

## **CHAPTER I**

### **INTRODUCTION**

#### **A. Background of Study**

Indonesia's education system has been constantly adapted and modified over the years. Yudishtira in Kristiani, (2022) it is argued that the education system is constantly evolving and adapting to changing times. Education in Indonesia is also constantly reformed and optimized to keep it at the level of educational conditions in other countries. The Indonesian education system also has a structured and coordinated set of instructions and plans contained in the curriculum. Curriculum is generally described as a set of information covering many subjects taught in schools. Understanding the Curriculum according to the Law of the Republic of Indonesia Number 20 Year 2003 on the National Education System in (Herry dan Andriyani, 2014), the curriculum is a set of plans and agreements according to objectives, content and learning material, which serves as a guide to organize learning activities to achieve national educational goals. and methods.

The curriculum changes and is updated every year. From his 1947 curriculum or lesson plans to the current curriculum, it has always changed with the development of time and the progress of his people and the people of Indonesia. In 2020, a new draft of curriculum changes was unveiled, the board's drafts and ideas were discussed, and implementation began in various schools. The emerging learning crisis has been further exacerbated by the

COVID-19 pandemic, which has suddenly changed the face of education in Indonesia Fitri et al., (2023). The most obvious change occurred in the learning, which was initially based on face-to-face methods, but changed to distance learning.

Important factors in the implementation of distance learning are: attention, the teacher confidence, experience, easy-to-use tools, creativity in using media and creating interaction with students (Prawiyogi, 2020) and Fitri et al., (2023). Also, the intensity of teaching and learning decreased significantly, both in the number of study days per week and in his average lessons per day (Kristiani, 2022). Allah SWT says in the Qur'an Surah Al-Mujadalah verse: 11

يَرْفَعُ اللَّهُ الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا مِنْكُمْ وَالَّذِينَ أُوتُوا الْعِلْمَ دَرَجَاتٍ ...

Undoubtedly, Allah will raise up the believers and those who have been given knowledge in various ways. This verse shows that Allah SWT raises the ranks of the people of knowledge. Therefore, it is very important that teacher continue to improve their knowledge and skills in fulfilling their duties, including the ability to independently implement the curriculum. Independent Curriculum emphasizes teacher autonomy in developing learning materials and assessment tools. Teacher is required to understand the core competencies and skills outlined in the curriculum and translate them into effective teaching and assessment materials. However, research shows that many teachers do not have the skills to do this (Pratiwi, 2014). Common challenges teacher face include difficulty developing teaching modules, lack

of understanding of scientific methods, and limited ability to develop assessment tools (Marbun et al., 2022) and (Afitska dan Said, 2022).

A teacher preparation when implementing a program depends on many factors, including knowledge of the program, teaching skills, experience, and attitude Supriatna, (2020). Studies have shown that additional training and ongoing support are essential to help teacher effectively implement programs independently Nurfadilah in Aida et al., (2023), Pokhrel, (2024), Desmawanti dan Sulong, (2024), and Sanjaya et al., (2022) . However, the training provided is often inadequate and does not involve ongoing coaching (Prasojo et al., 2017) and Afitska dan Said, (2022). Comprehensive professional development programs are needed to prepare teacher.

Based on research conducted by Nurzen, (2022) examining teacher readiness in implementing the Independent Curriculum, this study shows that teacher readiness in implementing the Independent Curriculum is categorized as quite ready. The teacher involved in this study showed confidence and enthusiasm in facing the challenges and changes that occurred in the implementation of the Independent Curriculum. They also have quite good abilities in compiling teaching modules, preparing teaching materials, evaluating by adjusting the characteristics of students, focusing on general teacher readiness in implementing the Independent Curriculum and also looking at mental readiness and the ability to compile learning modules. Meanwhile, this research focuses more on the readiness of English teacher in the implementation of the Independent Curriculum, including aspects of

readiness in learning assessment, and communication with students. Researcher can find opportunities to conduct further research that can complement and expand understanding of teacher readiness in implementing the Independent Curriculum, especially in the context of teaching English at the elementary school or Madrasah Ibtidaiyah level.

At Madrasah Ibtidaiyah (MI), English was not a compulsory subject in the previous curriculum but was usually taught as a local content subject in accordance with school policy. It was up to each madrasah to decide whether or not to teach English, based on available resource, teacher readiness, and community demand. For MIN 11 Banjar, the English subject was recently introduced alongside the introduction of the Independent Curriculum. This simultaneous introduction provides a unique context where both the subject matter and the curriculum are being introduced for the first time, thereby creating a special environment to assess teachers' readiness and adaptability.

The implementation of the Independent Curriculum in Indonesian education marks a shift from traditional instructional practices to more flexible, student-centered approaches. Teachers are expected to adapt to curriculum changes by developing their competence in planning, delivering, and assessing learning activities based on students' needs. As curriculum transformation requires intellectual engagement and pedagogical understanding, the role of teacher readiness becomes vital, particularly in the area of cognitive preparedness. In the context of Madrasah Ibtidaiyah (MI), English is not a compulsory subject under the other curriculum but is often

introduced as a local content (*muatan lokal*) subject depending on the school's policy. In MIN 11 Banjar, the English subject was introduced simultaneously with the implementation of the Independent Curriculum. This dual introduction demands that the teacher possess sufficient cognitive readiness to comprehend, plan, and deliver the English subject within the new curriculum framework. Cognitive readiness refers to the teacher mental preparedness, including their knowledge, understanding, and intellectual ability to implement the curriculum. It includes their awareness of curriculum principles, their ability to develop teaching modules, conduct assessments, and adapt learning resource effectively. Without cognitive readiness, even the most well-designed curriculum may not be implemented as intended. Considering this situation, it is important to investigate the cognitive readiness of the English teacher in MIN 11 Banjar. This study specifically focuses on cognitive readiness, which refers to the teacher's intellectual capacity to understand curriculum principles, develop teaching modules, select and adapt learning resource, and design assessments. Other dimensions of readiness, such as emotional, physical, or facility readiness, are not included in the scope of this research. The focus on cognitive readiness is intended to provide an in-depth understanding of how intellectually prepared the teacher is to implement the Independent Curriculum effectively. By identifying cognitive strengths and challenges, this study aims to highlight areas that require further development and support to ensure successful curriculum implementation.

This study would provide an in-depth investigation of English teacher preparation to implement the Independent Curriculum independently in specific school contexts. The results would provide insight into the support teacher need to improve their ability to implement the curriculum independently. It would contribute to the literature on teacher preparation for curriculum reform in Indonesia.

## **B. Definition of Key Terms**

Several terms related to the research is clarified to avoid misconceptions.

### **1. English Teacher:**

English teacher at the school where this study was conducted. They are responsible for developing learning materials and assessments based on the Independent Curriculum.

### **2. Cognitive Readiness:**

In this study, cognitive readiness refers to the teacher intellectual preparedness in implementing the Independent Curriculum. It includes their knowledge of curriculum principles, ability to develop teaching modules, understanding of assessment strategies, and skill in selecting and adapting learning resource. This study focuses exclusively on the cognitive aspect of readiness, not including emotional, physical, or behavioral readiness.

### **3. Independent Curriculum Implementation:**

Independent Curriculum Implementation refers to the application of implementing and using the Independent Curriculum in schools, with an

emphasis on flexibility, student-focused learning, and teacher autonomy in planning the learning content and the tests. Here, it is a reference to the manner in which the English teacher of MIN 11 Banjar implementing the curriculum through planning, instruction, and evaluating teaching and learning activities based on the principles of Independent Curriculum. These principles include differentiation, project-based learning, character education, and using the context and learning needs of students in teaching. Implementation also involves the implementation of learning modules, evaluation of learning, facilities, and adaptation to nature of students as outlined in the curriculum policy.

### **C. Research Questions**

Based on the problems described in the research background, the researcher decided to explore 3 research questions, as follows:

1. How is the cognitive readiness of English teacher in implementing Independent Curriculum at school?
2. What challenges does the English teacher face in implementing the Independent Curriculum?

### **D. Objectives of Study**

According to the research questions, the research aims to analyze:

- a. To describe the readiness of English teacher in implementing Independent Curriculum at school
- b. To find out the challenges of English teacher's readiness to implementing the Independent Curriculum at school.

### **E. Significance of Study**

This research would provide useful information for teacher and researcher about teacher readiness to implement the independent curriculum, and the challenges faced by teacher.

1. For English teachers, it helps teachers understand their cognitive readiness in applying the Independent Curriculum and shows what challenges they might face, such as creating modules, choosing learning materials, and making assessments.
2. For Future Researchers. This research can be a reference for others who want to study teacher readiness in different areas, schools, or subjects.

For School, the findings help schools know how to support teachers better, such as by giving time, mentoring, or teacher group discussions (like KKG).