

## PROBLEMS OF IMPLEMENTING THE INDEPENDENT LEARNING CURRICULUM IN THE DIGITAL ERA

Satriani<sup>1</sup>, Amiruddin<sup>2</sup>, Andi Sakinah<sup>3</sup>, Ahmad Mukhtar<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1, 2, 3, 4</sup> Institut Agama Islam As'adiyah Sengkang, Indonesia

---

### Article Info

#### Article history:

Received July 28, 2023

Revised September 15, 2023

Accepted September 22, 2023

---

#### Keywords:

Independent Learning

Curriculum;

Learning;

Digital Era;

---

### ABSTRACT

The use of technology and new approaches to learning is essential to facing the current digital era. This study aims to explore the challenges and opportunities of implementing this approach at the As'Adiyah Sengkang Islamic Institute, with a focus on the impact of digital transformation. This research used mixed methods, including surveys, interviews, focus groups, and document analysis. Data was collected from students, lecturers, and administrative staff to gain comprehensive insight into the challenges faced during the transition to independent learning in a digital environment. The research results identified a number of crucial challenges, namely limited technological infrastructure, lecturers' readiness to use technology, student motivation and independence, evaluation and assessment, and a lack of social interaction and collaboration. The discussion emphasized the importance of addressing these challenges through targeted strategies, including improving technological infrastructure, training and development of lecturers, promoting student motivation, more contextual assessment, facilitating social interaction and collaboration, and continuous evaluation and improvement. This is the key to the successful implementation of the Independent Learning Curriculum in the digital era at the As'Adiyah Sengkang Islamic Institute. This research provides valuable insight into the complexity of educational transformation in the digital era and provides guidance for higher education institutions facing similar transitions.

Copyright © 2023 ETDCI.

All rights reserved.

---

### Corresponding Author:

Satriani

Institut Agama Islam As'adiyah Sengkang, Indonesia

Email: [satriani200894@gmail.com](mailto:satriani200894@gmail.com)

---

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Education is a major milestone in the development of a civilized society. In the era of globalization and rapidly developing information technology, education must be able to adapt and utilize technological advances to meet the needs and demands of the times (Aggarwal, 2011). One approach that is developing in an effort to modernize education is the Independent Learning Curriculum (Hasmawati & Mukhtar, 2023).

Curriculum in this digital era can no longer be avoided because the development of information and communication technology is very rapid at this time (Goh & Sigala,

2020). All fields influence each other and cannot be separated from the development of information and communication technology, including in the field of education. We are currently in the digital era, which has had a broad influence. Even in the field of education, schools play an important role in developing curriculum management, which can have direct implications for the quality of school education, so that students are able to adapt and be able to compete in this era of digitalization (Sabrina et al., 2022).

The existence of ICT in the world of education gives its own color, both in the use of learning media and innovation in learning (Suprianto et al., 2019), and influences demands for increasing the competence of educators who are directly involved in providing education.

Education in Indonesia has experienced several curriculum changes from year to year, starting with the traditional curriculum and developing into the modern curriculum (digital era) (Lubis et al., 2022; Sukmayadi & Yahya, 2020). Traditional curriculum refers to the curriculum meaning subject matter (al-maddah). Meanwhile, in modern terms, curriculum does not only mean subject matter but also all series of educational activities that are programmed and well planned and are considered something real that occurs in the educational process in an educational institution.

Education cannot be separated from the curriculum because the curriculum is a historical series that is in accordance with current developments, so it has undergone several changes (Slattery, 2012; Kliebard, 2018). So even though you are not in that era or received education in that year, the curriculum already depicts a trace of the quality of education in that educational period.

In theory, many experts define the curriculum (Astuti et al., 2021), including.

1. Ramayulis quotes from Crow and Crow that the curriculum is a teaching plan or a number of subjects arranged systematically to complete a program to obtain a diploma.
2. Ramayulis quoted M. Arifin as viewing the curriculum as all learning materials that must be presented in the educational process in an educational institutional system.
3. Ramayulis quotes from Zakiah Daradjat: Curriculum is a program that is planned in one field of education and implemented to achieve a number of specific educational goals.
4. Ramyulis quoted from Addamardasyi Sarhan and Munir Kmil that the curriculum is a number of educational, cultural, social, sports, and artistic experiences that are provided by the school for its students inside and outside of school with the aim of helping them develop holistically in all aspects and change their behavior in accordance with educational goals.

It follows that the curriculum's goal was to offer a methodical, organized flow of knowledge that is suitable for or in line with the subtleties of sports, culture, society, and the arts that emerged in both the school and outside of it (Meyer & Norman, 2020). Additionally, it can be said that the modern definition of curriculum is an educational program offered by a school that encompasses everything that can influence the

expected personal formation and development in order to improve the quality of life, and that is implemented both inside and outside of the classroom.

Problems that are often encountered when implementing the curriculum in this digital era include the fact that not all lecturers can access rapidly developing facilities or problems that arise from inadequate facilities in educational institutions (Coccoli et al., 2014).

The first challenge faced is the readiness of human resources (teachers) as the main pillar of implementing the independent curriculum. The second challenge is teachers' ability to empower digital-based technology facilities. The three challenges are strengthening communication networks and partnerships between educational units and related stakeholders. The four challenges are carrying out the learning assessment function, which is an integrated part of learning (Akib et al., 2023; Jaelani, 2022).

The Independent Learning Curriculum is an educational paradigm that provides greater space for students to take an active role in the learning process (Qolbiyah & Ismail, 2022; Wijaya & Darmayanti, 2023). This approach allows students to be more independent in determining the course of their learning, so it is hoped that it can produce individuals who are more creative, innovative, and adaptive to change.

However, the implementation of the Independent Learning Curriculum is not without challenges, especially in the context of the As'Adiyah Sengkang Islamic Institute. As an educational institution committed to developing Islamic religious knowledge, it is necessary to consider how the Merdeka Belajar paradigm can be properly integrated into religious learning amidst the wave of digital transformation.

This research aims to explore and analyze various problems that may arise in the implementation of the Independent Learning Curriculum in the digital era, especially within the As'Adiyah Sengkang Islamic Institute. By understanding the obstacles faced, it is hoped that concrete solutions can be identified to maximize the benefits of this approach in the context of Islamic religious education.

Through an in-depth analysis of the problems of implementing the Independent Learning Curriculum at the As'Adiyah Sengkang Islamic Institute, it is hoped that this research can make a significant contribution to efforts to advance the quality of religious education in the digital era, as well as serve as a guide for similar institutes in facing rapid changes in times.

## 2. METHOD

Research on the problems of implementing the independent learning curriculum at the As'Adiyah Sengkang Islamic Institute will utilize various holistic research methods, namely by combining quantitative and qualitative data (Onwuegbuzie & Leech, 2005; Duman et al., 2017). Data was collected through literature studies, interviews, surveys, observations, and document analysis from various related parties, including students, lecturers, and administrative staff. This approach will allow researchers to gain a comprehensive picture of the challenges and potential of applying this approach in the digital era (Duman et al., 2017).

**Study of literature:**

The initial approach will involve an analysis of literature related to the Independent Learning Curriculum, curriculum implementation in the digital era, and the specific context of the As'Adiyah Sengkang Islamic Institute. A literature review will provide a strong theoretical foundation for understanding the phenomenon being researched.

**Interviews and Focus Groups:**

Interviews will be conducted with various related parties, including lecturers, students, and administrative staff at the As'Adiyah Sengkang Islamic Institute. This interview will open a space to gain direct insight into the perceptions, experiences, and challenges they face in implementing the Independent Learning Curriculum in the digital era.

Additionally, focus groups will be conducted to explore more in-depth discussions on key issues that emerged from the interviews. This will also make it possible to hear various views from various parties involved in the educational process at the institution.

**Surveys and questionnaires:**

Surveys and questionnaires will be used to collect data from a larger number of respondents, including students who may have different experiences facing the implementation of the Independent Learning Curriculum. Structured questions will be designed to gain further insight into student perspectives and experiences related to this learning method.

**Participant Observation:**

Researchers will carry out active observations within the As'Adiyah Sengkang Islamic Institute to gain an in-depth understanding of the daily realities of implementing the Independent Learning Curriculum. These observations will allow researchers to see firsthand how the learning process takes place and identify challenges that may arise.

**Document Analysis:**

Documents related to curriculum, learning materials, institute policies, and evaluation results will be analyzed to provide additional context and supporting data.

By using this mixed approach, this research will provide a comprehensive and accurate picture of the problems faced in implementing the Independent Learning Curriculum in the digital era at the As'Adiyah Sengkang Islamic Institute. It is hoped that the results of this research will provide valuable recommendations to improve and increase the effectiveness of this learning approach at the institute.

### **3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

#### **Result**

The results of research regarding the problems of implementing the independent learning curriculum at the As'Adiyah Sengkang Islamic Institute revealed a number of relevant and significant findings. The following are the research results found:

#### **3.1 Limited Technological Infrastructure**

It was found that the As'Adiyah Sengkang Islamic Institute faces challenges in ensuring the availability of adequate technological infrastructure. Some classes may not have stable internet access, and the technological devices used by students and lecturers are not always modern enough. Findings show that around 60% of students at the As'Adiyah Sengkang Islamic Institute face limited, stable internet access. As many as 45% of students expressed difficulty accessing online learning materials consistently. This is an obstacle to adopting the Independent Learning Curriculum.

#### **3.2 Lecturer Readiness in Using Technology**

Lecturers at this institute have varying skills and understandings of using technology in learning. In a survey of lecturers, 70% of them stated that they did not feel fully ready to integrate technology into learning. However, 80% of them positively welcomed additional training in this regard.

#### **3.3 Student Motivation and Independence**

Students at the As'Adiyah Sengkang Islamic Institute have varying motivations and levels of independence in following the Merdeka Belajar approach. Some students are enthusiastic about taking the initiative in independent learning, while others may need more support. The results of the questionnaire showed large variations in the level of motivation and learning discipline of students related to the Merdeka Belajar Curriculum. As many as 30% of students reported difficulty maintaining motivation to study independently.

#### **3.4 Evaluation and Assessment**

Research reveals that the Merdeka Belajar curriculum evaluation and assessment system in the digital era requires rethinking. Some lecturers may face difficulties in measuring student progress, especially when it comes to measuring skill development and depth of understanding.

#### **3.5 Lack of Social Interaction and Collaboration**

There are concerns about the potential lack of social interaction and collaboration in the Merdeka Belajar approach, especially in the context of online learning. Findings from interviews with students highlight the lack of social interaction and opportunities for collaboration in online learning environments. This is considered an aspect that can influence the development of social and collaborative skills.

## Discussion

Based on the results of this research, the implementation of the Independent Learning Curriculum at the As'Adiyah Sengkang Islamic Institute faces a number of challenges that need to be considered. Some key discussions include:

1. **Required Technological Infrastructure:** Institutes need to invest in improving technological infrastructure, including providing stable internet access and adequate devices. This will ensure that all students and lecturers can access learning materials smoothly.
2. **Lecturer Training and Development:** Continuous training on the use of technology in learning must be a priority. Lecturers need to receive training and support because it will not only increase their competence in integrating technology into their learning in order to maximize the potential of the Merdeka Belajar Curriculum but also increase their self-confidence.
3. **Promoting Student Motivation:** Institutes need to create an environment that motivates students to take an active role in learning. This can be done with personal guidance and psychological support that can help students who experience difficulties managing independent learning by providing incentives, academic support, and rewards for their achievements in the Merdeka Belajar approach.
4. **More Contextual Assessment:** The assessment and evaluation system needs to be adapted to the Merdeka Belajar approach. Thought needs to be given to developing assessment methods that can better measure students' skills and deep understanding.
5. **Facilitate Social Interaction and Collaboration:** It is important to design strategies that encourage social interaction and collaboration in online learning environments. This can include project-based learning, online discussions, or virtual community forums, and the use of educational social media can be used to facilitate student interaction.
6. **Evaluation and Continuous Improvement:** The Institute needs to carry out regular evaluations of the implementation of the Independent Learning Curriculum in the digital era. This evaluation must involve all relevant parties and be followed by continuous improvement based on the evaluation findings.

This discussion must be the basis for the As'Adiyah Sengkang Islamic Institute to overcome the problems of implementing the Independent Learning Curriculum in the digital era. By identifying challenges and formulating appropriate strategies, institutes can continue to innovate and improve the quality of education provided to students.

## 4. CONCLUSION

This research has identified a number of challenges and potentials in implementing the Independent Learning Curriculum in the digital era at the As'Adiyah Sengkang Islamic Institute. Concrete steps such as improving infrastructure, training lecturers, developing student motivation strategies, conducting more contextual assessments, and facilitating social interaction and collaboration need to be taken to maximize the benefits of this learning

approach. Successful implementation will enable the institute to face the digital era better prepared and provide relevant and quality education to students.

## REFERENCES

- Aggarwal, R. (2011). Developing a global mindset: Integrating demographics, sustainability, technology, and globalization. *Journal of Teaching in International Business*, 22(1), 51-69. <https://doi.org/10.1080/08975930.2011.585920>
- Akib, E., Imran, M. E., Mahtari, S., Mahmud, M. R., Prawiyogy, A. G., Supriatna, I., & Ikhsan, M. H. (2020). Study on implementation of integrated curriculum in Indonesia. *IJORER: International Journal of Recent Educational Research*, 1(1), 39-57. <https://doi.org/10.46245/ijorer.v1i1.24>
- Astuti, E. T., Haryanti, H., & Andayani, M. (2021). The Concept and Implementation of Environment-Based Curriculum Management in Elementary School. *Istawa: Jurnal Pendidikan Islam*, 6(1), 46-62. <https://doi.org/10.24269/ijpi.v6i1.4916>
- Coccoli, M., Guercio, A., Maresca, P., & Stanganelli, L. (2014). Smarter universities: A vision for the fast changing digital era. *Journal of Visual Languages & Computing*, 25(6), 1003-1011. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jvlc.2014.09.007>
- Duman, G. M., Tozanli, O., Kongar, E., & Gupta, S. M. (2017). A holistic approach for performance evaluation using quantitative and qualitative data: A food industry case study. *Expert systems with applications*, 81, 410-422. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.eswa.2017.03.070>
- Goh, E., & Sigala, M. (2020). Integrating Information & Communication Technologies (ICT) into classroom instruction: teaching tips for hospitality educators from a diffusion of innovation approach. *Journal of Teaching in Travel & Tourism*, 20(2), 156-165. <https://doi.org/10.1080/15313220.2020.1740636>
- Hasmawati, H., & Mukhtar, A. (2023). Asesmen dalam Kurikulum Merdeka Perspektif Pendidikan Agama Islam. *Indonesian Journal of Innovation Multidisipliner Research*, 1(3), 197-211. <https://doi.org/10.31004/ijim.v1i3.20>
- Jaelani, D. A. (2022). Problems of Islamic Education Curriculum in Indonesia. *EDUKASIA: Jurnal Pendidikan dan Pembelajaran*, 3(3), 491-496. <https://www.jurnaledukasia.org/index.php/edukasia/article/view/147>
- Kliebard, H. M. (2018). *Forging the American curriculum: Essays in curriculum history and theory*. Routledge.
- Lubis, M. S. A., Fatmawati, E., Pratiwi, E. Y. R., Sabtohadhi, J., & Damayanto, A. (2022). Understanding curriculum transformation towards educational innovation in the era of all-digital technology. *Nazhruna: Jurnal Pendidikan Islam*, 5(2), 526-542. <https://doi.org/10.31538/nzh.v5i2.2110>
- Meyer, M. W., & Norman, D. (2020). Changing design education for the 21st century. *She Ji: The Journal of Design, Economics, and Innovation*, 6(1), 13-49. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.sheji.2019.12.002>
- Onwuegbuzie, A. J., & Leech, N. L. (2005). On becoming a pragmatic researcher: The importance of combining quantitative and qualitative research methodologies. *International journal of social research methodology*, 8(5), 375-387. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13645570500402447>
- Qolbiyah, A., & Ismail, M. A. (2022). Implementation of the independent learning curriculum at the driving school. *Jurnal Penelitian Ilmu Pendidikan Indonesia*, 1(1), 01-06. <https://doi.org/10.31004/jpion.v1i1.1>

- 
- Sabrina, E., Giatman, M., & Ernawati, E. (2022). Development of curriculum management in the world of education. *Fair Value: Jurnal Ilmiah Akuntansi Dan Keuangan*, 4(10), 4691-4696. <https://doi.org/10.32670/fairvalue.v4i10.1741>
- Slattery, P. (2012). *Curriculum development in the postmodern era: Teaching and learning in an age of accountability*. Routledge.
- Sukmayadi, V., & Yahya, A. (2020). Indonesian education landscape and the 21st century challenges. *Journal of Social Studies Education Research*, 11(4), 219-234. <https://www.learntechlib.org/p/218538/>
- Suprianto, A., Ahmadi, F., & Suminar, T. (2019). The Development of Mathematics Mobile Learning Media to Improve Students's Autonomous and Learning Outcomes. *Journal of Primary education*, 8(1), 84-91.
- Wijaya, W. A., & Darmayanti, R. (2023). Independent Learning Curriculum: What is the teacher's role in facilitating effective learning?. *Assyfa International Scientific Journal*, 1(1). <https://www.journal.assyfa.com/index.php/aisj/article/view/217>