

Islamic Religious Education Teachers' Problems In Implementing The Independent Curriculum At Min 15 Pidie Jaya

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Abstract

The phenomenon of the independent curriculum problem at MIN 15 Pidie Jaya has experienced several changes, especially the learning system. The Independent Curriculum (Kurmer) gives religious teachers more freedom in choosing and deciding on different teaching tools according to the needs and interests of their students. Based on the research context above, the author conducted a study with the research title "Problems of Islamic Religious Education Teachers in Implementing the Independent Curriculum at MIN 15 Pidie Jaya". This type of research is qualitative. The method is descriptive. The formulation of the problem is how the problems of Islamic religious education teachers in implementing Kurmer at MIN 15 Pidie Jaya. The results of the study stated that there were three main problems in implementing Kurmer at MIN 15 Pidie Jaya for PAI teachers. First, the lack of teacher understanding due to minimal training. Second, difficulties in compiling teaching modules and learning objective flows, due to differences in the system with the previous curriculum. Third, challenges in differentiated learning, influenced by variations in student abilities, time constraints, and supporting facilities. Despite facing obstacles, PAI teachers try to overcome them through group learning strategies, collaboration in KKG, and support from the school. Ongoing support, such as intensive training, provision of adequate facilities, and access to relevant learning resources, is expected to increase the effectiveness of the implementation of Kurmer. Thus, the quality of PAI learning can be improved, while forming the character of students who are faithful, pious, and have noble character

Keywords: Problems, Islamic Religious Education Teachers, Independent Curriculum.

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Introduction

In the Independent Curriculum, an educator has a role to teach students with stages of achievement and development. On the other hand, teachers must also contribute by working on the independent learning platform, sharing and updating through independent learning through the independent learning platform. The competencies that teachers must have are planning, managing, and implementing learning evaluations to ensure that learning is carried out in the right way to create effective learning (Suhandi & Robi'ah, 2022). In addition, teachers in the Independent Curriculum policy are guided to be able to design learning according to student characteristics and choose learning models. To be able to master these competencies, teachers



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are required to continuously carry out training carried out by education such as periodic training, skills development, and other training in order to improve their teaching skills (Hamdayama, 2016).

One of the subjects taught in madrasas is Fiqh lessons. In providing fiqh subject teaching, of course, it is not enough to rely only on learning methods in the form of lectures or questions and answers in each delivery of the material (Alawiyah, 2012). The fiqh learning material is practical so that students are able and understand to practice it in their daily lives. The fiqh subject has special characteristics that make it different from other subjects, namely the fiqh subject focuses on teaching students to be able to understand, implement or practice, and practice Islamic laws in their daily lives.

Based on the researcher's observations, one of the madrasas that implements the independent curriculum in Pidie Jaya is the State Elementary School (MIN) 15 Pidie Jaya and this madrasah is one of the schools recommended to implement the Independent Curriculum in the 2023/2024 school year and this includes a new curriculum in the madrasah also in its implementation applied to classes 1 and 4 as an initial step. The implementation of the independent curriculum including in the field of religious studies has also been implemented. All elements hope that the problems in the Implementation of the Independent Curriculum at MIN 15 Pidie Jaya can be solved and are expected to run as desired. However, in reality, many religious teachers are still constrained in implementing the evaluation of the Independent Curriculum, because this is still a new thing for religious teachers at MIN 15 Pidie Jaya and in other schools. These obstacles come from within the teacher concerned and from outside.

Based on the results of initial observations that researchers have conducted that focus on the problems of religious teachers, it was found that in implementing the independent curriculum in their daily learning in the classroom, there are still several problems. The problems include religious teachers needing adjustments and the lack of understanding of religious teachers regarding the concept of the independent curriculum, this is because the independent curriculum is still relatively new and there is a lack of training which is only held twice a year, so that in practice in the field the application of the independent curriculum in learning is not in accordance with the demands that should be applied in the independent curriculum.

The researcher's observation also the religious teachers who implement the curriculum especially as a new curriculum there are not a few obstacles and challenges that must be faced. Various obstacles are related to literacy, references, digital access, teacher competence, and time management. There are some teachers who do not understand the implementation of learning in the independent curriculum in the classroom, so they still need training, literacy, and other things that are references in the implementation of the Independent Curriculum. In the implementation of the problems of the independent curriculum at MIN 15 Pidie Jaya, there have been several changes, especially in the learning system. The Independent Curriculum gives religious teachers more freedom in choosing and deciding on different teaching tools according to the needs and learning interests of their students.

Based on the research context above, therefore the researcher wants to conduct further research in the form of research with the title "Problems of Islamic Religious Education Teachers in Implementing the Independent Curriculum at MIN 15 Pidie Jaya". Based on the background of the problems that have been mentioned, it gives rise to the formulation of the

problem being studied, how are the problems of Islamic religious education teachers in implementing the Independent Curriculum at MIN 15 Pidie Jaya. While the purpose of this study is to explain the problems of Islamic religious education teachers in implementing the Independent Curriculum at MIN 15 Pidie Jaya

Teacher Problems in the World of Education

The term problematic comes from English, namely problematic, which means a problem or issue. In the big Indonesian dictionary, problem means something that cannot be solved which causes problems. In other literature, the word problem means a problem or issue, while the word problematic is interpreted as something that causes problems or still cannot be done. So problematic is a variety of difficult problems faced in the learning process, both those coming from individual teachers (external factors) and in the learning process that takes place at school (internal factors) (Candra, 2018).

Teachers or educators according to Law Number 20 of 2003 concerning the national education system, article 29 paragraph 2 states that educators are professional staff who are tasked with planning and implementing the learning process, assessing learning outcomes and mentoring and training services, and conducting research and community service, especially for educators in higher education. In the context of teaching strategies, usually in an organized manner the obstacles faced, the goals to be achieved, the material to be studied, learning experiences and evaluation procedures. The role of the teacher here is more of a facilitator or guide (Purnomo, 2019) Every obstacle or constraint that exists must have its own solution. Moreover, being able to find a solution will make learning easier so that the results are more optimal (Muhaimin, 2012).

Problems can also occur for teachers to carry out their roles, namely that some teachers still do not understand how to use learning media. Then with the new policy that can free educational institutions so as to provide encouragement for students to be able to innovate and develop their minds creatively. Challenges become a major problem for teachers and also become a major concern in the implementation of the new curriculum. The concept of religious education in society is not just teaching religious knowledge and training children's skills in carrying out worship, but religious education is much broader than that, namely aiming to form a personality in accordance with Islamic teachings. Islamic religious education is not just teaching in the sense of conveying knowledge about Islam to students, but also spiritual mental development, in accordance with Islamic teachings. Even Islamic education can be interpreted as personality development which in its implementation can not only occur through lessons that are given intentionally, but also concerns the experiences that students have gone through since they were born, even since they were in the womb, school, society (Darajat, 1999).

Religious education not only equips humans with knowledge and develops intellectuality, but also forms human personality in accordance with Islamic teachings, namely starting from daily practice with Islamic teachings, both concerning the relationship between humans and God, humans with humans and humans with other creatures. When viewed from the strategy of fostering the community, it can be said that the Majelis Taklim is a container or vehicle for Islamic preaching that is purely a religious institution, and as an Islamic religious institution, the Majelis Taklim system is inherent in Islam itself. Therefore, strategically, the Majelis Taklim is a means of preaching and tabligh that is Islamic in nature, which plays a central role in fostering and improving the quality of life of Muslims in accordance with the guidance of religious teachings. In addition, it is to make Muslims aware in order to live, understand and

practice the teachings of their religion that are contextual to the environment, socio-culture and nature around them so that they can make the community a ummatan wasathan who emulates other groups of people (Hasbullah, 2015).

In this regard, the function and role of Majlis taklim, cannot be separated from its position as a tool and at the same time a medium for fostering religious awareness. Efforts to foster society in the field of religion must pay much attention to the method of approach, which is usually divided into three forms, namely:

- 1) Through propaganda, namely more emphasis on the formation of public opinion, so that they are willing to act and behave according to the intent of propaganda. The nature of propaganda is mass, the method can be through general methods, radio broadcasts, TV, films, dramas, banners and so on.
- 2) Through indoctrination, namely instilling teachings with concepts that have been formulated firmly and completely by the teachers to be conveyed to the community, through lectures, talks, courses, training centers and so on.
- 3) Through education, namely by emphasizing the awakening of creativity, feeling, and will, so that this educational method is more profound and mature than propaganda and indoctrination.

In the method of spiritual mental development approach through education, it is widely used, such as schools, madrasahs, Islamic boarding schools and religious studies, including Majlis taklim. In this context, Majlis taklim or religious study groups are considered effective. Because through Majlis taklim, many people can be gathered at one time. That is why it is very clear how important the position of Majlis taklim is in Islamic education and preaching. As a non-formal educational institution, Majlis Taklim functions as follows:

- 1) Fostering and developing Islamic teachings in order to form a society that is devoted to Allah SWT
- 2) As a spiritual recreation park, because its implementation is relaxed
- 3) As an arena for mass gatherings that can foster Islamic da'wah and ukhuwah.
- 4) As a means of continuous dialogue between the ulama, umara and the people
- 5) As a medium for conveying ideas that are beneficial for the development of the people and the nation in general.
- 6) Increasing religious awareness

Problems of Educational Curriculum Management

The curriculum comes from the English word "curriculum" which means lesson plan, while according to the term it is a set of plans and arrangements regarding the objectives, content, and learning materials as well as the methods used as guidelines for organizing learning activities to achieve certain educational goals (Hidayat & Machali, 2010).

Etymologically, the term curriculum comes from Greek, namely curir which means "runner" and curere which means "place to race". The term curriculum comes from the world of sports, especially in the field of athletics in the Ancient Roman era in Greece. In French, the term curriculum comes from the word courier which means to run. Curriculum means a distance that must be traveled by a runner from the starting line to the finish line to get a medal or award.

The distance that must be traveled is then changed into a school program and everyone involved in it (Chaer, 2003).

The curriculum is very important in the education process. In its development, a curriculum that will be implemented must have a basic framework. The basic framework is a guideline used to develop curriculum documents, curriculum implementation, and curriculum evaluation. The basic framework is also used as a guideline for developing national, regional, and educational unit curricula (Arifin, 2019). According to B. Othanel Smith, WO Stanley, and J. Harian Shores, the curriculum is viewed as a number of experiences that can potentially be given to children and young people, so that they can think and act according to their society (Nasution, 2008).

Edward A. Krug quoted by Syafruddin Nurdin stated that a curriculum consists of the means used to achieve or carry out our given purposes of schooling. This means that the curriculum consists of the means used to achieve or carry out the goals given by the school. This means that in the curriculum there are ways that can be used to achieve educational goals. Wina Sanjaya in Ahmad Yani stated that the curriculum is a planning document that contains the goals to be achieved, the content of the material and learning experiences that must be carried out by students, strategies and methods that can be developed, evaluations designed to collect information about the achievement of goals, and the implementation of documents designed in real form. Based on this understanding, it can be concluded that the curriculum is a set of educational tools used to achieve educational goals.

Dynamics of Independent Curriculum

In Dictionary Big Language Indonesia (KBBI) from Integration of Education And Culture define The curriculum is a collection of lessons taught in educational institutions. Sei while the word "meirdeika" has three meanings, namely: a) Standing alone, free (from slavery, colonialism, and other forms of oppression); b) Not subject to or freed from demands; c) Free, without any dependence on one individual or groupspecial, and easy to adapt.

Freedom to learn is freedom of thought and freedom of innovation. Freedom to learn can be understood as freedom to think, freedom to work, and respect or respond to changes that occur (having the appropriate power). Freedom to learn is a policy of the Ministry of Education and Culture of the Republic of Indonesia. The Freedom Curriculum is implemented with the aim of training students' freedom of thought. The most important core of freedom of thought is aimed at teachers. If teachers are not yet free to teach, of course students are also not free to think (Rifi, 2019).

The Independent Curriculum is the basic framework and structure of the curriculum stipulated by the Regulation of the Minister of Education and Culture of the Republic of Indonesia (Permendikbudristek) Number 12 of 2024. The Independent Curriculum is part of the learning recovery efforts aimed at improving the quality of education. This curriculum is designed to provide flexibility to teachers and schools in developing learning programs. The Regulation of the Minister of Education, Culture, Research, and Technology (Permendikbudristek) Number 12 of 2024 stipulates the Independent Curriculum as a national reference for education in Indonesia, including Early Childhood Education (PAUD), elementary education levels, and secondary education levels. According to the Ministry of Education and Culture, Independent Learning is providing freedom and autonomy to educational institutions and freedom from bureaucratization (Pratiwi et al., 2022).

1) Objectives of the Independent Curriculum:

Realizing meaningful and effective learning to increase faith, devotion to God Almighty, noble morals, and develop the creativity, feelings, and will of students as lifelong learners with Pancasila character.

2) Principles of Independent Curriculum:

- a **Character Development:**Emphasizing the development of students' spiritual, moral, social and emotional competencies, both through allocating special time and in an integrated manner in the learning process.
- b **Flexibility:**Providing flexibility for educational units to adapt the curriculum to the needs of student competency development, the characteristics of the educational unit, and the local socio-cultural context.
- c **Focus on Essential Content:**Focusing on the material that is most needed to develop students' competencies and character, so that educators have

3) Advantages of the Independent Curriculum

The curriculum promoted by the Minister of Education, Culture, Research, and Technology, Nadiem Makarim, has several advantages. According to him, the advantages of the Merdeka Curriculum are:

- a The Merdeka Curriculum is simpler and more in-depth because it focuses on essential materials and the development of student competencies according to their developmental stages. Thus, learning activities become more in-depth, meaningful, and unhurried, and enjoyable.
- b There is no elective program for high school students. Teachers and students have freedom in teaching and learning activities. Students are given the freedom to choose subjects according to their interests, talents, and aspirations, and teachers can teach according to the stages of achievement and development of students. Schools also have the authority to develop and manage curriculum and learning according to the characteristics of educational units and students.
- c More relevant and interactive. Learning can be done through project activities that can provide wider opportunities for students to more actively explore current issues, such as environmental issues, health, and others to support the development of character and competency of the Pancasila Student Profile.

4) Weaknesses of the Independent Curriculum

The weaknesses of this independent curriculum are as follows:

- a The need for trained and competent educational staff: This is because the independent curriculum emphasizes the importance of students being able to understand, appreciate and utilize their potential and their environment, so that educational staff must be able to provide appropriate guidance to students.
- b There needs to be adequate facilities and infrastructure: the implementation of the independent curriculum requires adequate facilities and infrastructure, namely to support the learning process.

- c The implementation of the independent curriculum requires a long time to provide optimal benefits.

The implementation of the curriculum in some schools may experience difficulties because there are still some negative perceptions about the curriculum in society

Methodology

Researchers conducted research with locationshis researchState Elementary School 15 Pidie Jaya State Elementary School 15 Pidie Jaya is located in a very strategic location on the side of the sub-district road, which is only 150 meters from the center of Jangka Buya sub-district.This type of research is qualitative, which is a data collection technique by the author going directly to the field on the research object. So the data sources are the people who are directly involved in this research, namely teachers and students. MIN 15 Pidie Jaya. The method used by the author is a descriptive method. (Rahmad, 2004)

The data sources used in this study come from two sources, namely primary and secondary data sources (Arikunto, 1997). The primary data sources in this study come from a number of informants consisting ofMIN 15 Pidie Jaya, namely the Principal, teachers. The author obtained secondary data sources from several books related to the research problem, including:Saifudin, Theoretical and Practical Learning Management, A Zaki Mubarak, Independent Learning Curriculum Design, Abuddin Nata, Islamic Perspectives on Learning Strategies, and several other books.

Data collection techniqueThe author uses several techniques, including the first technique, observation, which is carried out by directly observing the research object, including the implementation of learning process activities regarding obstacles related toproblems of religious teachers in implementing the independent curriculum at MIN 15 Pidie Jaya.Second, Interview. The interview technique was conducted directly with the head of the madrasah, teachers and students, by asking questions related to the interview related to the problems of religious teachers in implementing the independent curriculum inMIN 15 Pidie Jaya (Mardalis, 2003).. Third, documentation, namely collecting data sourced from various documents. The documents needed are data aboutMIN 15 Pidie Jayaand other matters related to research.

Qualitative data analysis according to Bogdan and Biklen in the book "Qualitative Research Methodology" by Lexy J. Moleong is an effort made by working with data, organizing it, selecting it into manageable units, synthesizing it, searching for and pursuing patterns, finding what is important to learn and deciding what can be told to others. In analyzing data, all the author's research results are discussed through descriptive methods, this method aims to solve problems that exist today by breaking down, interpreting, recording and analyzing existing data with a deductive nature, namely by studying general conditions and then concluding for specific things. All analyses are carried out using a qualitative approach.

Result and Discussion

MIN 15 Pidie Jaya in implementing the independent curriculum in Islamic Religious Education learning, it can be said that there are still several problems faced by PAI teachers at MIN 15 Pidie Jaya, the problems faced by PAI teachers, including:

1. Lack of Understanding of Islamic Religious Education Teachers Regarding the Independent Curriculum Concept

One of the problems experienced by Islamic religious education teachers is related to the lack of teacher understanding of the concept of the independent curriculum, because technically and theoretically the independent curriculum has undergone several changes from the previous curriculum. As stated by Mr. Masruor as Deputy Head of Curriculum at MIN 15 Pidie Jaya, he stated that:

"Our experience when we first implemented the independent curriculum was that there were still several obstacles because this was still a new curriculum, and had just been implemented in this madrasah, so there were several obstacles that I faced where at the beginning of the implementation I did not understand the concept of the independent curriculum, then at the beginning of learning the independent curriculum we were still carried away by the previous curriculum learning model so that in its implementation in class I taught it using a mixture of the 2013 curriculum and the independent curriculum, and here I still need to learn a lot"

A similar thing was also expressed by the results of an interview with Masruor, as Deputy Head of Curriculum at MIN 15 Pidie Jaya, who said that:

"In implementing the independent curriculum which is still considered quite new, of course teachers in madrasahs also have a little difficulty because teachers still do not fully understand the independent curriculum, and they also have to adjust to the learning methods, because the KOSP of the independent curriculum is different from the 2013 curriculum, then teachers still need to adjust".

Mr. Hidayatullah, a teacher at MIN 15 Pidie Jaya, also revealed the following regarding the problem of teacher understanding:

"The experience of teachers when implementing the independent curriculum, at first we had a bit of difficulty, and there were still many things to do to adjust to the independent curriculum. The difficulty itself was caused by the lack of training at the beginning, but gradually with the training, teachers began to understand the independent curriculum."

Based on the interview above, the author concludes that the problems faced by teachers when they first implemented the independent curriculum at MIN 15 Pidie Jaya were that they did not fully understand the concept of the independent curriculum, because the independent curriculum was still relatively new and there was a lack of training which was only held twice a year. Then at the beginning of learning the independent curriculum, teachers were still carried away by the previous curriculum learning model so that in its implementation in the classroom, teachers taught using a mixture of the 2013 curriculum and the independent curriculum.

2. Difficulty in Creating Teaching Modules or Planning

Learning planning in this independent curriculum is a teaching module that contains learning outcomes (CP), learning objectives (TP), learning objective flow (ATP). This was conveyed by Mr. Hidayatullah as a PAI teacher who stated that:

"There must be difficulties, especially since this is a new curriculum and we are still learning to perfect it. For you, the difficulty is in the CP that must be achieved by students at the end of the phase because we have to analyze and be really careful because it is made in each phase and to be able to be applied to students, so we have to be careful and meticulous in choosing which CP will be applied in learning."

Similar things were also expressed by the deputy head of curriculum at MIN 15 Pidie Jaya, Mr. Masrour, also a teacher at MIN 15 Pidie Jaya, stated that for teachers, there are many obstacles that must be done to adapt to the independent curriculum, for example regarding administration, analyzing CP, then the teacher compiles the flow of learning objectives. He further said:

" Furthermore, in the learning objective flow, there are 1) elements, 2) learning achievements, 3) learning objectives, 4) materials, 5) indicators, 6) Pancasila profile, 7) assessment, 8) time allocation. The preparation of this learning objective flow is adjusted to the abilities of students, from the learning objective flow, the teaching module is prepared, the problem is that teachers do not fully understand this because there are differences from the previous curriculum so teachers must be patient and learn again. "

Based on the interview results above, it can be concluded that another obstacle faced by teachers when implementing the independent curriculum is that teachers find it difficult to create teaching modules or prepare learning plans, namely when analyzing learning achievements, then compiling a learning objective flow that is adjusted to student abilities. In preparing learning plans, teachers do not fully understand because the planning is different from the previous curriculum.

3. Constraints of Differentiated Learning Methods

In the implementation of the Independent Curriculum, the differentiation learning method is one of the important elements that is emphasized. This concept focuses on meeting the diverse learning needs of students, both in terms of their abilities, learning styles, and interests. The goal is to ensure that each student gets a learning experience that suits their individual conditions, so that learning is more meaningful and effective. However, at MIN 15 Pidie Jaya, the implementation of the differentiation learning method faces a number of significant obstacles. Although in theory this concept looks ideal, its implementation in the field requires high creativity, thorough preparation, and adequate support from the madrasah. This was expressed by several PAI teachers who are the spearheads of the implementation of the Independent Curriculum in the classroom.

Mr. Hidayatullah, S.Pd.I, a PAI teacher at MIN 15 Pidie Jaya, explained the main challenges in implementing differentiated learning. According to him, the diversity of student abilities in one class is often an obstacle. There are students who have a quick understanding of the material, while other students need more time to understand the same concept.

"Differentiated learning is great in theory, but it is difficult to implement, especially since the variety of student abilities in the classroom is so diverse. Teachers have to be really creative and innovative to find the right approach,"

Teachers must strive to develop materials that can accommodate students with high, medium, and low abilities simultaneously. This requires breaking down tasks into levels of difficulty, with each group of students given materials and activities that are appropriate to their level of understanding. However, in practice, this adjustment takes extra time, both in the planning stage and in the implementation in the classroom.

Another significant challenge is the limited time and preparation in designing differentiated learning. Ms. Asmaul Husna, another PAI teacher, added that the process of designing appropriate materials for each group of students requires thorough preparation. Teachers must not only prepare the main teaching module, but also prepare a variety of tasks or activities for students with different abilities.

"We are still trying to understand how to design learning that can accommodate all students. This requires time, thorough preparation, and support from the school. Sometimes, due to time constraints and the many responsibilities of teachers, it is difficult for us to be truly optimal,"

This time constraint is often caused by the many administrative responsibilities of teachers that must be completed simultaneously with teaching duties. Teachers are not only required to compile teaching modules, but also to prepare formative and summative assessments, evaluate student learning outcomes, and carry out other madrasah activities. In addition, Asmaul Husna highlighted the importance of a deep understanding of the concept of differentiation itself. Some teachers are still confused in classifying student needs based on three main aspects of differentiation, namely learning readiness, interests, and student learning profiles.

The implementation of differentiated learning is also constrained by limited facilities and infrastructure. In this method, teachers ideally have access to various learning resources that can be adjusted to students' needs. However, at MIN 15 Pidie Jaya, the availability of diverse teaching materials is still a challenge. Teachers often have to search for additional materials independently from the internet or develop their own appropriate teaching materials. This was conveyed by Mr. Abubakar, S.Pd, who stated that limited facilities and references are the main obstacles for teachers in implementing the differentiation method optimally.

"We need support in the form of complete learning resources that are in accordance with the Merdeka Curriculum. For the time being, we often use materials from the

internet or seek inspiration from other schools. However, this certainly requires additional time and effort,"

In addition, the use of technology in differentiation learning at MIN 15 Pidie Jaya is still limited. The lack of technological facilities, such as access to computers or multimedia devices in the classroom, makes it difficult for teachers to provide varied and interactive materials. In fact, the use of technology can help simplify the delivery of diverse materials for students.

Despite facing various challenges, teachers at MIN 15 Pidie Jaya continue to try to implement differentiated learning with various strategies. One of the strategies implemented is group learning, where students with the same abilities are grouped to work on assignments or projects together. In this way, teachers can focus more on providing guidance to each group according to their needs.

Mr. Masruor, Deputy Head of Curriculum at MIN 15 Pidie Jaya explained that he often divides students into several groups based on the results of the initial assessment. Groups of students with fast understanding are given further challenges to develop critical thinking skills, while groups with low understanding are given additional guidance through simpler activities.

"This strategy helps us manage the diversity of student abilities in the class. Although it is not perfect, at least we can provide learning that is more in line with the needs of each student."

Meanwhile, Mrs. Asmaul Husna emphasized the importance of collaboration between teachers in the Teacher Working Group (KKG) forum. This forum is a place for teachers to discuss with each other, share experiences, and find joint solutions related to the challenges faced in differentiated learning. With the support of KKG, PAI teachers can develop more effective and practical strategies in designing differentiated learning.

Teachers at MIN 15 Pidie Jaya also hope for more concrete support from the madrasah and education policy makers. This support includes the provision of adequate facilities, increased access to learning resources, and ongoing training programs related to the implementation of the Merdeka Curriculum, especially differentiated learning. Murhaban, as the Head of the Madrasah, realizes the importance of this support. He emphasized that the madrasah is committed to facilitating teachers in facing the challenges of implementing the new curriculum. One of the steps taken is to encourage teachers to participate in training and workshops organized by related parties, as well as allocating special time for learning planning and evaluation.

"We understand the challenges faced by teachers, especially in implementing differentiated learning. As the head of the madrasah, I will continue to try to support them by providing the facilities and space they need,"

Based on the interviews, observations and documentation, it can be concluded that in the implementation of the independent curriculum there are several problems faced by Islamic Religious Education teachers so that they have a major impact on Islamic Religious Education teachers in implementing the independent curriculum learning in class MIN 15 Pidie Jaya. The problems faced by teachers in this independent curriculum are that the first is that Islamic

Religious Education teachers still do not understand the concept of the independent curriculum because this independent curriculum is still relatively new and there is a lack of training which is only held twice a year, then at the beginning of the independent curriculum learning, teachers are still carried away by the previous curriculum learning model so that in its implementation in class the teacher teaches it using a mixture of the 2013 curriculum and the independent curriculum.

The obstacles experienced by teachers are when creating teaching modules or compiling learning plans, namely when analyzing learning achievements, then compiling a flow of learning objectives that are adjusted to students' abilities. In compiling learning plans, teachers do not fully understand because the planning is different from the previous curriculum. Third, the constraints of the differentiation learning method. Based on the description above, differentiation learning as one of the main components in the Independent Curriculum has great potential in improving the quality of learning at MIN 15 Pidie Jaya. However, its implementation still faces various obstacles, such as the diversity of student abilities, limited time and facilities, and a lack of in-depth understanding of this method. Teachers are required to be more creative, innovative, and have thorough preparation in designing learning that suits the individual needs of students. However, the teacher's efforts to overcome this obstacle deserve appreciation.

Through group learning strategies, collaboration in the KKG forum, and support from the school, teachers at MIN 15 Pidie Jaya continue to strive to implement differentiated learning methods more effectively. Continuous support, such as training, provision of facilities, and access to adequate learning resources, are the keys to success in overcoming these challenges. With commitment and cooperation from all parties, the implementation of the Merdeka Curriculum at MIN 15 Pidie Jaya is expected to have a significant positive impact on the quality of education, especially in Islamic Religious Education learning.

Discussion

The implementation of the Independent Curriculum is a major step taken to improve the quality of education in Indonesia, including at MIN 15 Pidie Jaya. This curriculum aims to provide freedom to teachers and students to adjust learning to individual needs and potential. However, its implementation is not free from challenges faced by Islamic Religious Education (PAI) teachers at this madrasah. Among these problems, first, the lack of understanding of the concept of the independent curriculum. The Independent Curriculum introduces a new approach that is different from the previous curriculum. PAI teachers at MIN 15 Pidie Jaya, as expressed by several teachers and the Deputy Head of Curriculum, still face difficulties in understanding the basic concepts of the Independent Curriculum. This is natural considering that this curriculum is still relatively new, so many teachers are carried away by the mindset and learning methods of the 2013 Curriculum.

Lack of understanding of the Independent Curriculum not only impacts the implementation of learning, but also hinders teachers' efforts to design appropriate teaching tools. Limited training, which is only held twice a year, is one of the main causes of the slow adaptation of teachers to this curriculum. This limited understanding can be seen from the teaching patterns in the classroom which often mix the 2013 Curriculum method with the Independent Curriculum. This creates inconsistencies in the learning process and makes it

difficult for students to fully experience the benefits of the new approach offered by the Independent Curriculum.

Second, difficulties in compiling teaching modules and learning planning. This problem is related to teaching modules being an important element in the Independent Curriculum which is designed to help teachers plan and implement learning effectively. However, the process of compiling teaching modules at MIN 15 Pidie Jaya faces many obstacles. Islamic Religious Education teachers often find it difficult to analyze learning outcomes, compile learning objective flows (ATP), and design learning activities that suit students' needs. Teaching modules in the Independent Curriculum include elements such as learning outcomes, learning objectives, materials, indicators, assessments, time allocation, and strengthening the Pancasila Student Profile.

The development of this module requires a deep understanding of each element, but many teachers do not fully understand how to integrate these elements into the lesson plan. In addition, the high administrative burden, such as the preparation of daily reports and evaluation of learning outcomes, makes it difficult for teachers to give full attention to the learning planning process. This is a major obstacle in efforts to improve the quality of learning in the classroom. Third, obstacles in implementing differentiated learning. Differentiated learning is one of the key elements in the Merdeka Curriculum which aims to meet the diverse learning needs of students. However, at MIN 15 Pidie Jaya, PAI teachers face various obstacles in implementing this method. The diversity of student abilities in one class is the main challenge.

Some students grasp the material quickly, while others need more time to master the same concept. Teachers are required to design materials and assignments that are appropriate to each student's ability level. This process requires thorough preparation and high creativity, but limited time and resources make its implementation difficult. Teachers are also often confused in identifying students' needs based on their readiness to learn, interests, and learning styles. In addition, limited facilities and infrastructure are another obstacle in differentiated learning. The lack of access to technology and varied teaching materials means that teachers have to find or create additional learning materials themselves, which requires extra time and effort.

Furthermore, inadequate support is also a major problem in the implementation of the independent curriculum in the madrasah. The implementation of the Independent Curriculum requires strong support from various parties, including madrasahs and policy makers. However, at MIN 15 Pidie Jaya, this support is still lacking. Limited training, minimal access to technology, and limited teaching materials are the main problems faced by Islamic Religious Education teachers. Adequate support, such as ongoing training, provision of learning facilities, and reduction of administrative burdens, are needed to help teachers adapt to the Independent Curriculum. In addition, collaboration between teachers through the Teacher Working Group (KKG) forum can be a solution to share experiences and find effective strategies in overcoming obstacles.

Facing various challenges in implementing the Independent Curriculum, Islamic Religious Education teachers at MIN 15 Pidie Jaya continue to show high dedication to adapt and improve the learning process, although obstacles such as lack of training, administrative burden, and limited facilities and infrastructure often become obstacles. To overcome this, intensive and continuous training is needed so that teachers better understand the concept of the Independent Curriculum, including the preparation of teaching modules and the implementation

of differentiated learning. Provision of supporting facilities such as relevant teaching materials, access to technology, and other facilities are also key to supporting innovative and effective learning.

In addition, reducing the administrative burden is very important so that teachers can focus more on their main task, namely educating and guiding students. Strengthening collaboration through the Teacher Working Group (KKG) forum also needs to be optimized as a forum for sharing experiences and finding joint solutions. With full support from madrasas, the government, and policy makers, the implementation of the Merdeka Curriculum is expected to run better, create meaningful learning, and shape the character and competence of students in accordance with national education goals.

Conclusion

The problems faced by Islamic religious education teachers in implementing the Independent Curriculum at MIN 15 Pidie Jaya include three main aspects: lack of teacher understanding of the Independent Curriculum concept due to minimal training, difficulties in compiling teaching modules and learning objectives due to differences in the system with the previous curriculum, and challenges in implementing differentiated learning methods influenced by variations in student abilities, time constraints, and supporting facilities. Despite facing various obstacles, Islamic Religious Education teachers continue to strive to overcome these obstacles through group learning strategies, collaboration in the Teacher Working Group (KKG), and support from the school. With ongoing support in the form of intensive training, provision of adequate facilities, and access to relevant learning resources, the implementation of the Independent Curriculum is expected to run effectively and be able to improve the quality of Islamic Religious Education learning, as well as shape the character of students who are faithful, pious, and have noble morals

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