

Implementation of the Independent Curriculum Policy at Madrasah Tsanawiyah Negeri 1 West Lampung

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ABSTRACT

One of the innovations in education in facing the development of the era is the implementation of the Independent Curriculum which emphasizes flexible, contextual, and student-centered learning. This study aims to analyze the implementation of the Independent Curriculum at Madrasah Tsanawiyah Negeri 1, West Lampung and the challenges faced in implementing the Independent Curriculum. The data obtained involved observation, interviews, and documentation. The results of the study indicate that the implementation of the Independent Curriculum is running well, supported by the quality of human resources, facilities, and adequate technology. However, there are several obstacles such as the lack of further training and ineffective communication between policy implementers. This study recommends the preparation of more structured regulations and SOPs, increasing routine training, and optimizing the use of technology to support curriculum implementation. These findings are expected to be a reference for madrasahs and policy makers in improving the quality of education through the Independent Curriculum.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Education is a fundamental pillar in the development of a nation's civilization which functions as a catalyst for the formation of quality and competent human resources to face global dynamics. In the Indonesian context, education reform is a sustainable agenda that the government continues to carry out to answer the challenges of the times and ensure the relevance of education to the needs of society and increasingly complex global developments. As mandated in the fourth paragraph of the 1945 Constitution, national education has a strategic mission to

"educate the life of the nation and participate in realizing a world order based on independence, lasting peace, and social justice" [1]. In addition, national education functions to develop abilities and shape the character and civilization of a dignified nation in order to educate the life of the nation, with the aim of developing the potential of students to become human beings who believe and fear God Almighty, have noble character, are healthy, knowledgeable, capable, creative, independent, and become democratic and responsible citizens.

Contemporary dynamics, which are characterized by rapid and complex changes,

require education to always evolve with the times. Advances in digital technology, social transformation, and multidimensional world challenges require education to prepare the young generation not only with academic knowledge alone, but also with critical thinking, creativity, collaboration, and high adaptability. In this context, the curriculum as one of the fundamental elements in the implementation of national education has a strategic role that cannot be ignored [2]. The curriculum acts as a strategic guide in the implementation of education to achieve the goals that have been set, so that the quality and standards of education are significantly connected to the design and implementation of the effective curriculum.

The success of national education is greatly influenced by the curriculum component which is the heart of the education system [3]. Curriculum development efforts are comprehensive activities that include the preparation, implementation, evaluation, and improvement of the curriculum on an ongoing basis. Curriculum development aims to make changes to the curriculum that are more in line with the demands of the times and are able to anticipate future needs [2]. Therefore, changes in curriculum policies are a strategic and crucial step to keep up with the changing times and adjust to the needs of education that continue to grow dynamically.

The learning crisis that has hit Indonesia, especially triggered by the Covid-19 pandemic, has brought paradigmatic changes to the national education system. The transition from conventional face-to-face learning to distance learning (PJJ) forced the government to adapt the curriculum by issuing policies related to three options for the use of the curriculum for educational units, namely the 2013 Curriculum, the Emergency Curriculum, and the Independent Curriculum. This adaptive step is a strategic response to pandemic conditions that require a comprehensive transformation of learning methodologies. The Independent Curriculum, which was initially a prototype curriculum applied to 2,500 driving schools and 901 vocational high schools of excellence (SMK PK), was then expanded to be

implemented through the Independent Curriculum Implementation Registration program for schools that are not registered as driving schools [4].

The implementation of the Independent Curriculum represents a new paradigm in Indonesian education that gives greater autonomy to schools, teachers, and students in designing, managing, and evaluating the learning process [5]. The Ministry of Education and Culture explained that the Independent Curriculum is expected to be an innovative solution in improving the quality of education by focusing on a more contextual, creative, and adaptive learning approach. This policy tries to shift the educational paradigm that has been more oriented to academic test standards towards learning that emphasizes more on deep concept understanding, critical thinking skills, and holistic character development of students. The Independent Curriculum was developed as a more flexible curriculum framework, while focusing on essential materials and developing students' character and competencies comprehensively.

The main characteristics of the Independent Curriculum include three fundamental aspects that are integrated with each other. First, project-based learning for the development of soft skills and character according to the Pancasila student profile which emphasizes character formation based on the noble values of the nation. Second, focus on essential materials so that there is enough time for deep learning for basic competencies such as literacy and numeracy which are the foundation of lifelong learning. Third, flexibility for teachers to carry out differentiated learning according to students' abilities and make adjustments to the local content context that reflects the wisdom and needs of each region [6].

The urgency of the implementation of the Independent Curriculum is getting stronger when looking at the results of the evaluation of Indonesian education both at the global and national levels which show unsatisfactory achievements. The results of the Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) test show that Indonesian

students' abilities in literacy, mathematics, and science are still well below the global average, which indicates that there are significant challenges in achieving adequate educational standards. The results of the national test also show a worrying picture, where the Indonesian Student Competency Assessment (AKSI) and other surveys highlight the low basic competencies of students and the high inequality between regions and types of schools. Empirical data shows that learning outcomes have not increased significantly in the last 15-20 years (Ministry of Education and Culture, 2021). This condition is a determining factor that encourages the government to adopt the Independent Curriculum as a strategic solution to improve the quality of education in Indonesia comprehensively.

The implementation of the Independent Curriculum (IKM) in madrasas follows the policy framework of the Ministry of Education and Culture with special adaptations carried out by the Ministry of Religion (Kemenag) in accordance with the learning needs in madrasas. This adaptation focuses on strengthening Islamic Religious Education and Arabic as a characteristic of madrasas, which is outlined in KMA Number 347 of 2022 concerning Guidelines for the Implementation of the Independent Curriculum in Madrasas. Data shows that as many as 2,471 madrasah institutions have been determined to implement the Independent Curriculum in the early stages, but in 2023 this number will increase drastically to 26,169 institutions, including the RA, MI, MTs, and MA/MAK levels (Director of KSKK Madrasah, 2023). This significant increase reflects the high enthusiasm of the madrasah community in implementing the Independent Curriculum, which also signifies the courage of madrasas to transform education while maintaining their distinctive religious characteristics.

Madrasah Tsanawiyah Negeri 1 West Lampung, as one of the formal educational institutions under the auspices of the Ministry of Religion, has a strategic role in the implementation of the Independent Curriculum in the West Lampung region. As

a madrasah that integrates religious values with general education, MTs N 1 West Lampung faces unique challenges in implementing this curriculum. The geographical position in an area with diverse demographic and sociocultural backgrounds requires this madrasah to adjust its learning approach and strategy to suit the needs and potential of students. As an educational unit that is in demand by the majority of residents in West Lampung, with the support of a strategic geographical location and input from students from families who care about education, as well as the culture of West Lampung society which has the philosophy of *Piil Pesanggiri* (living in harmony, mutual cooperation, appreciation, equality and cooperation), this madrasah is trusted to implement the Independent Curriculum since 2022.

The implementation of the Independent Curriculum in madrasas implements learning that is tailored to the abilities of students, providing wider space to develop character and basic competencies optimally. This curriculum has the ability to support more interactive learning by developing soft skills and forming characters in the form of noble morals, cooperation, diversity, independence, critical reasoning, and creativity. Focusing on essential learning and learning that adjusts to the abilities of students makes teachers at the forefront of the implementation of this curriculum, which requires continuous improvement of one's abilities to expand horizons and competencies in order to provide the best education [7].

However, the implementation of the Independent Curriculum faces various complex challenges that cannot be ignored. The main challenge identified is the readiness of human resources, especially teachers as the main pillar of curriculum policy implementation, both in terms of pedagogic competence and technological capabilities [8]. Human resources are a critical factor in the successful implementation of policies, so continuous quality improvement is needed through systematic training and capacity building programs. Factors influencing policy implementation according to Edward III

(1980) include communication, resources, dispositions or attitudes, and bureaucratic structure, all of which must be managed effectively to ensure successful implementation [9].

Empirical data shows that MTs N 1 West Lampung has 41 educators with 90% with a minimum qualification of Bachelor (S1) and 10% have taken the Master's level (S2). Of the 29 teachers with civil servant status, 24 people have been certified as educators, but for educators with PPPK and GTT status, none have been certified. This condition shows the need for special attention to increase certification for non-civil servant educators so that the quality of learning is maintained. The Ministry of Religion has provided various training programs through the Ministry of Religion's Smart MOOC platform and sikurma.kemenag.go.id that can be accessed openly, independently, and online. However, data shows that teacher participation in training has not been optimal, such as the Independent Curriculum policy training which was only attended by 30 out of 40 existing educators.

Another significant challenge is the aspect of cultural and attitude change in the implementation of the Independent Curriculum, which requires a different approach from the traditional learning paradigm and has the potential to generate resistance from various related parties [10]. Based on initial observations, MTs N 1 West Lampung has never received assistance and evaluation from related parties, even though according to the IKM Guidelines for Madrasas, mentoring is a systematic and sustainable process of guidance and facilitation to educational units in implementing the Independent Curriculum. This condition shows that there is a gap between policy and implementation in the field that needs serious attention.

This research is important considering the complexity of the challenges faced in the implementation of the Independent Curriculum in madrasas, especially at MTs N 1 West Lampung as one of the pioneer madrasas in the implementation of this curriculum in West

Lampung Regency. An in-depth study of the implementation process and the challenges faced will make a significant contribution to the development of more effective implementation strategies, not only for the madrasah concerned but also for other madrasahs facing similar challenges. This research will analyze the implementation of the Independent Curriculum policy using the perspective of public policy implementation, especially the Edward III model which focuses on communication factors, resources, disposition, and bureaucratic structure as determinants of successful policy implementation.

Based on the complexity of the problems and the urgency that has been described, this study aims to comprehensively analyze the implementation of the Independent Curriculum Policy at Madrasah Tsanawiyah Negeri 1 West Lampung. This research is expected to provide a holistic picture of the implementation process, identify the challenges faced, and prepare strategic recommendations to improve the effectiveness of the implementation of the Independent Curriculum in madrasahs. The contribution of this research is not only academic but also practical, by providing valuable insights for stakeholders in madrasah education to optimize the implementation of the Independent Curriculum in order to improve the quality of education that is globally competitive but still has an Islamic character.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 *Public Policy: Concepts and Dimensions*

Public policy is a key pillar in governance, especially in the context of national education. In its definition, public policy refers to plans or principles made and implemented by the government to regulate and manage the interests of society in general [11]. This policy is a strategic tool for the state to connect power and people's aspirations [12].

Some experts define public policy in various ways, for example,

stating that public policy is everything that the government does or does not do. Emphasizing that public policy is the result of decisions of government agencies and officials. In this case, public policy is not only an administrative instrument, but also a concrete form of state responsibility in ensuring the welfare of the people [13].

2.2 *Public Policy Implementation: Challenges and Strategies*

The implementation of public policy is a crucial stage in the policy cycle, where political decisions are realized in the form of concrete actions. In practice, implementation often falls short of expectations due to various administrative and political obstacles [12]. Dunn (1981) sees implementation as a process to realize policy objectives through administrative and political measures. Meanwhile, [14] emphasized that implementation includes efforts to realize policies through planned activities. Therefore, a thorough understanding of the implementation elements is very important so that the implementation of the policy does not become an obstacle to the achievement of the goals themselves.

2.3 *Key Elements of Policy Implementation*

The success of policy implementation is determined by three main elements, namely policy implementers, policy programs, and target groups [15]. Implementing elements or *Implementer* Plays a role in translating policies into operational actions that include planning, organizing, implementing, and evaluating. Policy programs must be well-designed, contain clear objectives, sufficient resources, and adequate monitoring systems [13].

The target group is the community or institution that will receive the direct impact of the implementation of the policy. These three elements form the basic framework for policy implementation that is

oriented towards results and operational efficiency.

2.4 *Public Policy Implementation Models*

Several models have been developed to understand the dynamics of policy implementation more systematically. The Edwards III model offers four key variables: communication, resources, executive disposition, and bureaucratic structure. Effective communication greatly determines the clarity of policy implementation, both in terms of transmission, consistency, and interpretation of policy information (Winarno, 2014). Resources, whether human, financial, or technical, must be adequate to support optimal policy execution. The disposition or attitude of the implementers, reflects their level of commitment to the success of the policy. Meanwhile, an adaptive bureaucratic structure can prevent fragmentation and ensure coordination between institutions runs well [12].

The second model was put forward by Merilee S. Grindle (1980), who emphasized two main factors in implementation, namely the content of the policy (*content of policy*) and the context of implementation (*context of implementation*). Policy content factors include the interests involved, the benefits of the policy, the expected level of change, and the readiness of implementers and the distribution of resources. The context of implementation is related to the power and strategy of actors, institutional characteristics, and the responsiveness of the implementer to socio-political conditions. Grindle emphasized that the same policy can yield different results if applied in different environmental contexts [13].

The third model of the [16] see implementation as a linear process from political decisions to concrete actions. The model focuses on seven important variables: policy standards and objectives, resources, interorganizational communication, implementing

characteristics, socio-political conditions, and implementer attitudes. All of these variables are considered interrelated and determine the extent to which policies can be implemented effectively [17].

2.5 *Implementation of the Independent Curriculum in Madrasah*

The Independent Curriculum is the latest education policy that has been implemented gradually since the 2022/2023 school year. At the madrasah level, this policy accommodates two options: the application of the principles of the Independent Curriculum in the 2013 Curriculum, and the full implementation of the Independent Curriculum which includes graduate competency standards, content, learning outcomes, to assessment and project-based learning (IKM Guidelines, 2022). Madrasahs are given autonomy to develop operational curricula according to vision and needs, as well as optimize differentiated and collaborative learning approaches.

The implementation of the Independent Curriculum in madrasahs begins with the process of socialization, resource identification, and submission of implementation proposals through the PDUM system. After being verified by the Ministry of Religion of the Regency/City and the Provincial Regional Office, the eligible madrasah will be designated as the implementer. The implementation process also involves strengthening teacher capacity through training and technical guidance, as well as periodic monitoring and evaluation to ensure the quality of the implementation of the education policy.

2.6 *Madrasah Tsanawiyah Curriculum and Its Structure*

The curriculum at the Madrasah Tsanawiyah (MTs) level is designed based on the regulations of the Ministry of Religion which emphasizes the characteristics of Islamic education. The Decree of the Minister of Religion No. 372 of 1993 and No. 369 of 1993 stipulates that MTs is a first-level advanced school

that provides Islamic education for three years after MI or Elementary School. In the implementation of the Independent Curriculum, MTs adopts two learning approaches, namely intracurricular and project-based to strengthen the character of the Pancasila and Rahmatan lil Alamin student profiles (KMA No. 347 of 2022).

The structure of the MTs curriculum is divided into two phases: Phase D (grades VII-VIII) and Phase E (grade IX), with flexibility in the implementation of lesson content. The number of lesson hours is designed based on students' learning needs, with a thematic or project-based approach that allows collaboration between subjects (Guidelines for the Implementation of the Independent Madrasah Curriculum, 2022). This curriculum also supports inclusive education and the use of the semester credit system (SKS), as well as encouraging learning innovation by educational units according to student characteristics and resource availability.

3. METHODS

This study uses a descriptive qualitative approach that aims to explore and describe the implementation of the Independent Curriculum policy at Madrasah Tsanawiyah Negeri 1 West Lampung in depth and comprehensively. The qualitative approach was chosen because this research is based on the philosophy of postpositivism which allows researchers to examine the condition of objects in natural settings, where the researcher plays a key instrument in the process of collecting and analyzing data [18]. The characteristics of qualitative research that emphasize meaning rather than generalization are very much in line with the purpose of this research which seeks to understand the phenomenon of educational policy implementation in the specific context of madrasahs.

This research is categorized as a descriptive research because it produces data in the form of an in-depth picture through words and descriptions that describe the

implementation of the Independent Curriculum policy at MTs Negeri 1 West Lampung. The focus of the research is directed to two main aspects: first, the implementation of the Independent Curriculum uses a theoretical framework that includes four dimensions, namely communication, resources, disposition, and bureaucratic structure; Second, identify the challenges faced in the implementation process.

This research is located at Madrasah Tsanawiyah Negeri 1 West Lampung, which is an educational institution under the Ministry of Religion of the Republic of Indonesia. The selection of this location was based on the consideration that MTs N 1 West Lampung is one of the pioneer madrasahs that implement the Independent Curriculum since the enactment of government regulations on the implementation of the curriculum. The subjects of the study were determined using purposive sampling techniques with specific criteria, including: madrasah supervisors, madrasah quality assurance team, school principals, vice principals for curriculum, and five educators. Snowball sampling techniques are also used to expand the network of informants to obtain more comprehensive data, where key informants provide recommendations to additional relevant informants [19].

Research data was obtained through two main sources, namely primary data and secondary data. Primary data was obtained directly from informants through in-depth interviews, while secondary data was in the form of supporting documents, archives, and administrative data from MTs N 1 West Lampung and relevant literature [20]. The data collection technique uses triangulation methods that include observation, in-depth interviews, and documentation. Observation is carried out directly and indirectly to observe the implementation process of the Independent Curriculum in the field [21]. In-depth interviews are conducted using structured interview guides and recording tools to ensure data accuracy. Documentation is carried out to collect written data, photographs, and videos as supporting

materials that strengthen the research findings.

The data analysis technique uses the Miles and Huberman interactive analysis model which consists of three main stages that take place simultaneously [22]. The first stage is data reduction, where the data obtained from the field is simplified, important information is selected, and themes and patterns that emerge through the process of sharpening and grouping data are identified. The second stage is data presentation (data display) which is carried out through narrative text, tables, photos, and graphs to provide an overall picture of the research results. The third stage is conclusion drawing which is carried out based on data verification throughout the study in line with member checks to ensure the validity of the findings.

The validity of the data was tested using four criteria according to Moleong, namely: credibility (degree of trust) through extension of participation, perseverance of observation, and triangulation of sources, methods, and theories; transferability through the presentation of detailed and comprehensive descriptions; dependability through an audit of the research process by an independent auditor; and confirmability through documentation of the research process from start to finish. The use of these four criteria ensures that the research results have a high level of validity and reliability, so that research findings can be trusted and have a significant contribution to the development of science, especially in the field of education policy implementation.

4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

4.1 Results

The implementation of the Independent Curriculum (IKM) at Madrasah Tsanawiyah Negeri 1 West Lampung (MTsN 1 Lambar) is a strategic process influenced by various factors. To understand the dynamics of implementation, this study uses the policy implementation model approach of George C. Edward III, which includes four main elements: communication,

resources, disposition, and bureaucratic structure.

1) Communication

Communication is the main foundation in the policy implementation process. The results of the study show that the process of conveying the direction and objectives of the Independent Curriculum at MTsN 1 West Lampung is still general and has not touched the practical level as a whole. The educators feel that the information provided is not enough to answer their needs in the field.

One of the teachers stated, *"In general, policies related to the Independent Curriculum have been conveyed, but the planning, process, and evaluation for mapel teachers have not been fully conveyed"* (Interview, 06.01.2025). This shows the insynchronization between the intention of the central policy and the understanding at the executive level.

In line with that, another teacher revealed, *"What is conveyed is general but not practical... schools have not practically facilitated the needs of teachers in the field"* (Interview, 06.01.2025). This ambiguity is reinforced by teachers' expectations of in-depth, ongoing training, not just one-way information. *"They should have been given a few days of training to understand... so it can be practiced"* (Interview, 08.01.2025).

The head of the madrasah explained that information had indeed been conveyed through the leadership to the teachers, *"... the hope is to reach students according to what the government wants"* (Interview, 09.01.2025). However, the communication built is still mostly vertical and not yet participatory. This is also acknowledged by educators, *"Communication is still one way... It is still a clear question what the Independent Curriculum will look like"* (Interview, 03.02.2025).

From the technical side, the Deputy Head of Curriculum said that communication is carried out through social media, training, and socialization. *"... a team was formed, and each province sent representatives to the regions"* (Interview, 07.01.2025). However, the implementation in the field still shows inequities in information delivery and coordination across bureaucratic levels.

Communication barriers do not only occur between policymakers and implementers, but also between implementers and students. As the Deputy Chief said, *"... are still not used to using the Independent Curriculum, students need to adapt"* (Interview, 07.01.2025). The head of the Madrasah also added, *"... in English lessons the direction is not where to go"* (Interview, 09.01.2025). This condition shows that there is no effective and comprehensive communication flow at every level.

2) Resources

Policy implementation will not succeed without adequate resource support. From the results of the interviews, the majority of informants stated that in terms of facilities and infrastructure, MTsN 1 West Lampung already has sufficient facilities. *"Our human resources and facilities have supported... the budget is also in accordance with needs"* (Interview, 14.01.2025).

However, the quality of human resources is still a challenge. Although most of the teachers have been educated in S1 and S2 and are certified, the competence in the implementation of the Independent Curriculum has not been fully optimal. The madrasah superintendent emphasized, *"... Teacher competence is still lacking. Teachers are required to be more creative and innovative"* (Interview, 10.02.2025).

The School Operational Assistance Fund (BOS) has been used to support the implementation of policies, including in the procurement of teaching tools and teacher training. However, not all teachers make the most of these facilities, especially in developing teaching tools that are relevant to the independent learning approach.

3) Disposition (Attitude and Commitment)

The attitude of policy implementers plays a crucial role in determining the success of implementation. The teachers of MTsN 1 West Lampung have a high commitment, but on the other hand they still feel unsure of the steps taken. *"We are guessing whether what we are living is right or not"* (Interview, 06.01.2025).

The commitment of the implementers is also often hampered by the lack of advanced training. *"At the beginning the commitment was high, but then there was no more direct training"* (Interview, 04.02.2025). In fact, in the implementation of policies, continuity of capacity building is needed to maintain motivation and quality of implementation.

The Madrasah Quality Assurance Team stated that periodic coaching continues to be carried out, *"... emphasis is placed on madrassas to implement an independent curriculum and be given guidance"* (Interview, 15.01.2025). However, the reality on the ground shows that coaching is still uneven.

4) Bureaucratic Structure

Bureaucracy becomes a supporting structure that bridges the implementation of policies. In MTsN 1 West Lampung, the division of main tasks is quite clear, especially related to teaching duties. However, there is still confusion in the implementation of the Pancasila and Rahmatan Lil

Alamin (P5RA) student profile strengthening project.

A teacher said, *"For P5, the tasks have not been clearly divided, the coordinator has not yet been determined"* (Interview, 08.01.2025). This shows that the bureaucratic structure is not fully prepared to deal with the new components of this curriculum.

The head of the madrasah has indeed issued a decree on the division of duties, *"Everyone has their own duties by being given a decree"* (Interview, 06.01.2025), but the implementation in the field has not fully gone as expected. The Deputy Head of Curriculum stated that *"... there is confusion in the implementation of P5, there should be a certain process and time for its implementation"* (Interview, 23.01.2025).

5) Challenges and Solutions for the Implementation of the Independent Curriculum

In its implementation, the implementation of the Independent Curriculum at MTsN 1 West Lampung encountered various challenges. Some of them are the lack of teachers' understanding of the curriculum concept, limitations in mastery of technology, and low adaptation of students to new learning approaches. One teacher said, *"It is still difficult to distinguish between Curriculum 13 and Merdeka. Children are still passive and parents are not yet open to change"* (Interview, 05.02.2025).

The challenge also comes in terms of time and flexibility. *"There is still a lack of understanding of the independent curriculum, so its implementation is not clear"* (Interview, 03.02.2025). Some of the proposed solutions include direct training, group discussion forums (FGDs), and improving infrastructure.

"The solution is for teachers to be given space to study the curriculum and hold an FGD" (Interview,

08.01.2025). Meanwhile, strengthening teacher motivation is one of the strategic steps. *"Training, technical guidance, and MGMP are very important to foster teacher innovation"* (Interview, 23.01.2025). The head of the madrasah emphasized the importance of open access to training, *"so that teachers can grow knowledge and information about the independent curriculum"* (Interview, 13.01.2025).

6) Supporting Factors

Several supporting factors have helped the implementation of this policy. Among them are the readiness of facilities, support for qualified human resources, and learning facilities. *"The supporting factors are facilities, human resources, facilities and infrastructure"* (Interview, 08.01.2025). The ability of teachers to master technology is also an important point, *"Teachers must master technology and students must be more active"* (Interview, 04.02.2025).

The head of the madrasah added that *"Human resources must continuously seek information and move on from the old curriculum"* (Interview, 03.02.2025). This indicates that adaptation to curriculum changes is an absolute requirement for the successful implementation of education policies.

4.2 Discussion

The implementation of the Independent Curriculum at MTs Negeri 1 West Lampung was analyzed using four factors of Edward III (1980's theory), namely communication, resources, disposition, and bureaucratic structure. The analysis shows that these four factors have a significant influence on the effectiveness of curriculum policy implementation. The communication aspect shows that the results are not optimal in the implementation of the Independent Curriculum. Based on data triangulation, the direction and objectives of the Independent Curriculum have not been explained in detail to educators, but

only in general so that teachers' understanding is still limited. This is not in line with Edward III's theory which emphasized that communication must be clear so that policies can be understood and easily implemented [23]. This condition causes the interpretation of the independent curriculum to still differ between the government's wishes and practices in the field, especially in the implementation of the Pancasila Student Profile Strengthening Project (P5) which focuses more on the final product than the overall learning process.

Communication built by policy implementers to achieve program goals is still carried out passively and inconsistently, so that implementers have not fully understood the implementation from planning to implementation. This lack of clarity in communication is also due to obstacles in the distribution of communication to the target group (students), which causes confusion in implementation. As stated Siregar & Syukri, the unclear implementation instructions cause the implementer to experience confusion about the tasks that must be done [24].

From the aspect of human resources, MTs Negeri 1 West Lampung already has adequate educators with more than 80% having S1 and S2 qualifications and certified as professional educators. However, there are limitations in teacher training related to teaching methods that are in accordance with the Independent Curriculum. Sultoni emphasized that the significant shortcoming lies in the limitations of socialization and training for teachers, so that the understanding of the curriculum is still not optimal [25]. The facilities and infrastructure in the madrasah are adequate, including representative classrooms, complete laboratories, libraries with relevant collections, and sports and art facilities. The availability of information and communication technology, including internet access and digital devices,

strengthens the ability to implement innovative and interactive learning (Herawati et al., 2023). BOS funds as the main source of funding have been strategically allocated for the procurement of learning tools, curriculum development tools, teacher training, and improvement of infrastructure facilities in accordance with Edward III's theoretical framework on the importance of financial resources in policy implementation [26].

The disposition factor shows that teachers have a high level of commitment in implementing the Independent Curriculum, but it is still accompanied by uncertainty and confusion regarding the proper implementation. The educators revealed that although the commitment has been implemented, in its implementation it is still "guessing" whether the implementation is in accordance with the government's wishes. This condition illustrates that despite the intention and seriousness, the lack of clear direction and lack of clear guidance cause the executor to feel hesitant in carrying out their duties [26]. Existing commitments still face challenges in the form of lack of training support and continuous coaching. An educator revealed that after three years of implementation, there is still a lot that needs to be improved and learned about implementation. This shows the need for assistance and capacity building so that the implementation of policies is more effective in accordance with KMA Number 347 of 2022.

The bureaucratic structure shows that the division of duties and responsibilities is clear and efficient, but still requires more detailed regulations or Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs). The implementation of the program is still not running optimally because it requires adaptation to the independent curriculum and lack of coordination, especially in the implementation of P5 which is still experiencing confusion. This condition is in line with the findings of Muamar et al.

that a good SOP must include a clear, systematic, and easy-to-understand framework [27]. The bureaucracy still tends to be dominant on the formal side so that it is less responsive to the dynamics and practical needs that arise during implementation. According to Edward III's theory, the ideal bureaucracy should strike a balance between the formal side and the adaptive side that allows innovation. This shows the need for capacity building and continuous training so that the bureaucracy is more adaptive and supports learning innovation.

The implementation of the Independent Curriculum faces several main challenges. First, the flexibility of time in differentiated and project-based learning requires more complex time management without sacrificing other subject matter. Second, the resistance of parents who are more comfortable with the old curriculum and the lack of socialization from the madrasah are obstacles to external support. Third, a lack of in-depth understanding of the direction and objectives of the Independent Curriculum due to the lack of comprehensive socialization. Fourth, the personality of educators in the adaptation from teacher-centered to student-centered learning and mastery of technology in the digitalization era [28]. The solutions offered include developing educators' work motivation through training, technical guidance, and MGMP to improve work ethic, innovation, and learning creation. Improving teacher competence, cooperation with industry, support of school principals in facilitating learning, and government support in the form of training and funding are the keys to the successful implementation of the Independent Curriculum in educational units.

5. CONCLUSION

Based on research on the implementation of the Independent Curriculum at MTs Negeri

1 West Lampung, it can be concluded that the implementation process faces several main obstacles. Communication about the direction and objectives of the curriculum has not been maximized because the explanations given are still general so that educators have not fully understood the essence of the curriculum. Although human resources, facilities, and funding are adequate, educators' willingness is well committed, and the bureaucratic structure is clear, there is still room for improvement in terms of work motivation, ongoing training, and the development of clearer operational standards of procedures. The main challenges faced include time flexibility in facing new learning paradigms, curriculum understanding, educator personalities, and adaptation to digital learning media.

To overcome these problems, several strategic steps are suggested that need to be taken. First, the preparation of clear and structured regulations and SOPs for the

implementation of P5 to clarify the duties and responsibilities of the implementers. Second, the procurement of regular training and seminars so that educators get continuous knowledge updates and motivation. Third, optimizing the use of technology and supporting facilities as well as improving the communication dimension to maximize the socialization of curriculum directions and objectives. Finally, the need for periodic evaluation from madrassas and policymakers to identify and improve the obstacles that still exist in the implementation of the Independent Curriculum.

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