

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

A. Background of Study

Curriculum is a teaching and learning program that take place in formal contexts. A curriculum can refer to a system, such as a national curriculum, an institution, such as a school curriculum, or even a specific school. Curriculum theory has four dimensions: goals or objectives, content or subject matter, methods or processes, and evaluation or assessment, (Scott 2001). Moreover, Prideaux (2003) emphasizes that the curriculum encompasses planned learning experiences, values, and beliefs about what students should know. Based on the explanations above, The curriculum is a collection of plans and agreements regarding the goals, subject matter, and instructional resources, as well as the methods employed to serve as guidance for the execution of learning activities to meet specific educational objectives.

According to the official website of the Directorate of Teacher and Education Personnel for Primary Education, the Indonesian Ministry of Education and Culture, Research, and Technology officially released the Independent Learning Curriculum (Kurikulum Merdeka Belajar) In 2022. Before it officially released, the minister of education and culture, Nadiem Makarim announced the Independent Learning Curriculum in 2020. The

curriculum framework was designed to empower schools to have more control over what they teach and how they teach it. It is aimed to promote a more student-centered and competency-based approach to education. According to the Indonesian Ministry of Education and Culture (2022), Independent Learning Curriculums a curriculum with different intracurricular learning where the material will be more ideal so that students have plenty of time to explore topics to develop skills. Teachers have the opportunity to select several instructional tools to personalize instruction to meet students' needs and interests. Furthermore, projects to improve character of Pancasila students are designed on specific themes selected by the government. Because the project is not aimed at accomplishing specific learning attainment objectives, it is unrelated to subject content. Moreover, as the new curriculum, there are not many studies related to Independent Learning curriculum, especially in advantages and challenges of Independent Learning curriculum. In the Qur'an, Al-Baqarah verse 164 Allah the Almighty mentions that:

إِنَّ فِي خَلْقِ السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ وَاخْتِلَافِ اللَّيْلِ وَالنَّهَارِ وَالْفُلْكِ الَّتِي

تَجْرِي فِي الْبَحْرِ بِمَا يَنْفَعُ النَّاسَ وَمَا أَنْزَلَ اللَّهُ مِنَ السَّمَاءِ مِنْ

مَاءٍ فَأَحْيَا بِهِ الْأَرْضَ بَعْدَ مَوْتِهَا وَبَثَّ فِيهَا مِنْ كُلِّ دَابَّةٍ

وَتَصْرِيْفِ الرِّيْحِ وَالسَّحَابِ الْمُسَخَّرِ بَيْنَ السَّمَاءِ وَالْأَرْضِ

لآيَاتٍ لِّقَوْمٍ يَعْقِلُونَ

According to Shaykh Dr. Muhammad Sulaiman Al Asyqar, mudarris interpreter at the Islamic University of Madinahtruly, (there are) signs (of the oneness and greatness of Allah) for a people who think) Namely, all people of understanding know that everything that exists could not have been done in whole or in part by the worship of the unbelievers which includes the creation of the heavens and the earth, the change of day and night, the movement of ships in the sea, the rain that falls from the sky, the earth coming back to life with rain, the distribution of animals, and the movement of the wind, then whoever sees these things carefully and carries out his thoughts will undoubtedly be certain that what to do that is Allah Ta'ala.. From the verse above, there are so many big signs for humans to think about. People who want to understand then they have to think. And from those so many signs, humans have the freedom to choose how they want to learn. And by having the freedom to choose how they want to learn, human is expected to improve their knowledge and skills. This is in accordance with the concept of Independent Learning Curriculum, in the curriculum teachers are free to choose their material and methods in order to fulfill the students' competences. It means teachers are free to think which material and methods they should use in teaching activities.

And also from our prophet Muhammad peace be upon him, he said that:

قَالَ النَّبِيُّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ: كُنْ عَالِمًا أَوْ مُتَعَلِّمًا أَوْ مُسْتَمِعًا

أَوْ مُحِبًّا وَلَا تَكُنْ خَامِسًا فَتُهْلِكَ

(رَوَاهُ الْبَيْهَق)

According to the Indonesian Ulama Council, Rasul SAW ordered his people to become 'Alim (people of knowledge, teachers, instructors, ustad, kyai). If you can't do it, become a Muta'allimaan (a person who seeks knowledge, a student, a student, a santri) or a good listener (Mustami'an), at least become a Muhibban who loves knowledge, sympathizers of the Koran, donors to foundations, da'wah and educational institutions with wealth, energy, or mind, or supporting scientific assemblies. The Messenger of Allah emphasized that don't be the fifth person (Khoodisan), that is, don't be a teacher, student, listener, or lover of knowledge. Woe to this fifth group. By the hadiths above, human is obligated to be knowledgeable people, always looking for science, listening to lessons, or even people that love science. It means that human has to find a way to obtain knowledge in their way. They have to be creative to find ways to obtain more and more knowledge. In Independent Learning Curriculum, teachers should be creative in making their own lesson plans. In the making of the lesson plans they should teach, learn, and supervise their students to get the suitable teaching techniques for their students.

There are some previous studies that had discussed about Independent Learning Curriculum. First research, Lia Marlina et al., (2021) conducted research entitled "Improving The Competency of Elementary Teachers at Cileungsi in Preparing Merdeka Belajar Lesson Plan (RPP) Based on Characters and 21st Century Skills". The study focused on the

teachers and students at SDN Cinyosog 01 Cileungsi by training the teachers about one-sheet lesson plans based on Merdeka belajar. Two resources trained the teachers about presented material on Merdeka Belajar's Curriculum, Character Education, and 21st Century Skills. The second study was from Muhson (2022), in his research entitled "Discourse Analysis of Merdeka Belajar Curriculum Application in Madrasahs toward the Islamic Religious Education Learning System" which found that there shortcomings from Merdeka Belajar. This paper mostly focused on a Minimum Competency Assessment and Character Survey (Askomi Suka) given to students at the intermediate level, pupils could not perceive the knowledge that supports their skill abilities (grades 4, 8, and 11). Askomi Suka was primarily concerned about personality and character. Askomi Suka focused solely on general knowledge and attitude skills. It was good for public schools but not for vocational institutions since skill capabilities could not be observed. The third research was from Halitopo (2020), who conducted research entitled "Implementasi Merdeka Belajar Dalam Buku Teks Bahasa Inggris Untuk Smk", he researched an English textbook written by Utami Widiyanti et. al. with 220 pages and 15 chapters. The study found that most teachers that were given questionnaires agreed that the book was suitable for the student. The book was also well-structured, and the lesson was is integrated well.

Based on the previous studies above, the researchers researched different topics related to Independent Learning Curriculum. Therefore, The

researcher aims to analyze how the Independent Learning Curriculum benefits teachers and students. The researcher also intends to know what are the challenges for teachers.

B. Research Questions

Based on the background above, the research question of this research is formulated as follows:

1. What are the benefits of Independent Learning Curriculum for teachers and students?
2. What are the challenges of Independent Learning Curriculum for teachers?

C. Objectives of Study

Based on the statement of the problem above as follow:

1. To identify what are the benefits of Independent Learning Curriculum for teachers and students.
2. To identify what are the challenges of Independent Learning Curriculum for teachers.

D. Significance of Study

The results of this study are expected to provide good benefits and can give a contribution to language teaching and learning activity, among others, as follows:

1. Theoretically
 - a. The researcher expects this research to contribute to English education development to improve knowledge for either teachers or students.
 - b. This research will give good information related to the Independent Learning Curriculum.
2. Practically
 - a. For students: the research is expected to help the students improve their English competence through the Independent Learning Curriculum.
 - b. For the teacher: the research is expected to help other teachers who have the intention to implement the Independent Learning Curriculum during the teaching and learning process.
 - c. For researcher: The findings of this research are expected to be an appropriate reference for researchers who want to conduct similar research.

E. Definition of Key Terms

To avoid miss interpretation of this research, the researcher provides some terms related to the title as follows:

1. Independent Learning Curriculum

Independent Learning Curriculum refers to the Indonesian new curriculum. It is announced by the Ministry of Education, Culture, Research, and Technology (Kemendikburistek) in 2020. it is a policy for the development of the Independent Curriculum which was given to educational units as an additional option in the context of carrying out learning recovery during 2022-2024. In this study, the researcher focused on the advantages and challenges in implementing Independent Learning Curriculum.

2. Advantages

In this study, advantages refer to the benefits of the Independent Learning Curriculum. The researcher intends to find out the benefits of Independent Learning Curriculum.

3. Challenges

In this study, It refers to the problems that come because of the Independent Learning Curriculum in teaching and learning activities. The researcher intends to gain information about what are the challenges of Independent Learning Curriculum.