

Implementation of the Independent Learning Curriculum in Physical Education: Opportunities and Challenges

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INFO ARTIKEL	ABSTRAK
Accepted: July 02, 2025 Revised: August 24, 2025 Approved: September 10, 2025 Published: September 29, 2025	Physical education has an important role in the Indonesian education system, not only to improve physical fitness but also to build students' character and social skills, the implementation of the Independent Curriculum in physical education brings challenges as well as opportunities. This research aims to analyze the opportunities and challenges of implementing the Independent Curriculum in physical education and formulate strategic recommendations for its implementation. This study uses the Systematic Literature Review (SLR) method by collecting data from various relevant literature, published between 2022 and 2025, the data analysis process is carried out using a thematic approach to identify gaps and patterns in the existing literature. The results of the study show that the biggest challenges in the implementation of the independent curriculum are teacher readiness, limited facilities, and less effective managerial management. However, great opportunities are also found in the development of game-based learning methods, the use of technology, and more innovative project-based approaches. This study suggests improving teacher training, strengthening physical education facilities, and managerial improvements at the school level to ensure that the implementation of the independent curriculum runs effectively and sustainably.
Keywords: Independent Curriculum, Physical Education, Learning Innovation, Challenges, Teacher Training, Technology, Managerial	

INTRODUCTION

Physical education is one of the important components in the national education system that not only emphasizes the physical aspect, but also functions to shape the character, social skills, and healthy lifestyle of students. The change in the educational paradigm in Indonesia through the Independent Learning Curriculum policy brings new challenges as well as opportunities for the implementation of physical education. This curriculum emphasizes flexibility, learning differentiation, and strengthening student character through a humanistic approach that places students as the main subjects in learning (Sirait et al., 2024).

In the context of physical education, the implementation of this curriculum is expected to be able to improve the quality of learning oriented towards the development of holistic competencies, including physical skills, leadership, cooperation, and self-management. Physical learning innovations, as shown by Rismanto et al. (2024), through

a play-based model (play approach) are able to improve fitness while fostering social values among madrasah students. Teacher leadership has proven to be a crucial factor in the successful implementation of the independent curriculum, teachers are required to have leadership vision, flexibility, and managerial skills in managing heterogeneous classrooms. The results of the research of Sihotang et al. (2023) confirm that teachers who internalize the concept of participatory and collaborative leadership are more successful in implementing this curriculum in secondary school. The position of teachers in physical education is not just a teacher, but a facilitator who supports the creation of meaningful learning experiences that focus on physical activity and character building.

A number of studies also emphasize the importance of a managerial perspective in the implementation of the independent curriculum. Zuhdi et al. (2025) show that the effectiveness of implementation is highly dependent on coordination between schools, teachers, and other stakeholders, the curriculum risks becoming normative policy with no real impact if school management does not function optimally. This is reaffirmed by Wahidah et al. (2023) who use the CIPP (Context, Input, Process, Product) evaluation model to assess the effectiveness of the independent curriculum. The evaluation revealed that the main obstacle lies in the managerial aspect and the readiness of teachers in implementing adaptive physical learning.

The effectiveness of the role of educators also greatly determines the success of the independent curriculum, Sumantri (2023) emphasized that educators not only function as policy implementers, but also as agents of change that encourage the development of innovative learning methods, in physical education, the role of teachers is more complex because they must integrate cognitive, affective, and psychomotor aspects in a balanced manner. This emphasizes the importance of teachers' readiness in understanding the philosophy and principles of the independent curriculum.

At the practical level, Subandi et al. (2024) found that the independent curriculum has opened up space for the application of varied learning methods, including project-based approaches and collaborative learning. Real challenges still arise in the limitations of facilities, facilities, and teachers' ability to adopt innovative strategies. The research is in line with Utami et al. (2024) who examined the implementation of the independent curriculum at the junior high school level, although the curriculum provides great opportunities for improving the quality of physical learning, obstacles in the form of infrastructure and uneven teacher training still hinder the optimization of its implementation.

At the elementary school level, more attention is focused on diagnostic assessments and differentiated learning, Wijayanti (2023) noted that teachers still have difficulties in mapping students' initial abilities, so the application of differentiated physical learning has not been maximized, this condition illustrates that curriculum flexibility has not been fully realized in field practice, so mentoring and strengthening of teacher competencies is needed. The policy of mover schools is an important testing ground to assess the effectiveness of the independent curriculum. Wibowo et al. (2022) highlighted that driving schools are pioneers in curriculum implementation, although the variation in the quality of implementation between schools is still high, schools with adequate human resources and facilities are able to adapt faster, while schools with limitations face serious difficulties in adjusting to the demands of the new curriculum.

The results of research at the high school level, Yogi (2024) through his survey at Pematangsiantar City High School show that the implementation of the independent curriculum in physical learning is still constrained by teachers' lack of understanding of

the curriculum philosophy and the limitations of sports facilities, the research also confirms that there is a great opportunity to create more participatory, creative, and contextual physical learning according to the needs of students.

Most previous research has focused on specific aspects, such as teacher leadership, curriculum management, or learning strategies, without looking at the relationship between these factors thoroughly. This research integrates multi-dimensional analysis, which includes curriculum management, teacher readiness, infrastructure, and student learning outcomes. This comprehensive focus is expected to be able to provide a more complete picture of the opportunities and challenges of the implementation of the independent curriculum in physical education, the purpose of the research is to analyze in depth how the opportunities and challenges of implementing the Independent Learning Curriculum in physical education can be managed strategically, as well as formulate recommendations for teachers, schools, and policymakers so that its implementation runs effectively and sustainably

METHODOLOGY

This study uses the Systematic Literature Review (SLR) method because the purpose of the research focuses on analyzing the opportunities and challenges of the implementation of the Independent Learning Curriculum in the context of physical education, SLR was chosen as a method because it is able to present a comprehensive picture based on the synthesis of existing literature, this approach allows researchers to not only collect research results, but also to collect research results. also assess the consistency of findings, identify research gaps, and formulate strategic recommendations (Wibowo et al., 2022; Subandi et al., 2024).

The SLR process is carried out with the stages of identification, screening, feasibility assessment, and inclusion. Literature searches are conducted through reputable databases, such as Scopus, Google Scholar, DOAJ, and Garuda. The keywords used are Independent Learning Curriculum, Independent Curriculum, Physical Education, and Implementatio, with a range of 2022–2025 to ensure that all articles used are relevant to the latest policies regarding the independent curriculum.

Inclusion criteria are set so that the research focuses more on articles that: (1) discuss the implementation of the independent curriculum at the primary to secondary education level, (2) are relevant to physical learning, teacher leadership, learning strategies, and managerial aspects, and (3) are published in reputable national or international journals. Articles that are only opinions, policy reports without empirical data, or publications before 2020 are excluded from the analysis, so that the analyzed literature actually meets the criteria of academic validity and up-to-dateness.

Data analysis was carried out with a thematic analysis approach, articles that passed the selection were then grouped based on themes, such as teacher leadership, physical learning strategies, school managerial roles, diagnostic assessments, infrastructure, and student learning outcomes. This thematic analysis allows researchers to identify patterns of relatedness, similarity of findings, and differences between researches, through this stage, the opportunities and challenges of the implementation of the independent curriculum can be systematically mapped, resulting in a comprehensive literature synthesis.

The final results of the SLR process show that there are 23 journals that meet the inclusion criteria, this number reflects that this research departs from a strong literature database so that the SLR method is considered the most appropriate to be used in this

study because it is able to produce systematic literature mapping, reveal research gaps that have not been widely studied, and present strategic recommendations for strengthening the implementation of the independent curriculum in physical education.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Challenges in the Implementation of the Independent Curriculum in Physical Education

The results of this study show that the biggest challenges in the implementation of the Independent Curriculum in physical education lie in teacher readiness, limited facilities, and lack of adequate managerial support. One of the most striking challenges is the readiness of teachers to implement the philosophy of the independent curriculum, which focuses more on developing student competencies and character-based learning, most physical education teachers, especially those in areas with limited training, still feel bound to traditional learning approaches. Aji & Anwar (2024) state that many teachers do not fully understand how the philosophy of the independent curriculum can be translated into active and student-based learning. They often get caught up in old habits that prioritize teaching over learning that prioritizes student participation.

The readiness of teachers in facing this paradigm change is a determining factor in the success of curriculum implementation, Hendriani et al. (2022) revealed that without adequate training, many teachers do not know how to adjust physical education learning to the principles of the independent curriculum. Teachers who are used to teaching through conventional approaches find it difficult to change their teaching methods to be more flexible, experience-based, and focused on student competence.

In addition, the limited facilities are a big problem in the implementation of the independent curriculum. Research by Prasetyo et al. (2024) shows that many schools, particularly those located in remote areas or with limited budgets, have difficulty providing adequate sports facilities. Although the independent curriculum provides flexibility for teachers to innovate in learning, limited facilities still hinder the success of this curriculum in the context of physical education, which is oriented towards physical activity. In addition, the lack of adequate managerial support at the school level has also worsened the implementation of the independent curriculum. According to Wahidah et al. (2023), school principals who do not have a sufficient understanding of the philosophy of the independent curriculum, as well as management that is less adaptive to the needs of change, can hinder effective implementation. Inadequate school management will lead to difficulties in coordination between teachers, stakeholders, and poorly structured planning.

Opportunities for Learning Innovation in Physical Education through the Independent Curriculum

Although the existing challenges are quite large, the results of this study show that the Independent Curriculum opens up great opportunities for innovation in physical education learning, especially in terms of a more interactive and experiential learning approach, the play-based approach suggested in the independent curriculum can have a great positive impact on students' physical skills. As explained by Rismanto et al. (2024), the game-based approach focuses not only on fitness, but also on the development of social skills, leadership, and collaboration among students. With this approach, learning becomes more fun, interactive, and relevant for students.

The use of technology is also a great opportunity in physical education learning innovation, Haryono (2024) noted that technology can be used to support physical learning in a more flexible and independent way. Online fitness and training apps allow students to perform physical exercises independently outside of the classroom, and monitor their progress more effectively. This provides more opportunities for students to practice outside of school hours and develop their skills in a more flexible and personalized way.

However, although the technological opportunities are enormous, equitable access to technology throughout Indonesia is a big challenge, research by Panji & Damanik (2024), inequality in technology access between urban and rural areas is still a major obstacle in making the most of technology in physical education, so as to ensure that all students can enjoy the benefits of an independent curriculum, More attention is needed to equitable distribution of infrastructure and access to technology throughout regions, especially in more remote areas.

In addition, the project-based approach also opens up opportunities for more contextual and experiential learning. Afandi & Wakhudin (2025) emphasize that project-based learning, such as designing sports tournaments or other physical activities, provides students with opportunities to develop managerial, leadership, and cooperative skills, this approach also fosters a sense of responsibility among students, as they can directly engage in the planning and execution of physical activities involving all members of the group.

Managerial Strategies to Support the Implementation of the Independent Curriculum in Physical Education

The results of this study also show that an effective managerial strategy is very important in supporting the successful implementation of the independent curriculum, especially in physical education. Mulyadi et al. (2024) emphasized that school principals need to have a sufficient understanding of the philosophy of the independent curriculum and the ability to lead the necessary changes. Principals must be able to create an atmosphere that supports innovation among teachers and ensures that they get the training needed to implement the curriculum in an effective way.

Priyambada et al. (2024) also show the importance of collaboration between teachers and education managers, by creating a collaborative work culture, teachers can share experiences and solutions to the challenges they face. Principals should create a space for teachers to openly discuss the problems they encounter in the implementation of the independent curriculum, this collaboration will ensure that each party can support each other to achieve common goals.

Continuous evaluation is also one of the most important strategies, Wahidah et al. (2023) suggest the use of the CIPP (Context, Input, Process, Product) evaluation model to assess the success of the implementation of the independent curriculum, this evaluation must be carried out thoroughly to ensure that the curriculum is implemented properly and achieves the desired goals, the evaluation process must involve various parties, including teachers, school principals, and even students, to get more comprehensive input.

CONCLUSION

The implementation of the Independent Curriculum in physical education faces significant challenges, such as teacher readiness, limited facilities, and suboptimal managerial management. Nonetheless, the curriculum also opens up great opportunities for innovation in learning, such as the use of game-based approaches, technology, and

project-based learning. Successful implementation depends heavily on teachers' readiness to adapt to a more flexible approach, as well as the provision of supportive and effective managerial facilities, and although the challenges are considerable, the opportunities can be leveraged to create more participatory and holistic physical education.

The implications of this study show that to achieve success in the implementation of the independent curriculum, more intensive training for teachers, improvement of infrastructure, and managerial strengthening at the school level is needed. As a recommendation, the government should ensure equitable distribution of training for teachers in all regions, as well as support the improvement of physical education facilities. At the school level, principals must create a culture of collaboration among teachers and facilitate the implementation of the curriculum with a more innovative and competency-based approach. Continuous evaluation is also needed to ensure that this curriculum can be implemented effectively and sustainably throughout Indonesia.

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