Influence of the Independent Learning Curriculum in Islamic Education Subjects

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Article Information	**Abstract**
	The discussion in this research concerns the influence of the Independent Learning Curriculum on Islamic Religious Education subjects. This research aims to describe the implementation of an Independent Learning Curriculum in Islamic Religious Education subjects and the supporting and inhibiting factors for Islamic Religious Education teachers in implementing the independent curriculum at a Public High School. The research approach used is qualitative with a case study method. The instruments used to collect data in this research are observation and interviews. Researchers observed the environment of a Public High School and the condition of the classes that were implementing the Independent Learning Curriculum. The research subjects were Islamic Religious Education subject teachers who had used the Independent Learning Curriculum for two periods in their classes. The research results show that implementing the Independent Learning Curriculum at Public High School was quite successful, with many supporting factors from the school, such as teachers and staff having high enthusiasm for holding Independent Learning Curriculum Implementation training. Apart from that, the facilities in the form of Chromebooks provided by the government to Public High Schools are also no less critical in realising the success of the Independent Learning Curriculum implementation. However, it does not deny that public high schools face inhibiting factors, such as human resources (HR) among students, which are still low, as evidenced by the school report cards, which are still yellow. Pembahasan dalam penelitian ini mengenai pengaruh Kurikulum Merdeka Belajar (KMB) pada mata pelajaran Pendidikan Agama Islam. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mendeskripsikan implementasi KMB pada mata pelajaran Pendidikan Agama Islam di sebuah SMA Negeri, serta

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mendeskripsikan faktor pendukung dan penghambat guru Pendidikan Agama Islam dalam menerapkan kurikulum mandiri di sebuah SMA Negeri. Pendekatan penelitian yang digunakan adalah kualitatif dengan metode studi kasus. Instrumen yang digunakan untuk mengumpulkan data dalam penelitian ini adalah observasi dan wawancara. Peneliti mengamati lingkungan SMA Negeri dan kondisi kelas yang melaksanakan KMB. Subjek penelitian adalah guru mata pelajaran Pendidikan Agama Islam yang telah menggunakan penerapan KMB selama dua periode di kelasnya. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa penerapan KMB di SMA Negeri cukup berhasil dengan banyak faktor pendukung dari pihak sekolah seperti guru dan staf memiliki antusiasme yang tinggi dalam mengadakan pelatihan Implementasi KMB. Selain itu, fasilitas berupa Chromebook yang diberikan pemerintah kepada SMA Negeri juga tidak kalah pentingnya dalam mewujudkan keberhasilan penyelenggaraan KMB. Namun tidak menampik kenyataan bahwa SMA Negeri menghadapi faktor penghambat, seperti Sumber Daya Manusia (SDM) siswa yang masih rendah, terbukti dengan nilai rapor sekolah yang masih berwarna kuning.

I. INTRODUCTION

The curriculum in Indonesia has undergone eight changes since the old order until 2023. The latest curriculum is the Independent Learning Curriculum (KMB), launched by the Minister of Education, Research and Technology (Kemendikbudristek), Nadiem Anwar Makarim, for the first time in 2022 and is in effect today (Harianto et al., 2021). The Independent Learning Curriculum is a learning plan modified to be intracurricular learning that is not monotonous, varied and interesting by prioritising essential topics (Ikhwan, 2019).

KMB is the latest effort in the evolution of Indonesian education, and it aims to improve the existing education system (Anwar et al., 2023). KMB aims to strengthen the character of education, form students who have Islamic religious competence and encourage the development of critical and creative abilities in understanding religious values.

According to Arum, (2018), education is a humanitarian problem, so the first target is humans. Islamic Religious Education Teachers are educators who transform their knowledge and knowledge towards students at school to make each student a person with traits, character and behaviour based on Islamic teachings' values (Ikhwan et al., 2019). The role of Islamic Religious Education Teachers is to produce a curriculum that is implemented optimally (Zainuddin,

2020). Teachers are a means of fostering higher potential and hope for future generations, so an exciting and innovative learning atmosphere is needed so that students' enthusiasm for learning is maintained in the future.

Pringgarata 1 Public High School is one of the high schools in the Pringgarata sub-district, Central Lombok, West Nusa Tenggara. Pringgarata 1 Public High School has applied to KMB since the 2022/2023 academic year. The 2023/2024 academic year is the second year for Pringgarata 1 Public High School to apply to the KMB.

Several previous researchers have studied the implementation of KMB. *First*, Rahayu et al., (2022) research aims to find out and obtain information about the implementation of KMB in driving schools. The research results found that the curriculum in driving schools has been implemented well, although there are still shortcomings and obstacles. The key to successfully implementing this curriculum lies in the readiness of school principals and teachers to make changes. *Second*, research by Vhalery et al., (2022) aims to provide a deeper understanding of Independent Learning-Free Campus (MBKM) for academics and practitioners in the field of education. The research results show that the MBKM curriculum has undergone design changes, emphasizing the learning process on and off campus through various activities and assessing the character of participants.

Third, turning to implementing KMB in specific subjects, Aminah & Sya'bani, (2023) found that implementing KMB in Islamic Religious Education subjects is in accordance with government policy, leading to increased student enthusiasm and creativity. *Fourth*, in a similar vein Qorni, (2023) tested the implementation of KMB in Islamic Religious Education and character learning, identifying four key stages in the process.

Fifth, research by Intan et al., (2023) aims to look at the implementation of educational management in the implementation of independent learning on independent campuses and the challenges of implementing the curriculum. The research results reveal that the implementation of MBKM curriculum management includes ease of opening new study programs, changes to the tertiary accreditation system, as well as the right to study for three semesters outside the

study program, with additional learning activities such as internships, village projects, etc.; *Sixth*, Azkiya, (2023) aims to find out how KMB is implemented in Islamic and Character Education subjects. The research results show that implementing Islamic and Character Education learning involves three activities: introduction, main points and conclusions, and P5 projects. Problems in implementing Islamic and Character Education learning include a need for educator participation in training and non-optimal learning differentiation.

Based on the description the researcher presented previously, there are several research gaps, so this research on the influence of Independent Curriculum Learning in Islamic Religious studies presents several novelties. 1) The factors inhibiting the implementation of KMB have not been explained so that researchers will describe this study; 2) The researcher will explain further the evaluation of the effectiveness of each stage of the implementation of KMB Learning, which still has shallow information; 3) Previous research has not focused on the concrete challenges faced by each school, so researchers will focus on challenges or obstacles in implementing KMB.

Based on this research gap, the researcher formulated two problems: 1) How is the implementation of KMB in Islamic Religious Education subjects at a Public High School? 2) What are the supporting and inhibiting factors for Islamic Religious Education teachers in implementing KMB at a Public High School? This study aims to describe the implementation of KMB in Islamic Religious Education subjects at a Public High School and the supporting and inhibiting factors for teachers in implementing KMB at a Public High School.

II. METHODS

This research is descriptive qualitative research with a case study approach. Qualitative research describes and analyses phenomena, cases, social activities, attitudes, beliefs, perceptions, or thoughts of groups or individuals (Nurjaman et al., 2022). Qualitative research is systematic research conducted to investigate or explore an object in a natural context, without any intervention or manipulation and without conducting hypothesis testing (Intan et al., 2023). This is descriptive

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research; it focuses on describing the characteristics of a population or phenomenon. The researchers take primary data, which means collecting directly from first-hand sources by the researcher (Saunders et al., 2019). The primary data sources are surveys, interviews, and observation experiments (Ishtiaq, 2019). Narrative Analysis is the data analysis technique that the researchers use, it examines stories and personal accounts to understand how people make sense of experiences. A case study by Creswell & Poth, (2017) is a qualitative approach that explores a specific case in an actual and current real-life situation. In case studies, one source is acceptable (Batubara et al., 2023). The resource person is an Islamic Religious Education teacher who teaches at Pringgarata 1 Public High School using KMB for two periods. The data needed in research is descriptive data, which aims to describe or explain existing phenomena, both natural phenomena and human engineering (Nurfuadi, 2020). Researchers conducted observations and interviews to search and collect data at Pringgarata 1 Public High School (Ikhwan, 2021; Syahrizal & Jailani, 2023).

III.   FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Implementation is the same word as application. Explains that implementation is a series of policy implementations towards specific target groups. Implementation aims to achieve policy objectives, this is supported by Yaelasari & Astuti, (2022) who explained the importance of implementation as a form of expressing ideas so that they can be applied towards a civilisation or more fundamental educational change, with the aim that education can produce innovative changes that are systematic, targeted and measurable. The opinion of Harianto et al., (2021) is that implementation is the implementation of ideas and thoughts that are well-planned and structured and have clear and measurable goals and achievements.

The term 'Curriculum' originally referred to a study program at a school or university, a concept first used by the Greeks in the Atlantic. In their context, it meant 'mileage' (Zainuddin, 2020). In the Indonesian educational context, the curriculum is a roadmap for the optimal achievement of academic goals

(Wulandari & Mustofa, 2023). According to Law no. 20 of 2003, the curriculum is a comprehensive set of plans and arrangements, including objectives, content, learning materials, and methods, serving as a guide for learning activities to achieve national education goals (UU No. 20, 2003).

Implementing the Independent Learning (*Merdeka Belajar*) policy aims to accelerate the achievement of national education targets by improving the quality of human resources so that Indonesia can compete with other countries. Students' good character and rational thinking abilities, especially in terms of literacy and numeracy, reflect the competency and quality of human resources. Independent learning for students is enough to help teachers understand their students so that supervision is sufficient, thus providing benefits for school principals, teachers, parents, and local governments. There are two main benefits to this. First, collaboration between school principals, teachers, parents, and local governments can produce effective, efficient, and timely solutions to overcoming educational situations, challenges, and problems in various schools, especially in improving student learning quality. Second, this provides a sense of ownership and responsibility to school principals, teachers, parents and local governments in managing education in their area.

The Independent Learning Curriculum (KMB), a policy from the Ministry of Education and Culture of the Republic of Indonesia, is a beacon of hope for the future of education. It aims to promote students' independent thinking abilities, a skill that is becoming increasingly valuable in the modern world. For teachers, this essence of freedom of thought has great significance. If teachers do not teach independently, students are less likely to develop independent thinking skills. Teachers also have specific goals from the government, such as certification and management. Students will find it challenging to create flexibility in this context because they are limited to assessments. However, through KMB, students can explore their potential according to their talents and interests because each student has different abilities in absorbing the knowledge taught. This policy opens up new opportunities for teachers to manage various aspects of education,

from registration to final school exams. It paves the way for a brighter future for our students.

Even though the KMB was declared official only one year ago, this curriculum has been trialled in 2,500 driving schools in Indonesia. According to the Ministry of Education and Culture's policy, KMB is not carried out simultaneously but in stages depending on the school's readiness. Approximately 150,000 driving schools have implemented KMB, from kindergarten, elementary, and middle to high school.

Implementing KMB (*Kurikulum Merdeka Belajar*) is the main focus of Pringgarata 1 Public High School educational programs, including Islamic Religious Education subjects. In this implementation analysis, researchers focus on two main aspects: the implementation aspect of planning and implementing KMB in Islamic Religious Education subjects and aspects of influencing factors.

The planning process has undergone a significant transformation in implementing KMB learning in Islamic Religious Education subjects. Several indications show this: (1) Islamic Religious Education teachers at Pringgarata 1 Public High School carefully prepare annual, semester, weekly and daily programs, as well as planning for remedial and enrichment sessions; (2) This planning process begins with an analysis of the academic calendar, which then guides the preparation of Learning Outcomes (CP), Learning Objectives (TP), and Learning Objective Flow (ATP) by the KMB; (3) The teaching module previously known as the Learning Implementation Plan (RPP) has also been modified to be more concise; (4) Learning completion standards, or Learning Objective Completion Criteria (KKTP), are an integral part of this planning, ensuring that learning is structured and following established standards.

The learning plans prepared by Islamic Religious Education teachers in the context of KMB implementation at Pringgarata 1 Public High School are generally relevant to the implementation of learning carried out by teachers. Some indications of the implementation of KMB by teachers are illustrated in several essential points: 1) Islamic Religious Education learning implementation has adopted learning implementation that applies an intensive student-centred approach. By implementing this approach, students become more active in

learning; 2) Islamic Religious Education teachers at Pringgarata 1 Public High School start each class with a non-cognitive diagnostic assessment. This activity helps teachers understand the profile of each student before the learning material begins. This approach emphasises adapting teaching to student needs and characteristics to create an inclusive learning environment; 3) The implementation of KMB in Islamic Religious Education subjects at Pringgarata 1 Public High School has been able to implement differentiated learning, where teachers map student competencies into three categories: audio, visual, and kinesthetic, so this allows teachers to understand the needs and characteristics of each student and becomes the basis for creating learning that is responsive to the diversity of students; 4) In the context of KMB, it is essential to note that the application of more varied learning methods such as project-based learning (PjBL) has become more prominent. The PjBL learning method encourages students' active participation in learning, involves them in direct observation and research, and provides direct experience of the impact of lesson material and this aims to prevent boredom and provide motivation for students to learn more interactively and productively; 5) In learning evaluation, the use of various assessment methods has become common practice. From cognitive diagnostic assessments to formative and summative assessments, Islamic Religious Education teachers at Pringgarata 1 Public High School have carefully evaluated students' understanding and achievement after the learning process. Additionally, individual, group, and project-based learning assignments have been provided to students to support more holistic learning to support the development and success of each student in the learning process.

Wahyudin et al., in the Independent Learning Curriculum (KMB) Academic Study, stated that the KMB formulated 6 (six) dimensions of the Pancasila Student Profile. Pringgarata 1 Public High School students were observed trying to practice the six Pancasila Student Profiles: 1) Have faith, be devoted to God Almighty, and have noble character. The majority of religions practised in this environment is Islam. This school provides a prayer room for duha and zuhur prayers in the congregation; 2) Working together can be seen in school cleaning activities, which

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are carried out once a week. Cooperation can also be seen when working together to complete group assignments in class; 3) Critical Reasoning, due to the implementation of the KMB, which outlines a student centre, students at Pringgarata 1 Public High School are required to think critically; 4) Global diversity; 5) Independent, apart from using textbooks that have been determined by Islamic Religious Education teachers, students at Pringgarata 1 Public High School often look for learning resources in the school library and outside school. They can also observe the surrounding environment when Islamic Religious Education assignments require field studies; and 6) Creative (Idris, 2023; Wahyudin et al., 2024).

KMB proposes three main principles: 1) development of competence and character, 2) flexibility, and 3) focusing on essential content. Pringgarata 1 Public High School is slowly implementing these three principles over the following two periods. The curriculum needs to teach students not only knowledge concepts but also equip them with practical skills and encourage the development of positive values (Wahyudin et al., 2024). This aims to ensure students have a deep understanding and valuable skills and attitudes that reflect good character. Pringgarata 1 Public High School has provided knowledge, practical skills, and support in developing positive values within the school environment.

The main aim of the flexible principle is to make the curriculum feel more relevant to current conditions OECD in Wahyudin et al., (2024). Being adaptable also means being responsive to changes in the environment and providing varied learning to suit local situations and needs and individual students. Flexibility refers to changing several PAI teacher administration systems, as previously explained, starting from the planning process to evaluation.

Reducing curriculum density can help reduce disparities in learning quality (Baharuddin, 2021). That is why KMB has the principle of focusing teachers and students only on essential material. The Pringgarata 1 Public High School teacher said he had implemented this principle in his class. The results of implementing KMB in Islamic Religious Education subjects at Pringgarata 1 Public High School show tlied has positively impacted the implementation. Improves the quality and

relevance of Islamic Religious Education learning by encouraging teaching that is more inclusive and responsive to student needs and motivating students' active participation in the learning process.

Implementing KMB at Pringgarata 1 Public High School must be supported by supporting and inhibiting factors that influence Islamic Religious Education teachers in carrying out their duties. Significant supporting factors in implementing KMB include facility support and training provided by the school. Pringgarata 1 Public High School has provided various workshops, upgrades, and training related to implementing KMB to teachers, including Islamic Religious Education teachers. This helps them understand the concepts and objectives of KMB well and improves their skills in designing and implementing learning according to this approach. Apart from that, there is active collaboration between the teaching and curriculum development teams, including the deputy principal for curriculum; this team has provided additional support in implementing the KMB. Discussion and deliberation between Islamic Religious Education teachers is also an essential means of updating and adapting the curriculum plan (CP) according to the specific needs of schools and student characteristics.

The positive influences of an independent learning curriculum can be seen in the table below.

Table 1. Positive influence of the independent learning curriculum

Positive Influence	Description	Example
Enhanced Critical Thinking Skills	Students develop the ability to analyze and interpret religious texts independently, fostering a more profound understanding.	Students engage in debates on theological concepts, analyze different interpretations of Quranic verses, and write essays critiquing Islamic jurisprudence.
Personalized Learning Paces	Independent learning allows students to progress independently, ensuring they fully grasp complex religious concepts.	Students use online platforms to complete lessons at their speed, take quizzes to assess their understanding, and revisit topics as needed.
Improved Self-Discipline and Motivation	Students cultivate self-discipline and intrinsic motivation to study by taking responsibility for their learning.	Students set their study schedules, create personal goals for mastering specific religious texts, and maintain learning journals to track their progress.
Greater Engagement	Students can explore topics	Students choose research

and Interest	of personal interest within Islamic studies, increasing their overall engagement and enthusiasm.	projects on topics like Islamic art, the history of early Muslim communities, or modern Islamic thought and present their findings.
Development of Research Skills	Independent learning encourages students to conduct their research, enhancing their investigative and scholarly abilities.	Students use library and online resources to research Islamic philosophy, compare scholarly articles, and create annotated bibliographies for their projects.

Besides supporting factors, several inhibiting factors must be overcome when implementing KMB. One is the limited human resources of Islamic Religious Education teachers and students' lack of enthusiasm at school, reflected in the yellow school education report cards. This evaluation shows that there is still a need to improve the quality of teacher human resources by receiving KMB seminars or training to support more optimal implementation of KMB in the future.

Another obstacle Islamic Religious Education teachers face is the need for more time to prepare teaching modules and carry out learning processes per the KMB. Efforts to resolve this time constraint involve optimising free time, where teachers ensure that there are no additional burdensome tasks so they can focus on preparing teaching modules and lessons.

Challenges arise when introducing and applying information and communication technology (ICT) in learning. Even though Pringgarata 1 Public High School has obtained several new facilities, such as around 100 units of Chromebooks which have been integrated with learning IDs, further efforts are still needed to ensure that Islamic Religious Education teachers can utilise this technology effectively in supporting the learning process under the KMB.

The negative influences of an independent learning curriculum can be seen in the table below.

Table 2. Negative impact of independent learning curriculum

Negative Influence	Description	Example
Lack of Guidance and Misinterpretation	They may misinterpret complex reliability to understand without proper guidance, leading to misunderstandings.	Students studying Quranic verses with teacher support might develop correct theological beliefs or practices.
Decreased Social Interaction and Collaboration	Independent learning can limit opportunities for group discussions and collaborative	Students miss out on group discussions, debates, and peer feedback sessions that provide

	learning, which are essential for deeper understanding.	diverse perspectives and deeper insights.
Uneven Learning Outcomes	Students with varying levels of motivation and self-discipline may experience inconsistent educational outcomes.	Some students may fall behind or skip important topics due to a lack of structure, resulting in gaps in their knowledge.
Overwhelming Responsibility	Managing their learning can overwhelm some students, leading to stress and burnout.	Students struggle to balance independent study with other responsibilities, leading to anxiety and decreased performance.
Limited Access to Resources	Independent learning often requires access to a wide range of resources, which may only be equally available to some students.	Students in resource-limited environments may need access to necessary books, online materials, or knowledgeable mentors.

Several concrete steps need to be taken to overcome the current inhibiting factors, such as [lack of teacher training and coordination issues]. One way is to increase investment in the training and professional development of Islamic Religious Education teachers, especially in improving skills in designing learning based on KMB and utilising ICT in the learning process. Apart from that, there is also a need for better coordination between various related parties, including schools, education offices and other stakeholders, in supporting the implementation of KMB at Pringgarata 1 Public High School.

By overcoming these inhibiting factors and strengthening existing supporting factors, the implementation of KMB Pringgarata 1 Public High School can run more effectively and positively impact the Islamic Religious Education subject and the entire educational process at the school.

IV. CONCLUSION

Implementing KMB at Pringgarata 1 Public High School involves transforming the learning planning process, responsive implementation, and holistic learning evaluation. These steps aim to improve the quality and relevance of PAI learning. The implementation of KMB at Pringgarata 1 Public High School has positively impacted Islamic Religious Education learning with several existing supporting factors, namely encouraging more inclusive teaching, responsive to student needs, and motivating students in the learning process. However, several inhibiting factors need to be overcome in implementing KMB, such as limited human

resources in schools, lack of time available to prepare all administration, minimal time for implementing learning processes by KMB, and challenges in introducing and applying ICT in learning. Therefore, there is a need for concrete steps to increase investment in the training and professional development of Islamic Religious Education teachers, as well as better coordination between various related parties, in supporting the implementation of KMB at Pringgarata 1 Public High School.

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