such partnerships promote a supportive educational ecosystem, fostering resource-sharing, experiential learning opportunities, and community engagement initiatives that enhance the curriculum's relevance and impact.

Building institutional capacity within schools is equally important. Education managers should focus on strengthening management systems, cultivating effective teamwork among staff, and improving infrastructure to support curriculum adaptation and innovation. This includes establishing robust mechanisms for curriculum development, implementation, and evaluation that align with the principles of the Independent Curriculum.

Facilitating active involvement of parents and the community is another pivotal strategy. Education managers can organize forums, workshops, and collaborative projects that encourage parental participation and community support. These initiatives not only enhance educational outcomes but also foster a sense of ownership and shared responsibility for student success. Additionally, providing technical assistance to schools is crucial in ensuring effective curriculum design,

development, and evaluation. Education managers should offer relevant guidelines, tools, and evaluation frameworks to help schools align their educational practices with the Independent Curriculum's objectives.

Developing a robust monitoring and evaluation system is essential for assessing the implementation's progress and impact. Education managers need to establish clear performance indicators, evaluation tools, and processes to monitor student achievement, evaluate teaching effectiveness, and identify areas for improvement continuously.

Fostering a culture of innovation and experimentation is vital. Education managers should encourage schools to explore new pedagogical approaches, conduct action research, and share best practices. This promotes ongoing improvement and adaptation of teaching methods that reflect the evolving needs of students and the educational landscape. By implementing these education management strategies effectively, education managers can create a supportive environment conducive to implementing the Independent Curriculum. This approach not only enhances educational quality but also empowers schools to deliver relevant, challenging, and meaningful learning experiences that prepare students for future success.

The Role of School Principals and Teachers

The role of school principals and teachers is instrumental in driving the successful implementation of the Independent Curriculum. Principals serve as pivotal leaders, motivating school staff to embrace new educational approaches and fostering a supportive culture aligned with the Merdeka Curriculum's values. They communicate its vision effectively to stakeholders, ensuring clarity and alignment throughout the school community. Principals also facilitate a collaborative environment conducive to project-based learning and continuous improvement, while providing essential resources and support to empower teachers.

Teachers, as learning facilitators, play a crucial role in translating the Independent Curriculum into dynamic educational experiences tailored to students' needs and local contexts. They actively participate in curriculum design, leveraging their expertise to create engaging learning programs. Teachers develop innovative learning materials and manage classroom activities that promote active student participation and holistic skill development. Through ongoing evaluation and reflection, they continuously refine their teaching practices to enhance student outcomes and align with the curriculum's goals.

By synergizing their efforts, principals and teachers contribute significantly to overcoming challenges and maximizing opportunities presented by the Independent Curriculum. Their collaborative approach fosters an educational environment that nurtures creativity, critical thinking, and student-centered learning, ultimately enriching the educational experience and preparing students for future success.

Development of Educational Human Resources

The development of educational human resources (HR) plays a pivotal role in enabling the successful implementation of the Independent Curriculum. A key strategy involves providing extensive professional training and development opportunities for teachers and school staff. This includes equipping them with skills in managing project-based and contextual learning, as well as proficiency in utilizing educational technology effectively.

Mentoring and fostering collaboration among educators are essential in cultivating a culture of shared knowledge and best practices. Leadership development programs are also critical to empower school principals and educational leaders with the capabilities to lead change and innovation aligned with the Merdeka Curriculum.

Enhancing digital literacy among teachers ensures they can leverage digital tools and platforms to facilitate innovative and responsive teaching practices. Creating supportive learning communities further enhances collaboration and continuous professional growth among educators, fostering a dynamic environment for curriculum implementation. Moreover, building capacity in instructional design enables teachers to develop relevant and engaging learning materials that align with the principles of the Independent Curriculum. Implementing robust monitoring and feedback mechanisms helps in evaluating the effectiveness of curriculum implementation and providing timely support and recognition to educators.

Specialized training in essential skills such as problem-solving, collaboration, communication, and creativity equips teachers with the competencies needed to address the diverse learning needs of students within the framework of the Merdeka Curriculum. By adopting a comprehensive educational HR development strategy, schools can ensure that their staff are well-prepared and supported to deliver high-quality education that meets the goals of the Independent Curriculum effectively.

Monitoring and Evaluation Mechanism

An effective monitoring and evaluation mechanism is very important in ensuring that the implementation of the Independent Curriculum goes according to plan and achieves the desired goals. The following are some mechanisms that can be used:

Development of Performance Indicators: Identify clear and measurable performance indicators to evaluate the implementation of the Merdeka Curriculum. These indicators may include aspects such as student participation, academic achievement, parental involvement, and use of learning resources.

Formation of a Monitoring and Evaluation Team: Form a monitoring and evaluation team consisting of relevant stakeholders, such as education managers, school principals, teachers, parents, and the local community. This team is responsible for monitoring curriculum implementation and evaluating its impact.

Periodic Data Collection: Collect data periodically to measure progress and achievements in implementing the Merdeka Curriculum. Data can come from a

variety of sources, including classroom observations, student assessments, parent surveys, and school activity reports.

Data Analysis: Analysis of collected data to evaluate the effectiveness and efficiency of implementing the Merdeka Curriculum. Identify key trends, patterns and findings that can provide insight into successes and challenges faced.

Formative and Summative Evaluation: Carry out continuous formative evaluation during the implementation of the Merdeka Curriculum to identify problems and necessary improvements. In addition, conduct a summative evaluation at the end of a certain period to evaluate the achievement of long-term goals.

Feedback and Continuous Improvement: Provide feedback to all stakeholders involved in implementing the Merdeka Curriculum based on monitoring and evaluation results. Use this feedback to make continuous improvements in curriculum implementation.

Publication and Sharing of Results: Publish and share monitoring and evaluation results with all stakeholders to increase transparency and accountability. Discuss findings and recommendations with school staff, parents, and the community to gain greater support and involvement.

With appropriate monitoring and evaluation mechanisms, schools can ensure that the implementation of the Merdeka Curriculum goes well, correct weaknesses that arise, and strengthen successful aspects. This helps in achieving better educational goals and provides a more meaningful learning experience for students.

Implementing the Independent Curriculum in Education: Supporting Factors, Obstacles, and Policy Implications

The implementation of the Independent Curriculum faces a landscape shaped by both supportive factors and formidable obstacles that significantly influence its effectiveness in educational settings. Key to its success is the commitment of government entities at both central and regional levels, which must provide substantial support through adequate budget allocations, formulation of enabling policies, and ensuring the availability of well-trained educational personnel. This governmental backing not only facilitates the initial rollout of the curriculum but also sustains its long-term viability and impact.

Equally pivotal is the readiness of teachers to embrace and effectively implement the principles and methodologies of the Independent Curriculum. Comprehensive training programs and ongoing professional development are essential to equip educators with the necessary skills and understanding. Empowering schools with autonomy in curriculum design allows for flexibility to cater to local contexts and student needs, fostering innovation and relevance in educational delivery.

Active engagement of parents and the local community emerges as another critical factor. Their involvement not only enhances the learning experience by

connecting classroom activities with real-world contexts but also strengthens community support for educational initiatives. Adequate provision of educational resources, including modern facilities, educational technology, and diverse learning materials, is indispensable for ensuring equitable access and enhancing the quality of education under the Independent Curriculum. However, significant obstacles loom, such as entrenched cultural norms that resist change in educational practices, especially in management and teaching approaches. Addressing these challenges requires strategic efforts to promote awareness, build consensus, and foster a culture of openness to innovation. Moreover, overcoming resource constraints and administrative complexities, such as curriculum planning and assessment alignment, demands coordinated efforts and resource mobilization.

Navigating these complexities necessitates continuous monitoring and evaluation mechanisms to assess progress, identify areas for improvement, and ensure accountability in curriculum implementation. Sustainable policy frameworks that prioritize educational continuity amidst political transitions and policy changes are crucial for maintaining momentum and achieving long-term educational goals. In sum, by leveraging supportive factors and actively addressing obstacles through collaborative engagement among stakeholders, educational institutions can effectively implement the Independent Curriculum. This holistic approach not only enhances educational outcomes but also cultivates a dynamic and responsive learning environment that prepares students for future challenges and opportunities.

CONCLUSION

Key points related to the implementation of the Merdeka Curriculum and its implications for educational policy and practice: 1) Independent Curriculum Philosophy: An approach that emphasizes the development of holistic competencies, creativity, innovation and student learning freedom; 2) Project Based Learning: Use of a project-centered active learning approach to facilitate deeper understanding and practical application in real-life contexts; 3) Parent and Community Involvement: The active role of parents and the community in supporting and strengthening student learning outside the school environment; 4) Teacher Professional Development: The importance of training and professional development for teachers to understand and apply the Independent Curriculum approach in the learning process; 5) Formative and Holistic Assessment: Use of ongoing and holistic assessment to measure student progress in academic and non-academic aspects; 6) Supporting Educational Infrastructure: Availability of adequate educational infrastructure, including learning facilities, learning resources and technology, to support the implementation of the Independent Curriculum; 7) Coordinated Education Policy: Expansion of consistent and coordinated education policies to support the implementation of the Independent Curriculum at all levels of education; 8) Participation of the Government and Related Parties: Involvement of the government, educational institutions and

other related parties in supporting and encouraging the effective implementation of the Independent Curriculum.

Paying attention to these main points, policy makers and educational practitioners can take the necessary steps to support and strengthen the implementation of the Merdeka Curriculum, thereby providing a more relevant and meaningful learning experience for students.

Recommendations for Improving the Implementation of the Independent Curriculum

To improve the implementation of the Merdeka Curriculum, several recommendations include: providing intensive training and professional development for teachers; offering adequate technical and material support; increasing parent and community involvement; strengthening educational infrastructure; conducting regular monitoring and evaluation; encouraging collaboration between schools and learning communities; formulating supportive policies; and effectively disseminating information and communication to all stakeholders. Implementing these recommendations is expected to enhance the effectiveness of the Merdeka Curriculum and positively impact student learning.

Further Studies and Future Research Opportunities

Further studies and future research opportunities related to the implementation of the Merdeka Curriculum can cover a variety of relevant topics for deeper understanding and increasing its effectiveness. Here are some examples of further studies and research opportunities, (UNESCO 2017) :

Evaluation of Implementation Effectiveness: Evaluation study to evaluate the extent to which the Merdeka Curriculum has been implemented in various schools and regions, as well as its impact on student achievement, parental involvement, and teacher skills.

Analysis of Changes in Education Policy: Study of changes in education policies that support the Independent Curriculum at the local, regional and national levels, including analysis of their impact on educational practices in schools.

The Influence of the Merdeka Curriculum on Student Learning: Research on the influence of the Merdeka Curriculum on student learning motivation, critical skills, creativity and learning independence, as well as its influence on academic and non-academic achievement.

Analysis of Parent and Community Involvement: Study of the level of involvement of parents and the community in supporting the implementation of the Merdeka Curriculum, as well as the factors that influence their level of participation in education.

Project Based Learning: Research on the effectiveness of project based learning in the context of the Independent Curriculum, including its impact on student understanding, collaboration skills, and creativity.

Use of Technology in Learning: Study of the use of educational technology, such as online learning platforms, mobile applications, and other digital media, in supporting the implementation of the Independent Curriculum.

Analysis of Inhibiting and Supporting Factors: Research on factors that inhibit and support the implementation of the Merdeka Curriculum at the school level, including administrative challenges, teacher readiness, and policy support. Developing the Best Model: Research on developing the best model for implementing the Merdeka Curriculum, including teacher training strategies, school management, and community involvement.

Through further studies and comprehensive future research, it is hoped that a better understanding can be gained about the implementation of the Independent Curriculum and how to increase its effectiveness to provide a positive impact on education.

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