

IMPLEMENTATION OF THE INDEPENDENT CURRICULUM IN CHARACTER FORMATION OF GRADE IV STUDENTS AT SD NEGERI 1 BAKAUHENI

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Abstract

This research is motivated by the inconsistency of the students' character expected with the implementation of the independent curriculum. This is due to differences in perception in accepting changes in the curriculum implemented. This research was carried out at SD N 1 Bakauheni in the 2024/2025 school year. This study aims to describe how the implementation, impact and problems of the independent curriculum in shaping the character of grade IV students of SD N 1 Bakauheni. This study uses a qualitative descriptive method. The data sources in this study are school principals, curriculum administrators and educators. The research subjects are class IV students. The data collection techniques in this study are interviews, observations, and documentation. The data analysis technique in this study is the Miles and Huberman interactive analysis odel. The results of the study show that the implementation of the independent curriculum at SD Negeri 1 Bakauheni shows a positive impact on the formation of the character of grade IV students through a student-centered learning approach, the integration of the Pancasila Student Profile values, and the implementation of the P5 project. Despite facing challenges such as educator readiness, limited resources, and suboptimal parental participation, the school remains committed to continuous improvement. Overall, the independent curriculum is an important foundation in creating a holistic, fun, and meaningful learning ecosystem for strengthening students' character.

Article History

Submitted: 2 September 2025

Received: 24 January 2026

Published: 30 April 2026

Keywords: *character, independent curriculum, students, character formation.*

A. INTRODUCTION

Education undeniably plays a pivotal and strategic role in shaping and determining the overall progress and development of a nation within the global arena. Through the comprehensive and multifaceted approach of education, it becomes possible for students to cultivate and optimally develop their inherent potential across various domains, which include cognitive, affective, and psychomotor aspects of learning and personal growth. Law Number 20 of 2003, which outlines the framework of the National Education System, emphasizes the fundamental functions of education in not only developing individual abilities but also in shaping the character and fostering the civilization of a nation that is dignified and possesses integrity. This legislative framework clearly indicates that the significance of education extends beyond mere academic achievements; it also encompasses the

crucial dimension of character formation among students, which is essential for their holistic development.

In alignment with the evolving demands and complexities of contemporary society, the educational curriculum in Indonesia has undergone a series of transformative changes aimed at adapting to the

diverse needs and expectations of the community at large. The most recent modification to this curriculum is the introduction of the Independent Curriculum, which grants educators a degree of flexibility and autonomy to select teaching tools and methodologies that best suit the unique needs and characteristics of their students. This innovative curriculum places a strong emphasis on diverse, student-centered learning experiences within the intracurricular framework and actively integrates the core values embodied in the Pancasila Student Profile through the dedicated Pancasila Student Profile Strengthening Project (P5). Consequently, it is anticipated that this curriculum will not only facilitate the development of essential competencies among students but also reinforce the process of character formation, which is vital for their overall growth and development.

Elementary education, being the foundational stage of a child's learning journey, holds a crucial responsibility in instilling the fundamental principles and values that underpin the character of students as they embark on their educational paths. However, in practical terms, the implementation of the Independent Curriculum within the school environment continues to encounter a myriad of challenges, including but not limited to constraints related to limited facilities, the varying levels of readiness and preparedness of educators, as well as the suboptimal participation and involvement of parents in the educational process. These challenges have the potential to significantly affect and impede the success of initiatives aimed at fostering the character of students, thereby raising concerns regarding the overall effectiveness of the curriculum in achieving its intended objectives.

In light of these prevailing conditions and challenges, this study has been meticulously conducted with the aim of providing a comprehensive description of the implementation of the Independent Curriculum in the context of character formation specifically for grade IV students at SD Negeri 1 Bakauheni. Furthermore, the study seeks to analyze the various impacts and challenges that schools encounter in the execution of this curriculum, thus providing a holistic understanding of its efficacy. The primary objectives of this research endeavor are threefold: (1) to thoroughly describe how the Independent Curriculum is implemented in the character formation of grade IV students at SD Negeri 1 Bakauheni; (2) to analyze the impact that the implementation of this curriculum has on the overall character development of the students; and (3) to identify and articulate the various problems and challenges that arise during the implementation process of the Independent Curriculum in elementary school settings.

From a theoretical perspective, this research is anticipated to make a significant contribution to the broader discourse surrounding the development of education, particularly in relation to the effective implementation of the Independent Curriculum as it pertains to character formation in students. On a practical level, the findings and outcomes of this research can serve as a valuable reference resource for school principals, educators, and stakeholders in the field of education, aiding them in their endeavors to enhance the quality of learning environments and effectively nurture the character of their students. Education is undeniably vital in fostering potential and shaping the character of students, and the emergence of the

Independent Curriculum is viewed as a timely solution to address the existing imbalance between the mastery of hard skills and soft skills within educational institutions (Sujarwo, 2013). By facilitating a more flexible and adaptable approach to learning, the Independent Curriculum provides students with the invaluable opportunity to cultivate their competencies while simultaneously reinforcing character values that align with the Pancasila Student Profile (Rahmadayanti & Hartoyo, 2022). This research has been undertaken with the specific purpose of elucidating the implementation, impacts, and challenges associated with the Independent Curriculum in the context of character formation for grade IV students at SD Negeri 1 Bakauheni.

B. RESEARCH METHODS

This research endeavor employs a qualitative descriptive methodology, meticulously designed with the overarching goal of elucidating the processes and strategies involved in the implementation of the Independent Curriculum, specifically with regard to its role in shaping and nurturing the character development of students. The investigative activities were systematically conducted at SD Negeri 1 Bakauheni during the academic year spanning 2024 to 2025, thereby ensuring that the findings are relevant to contemporary educational practices. The primary subjects of this research consisted of fourth-grade students, who provided critical insights into their experiences, while the research informants included key educational figures such as the school principal, the vice principal responsible for curriculum development, and the educators teaching the fourth-grade cohort.

Data for this comprehensive study were meticulously gathered through a combination of structured interviews, detailed observations, and thorough documentation, ensuring a multifaceted understanding of the subject matter. The analysis of the collected data adhered to the Miles & Huberman interactive framework, which encompasses three distinct yet interconnected stages: data reduction, where unnecessary information is filtered out; data presentation, where the relevant information is organized and displayed in a comprehensible manner; and conclusion drawing, which involves synthesizing the findings into coherent insights (Mulyasa, 2023). To bolster the credibility and reliability of the data obtained, the research incorporated rigorous validation processes, specifically employing triangulation of both sources and techniques to cross-verify the information and ensure its accuracy.

C. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Research Results

The comprehensive analysis derived from the study, which encompasses a combination of interviews, detailed observations, and thorough documentation, clearly illustrates that the adoption and execution of the Independent Curriculum at SD Negeri 1 Bakauheni have engendered a remarkably positive influence on the development of character among the

fourth-grade students. The strategic implementation of project-based learning, specifically through the Pancasila Student Profile Strengthening Project (P5), has evidently encouraged students to become more engaged, cultivate their independence, and enhance their ability to collaborate effectively within group settings. The character traits that are noticeably emerging through this educational framework include, but are not limited to, religious values, a strong sense of discipline, a pronounced sense of responsibility, an ethic of mutual cooperation, and a heightened sense of independence. In this learning environment, teachers assume the crucial role of facilitators, while students are afforded the necessary freedom to explore and develop their inherent potential through a variety of contextual and relevant activities.

The findings from both observations and interviews substantiate the notion that learning experiences structured around the Independent Curriculum approach are indeed capable of nurturing students' positive attitudes and behaviors in their everyday lives, both within the confines of the classroom and in their interactions outside of it. This significant transformation not only enhances the academic experience but also contributes to the holistic development of students as they navigate their educational journeys. Ultimately, the evidence gathered underscores the efficacy of the Independent Curriculum in fostering a well-rounded character development framework that benefits students on multiple levels. The results of the research can be summarized in the following table:

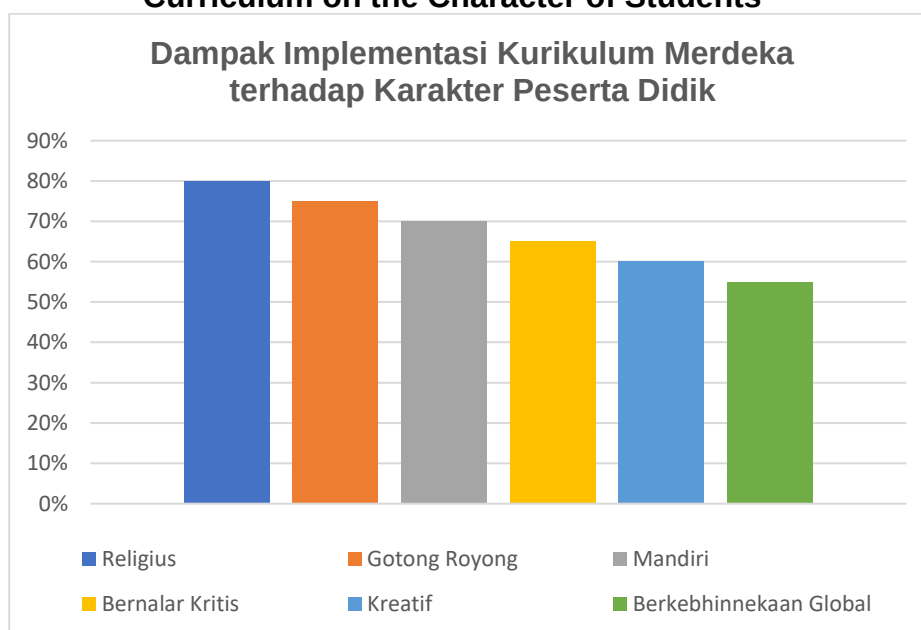
Table 1. Implementation of the Independent Curriculum in Shaping the Character of Students

Observed Aspects	Form of Implementation	Impact on Character
Learner-Centered Learning	Teachers use discussion methods, group work, and project exploration	Students are more active, confident, and independent
Integration of Pancasila Student Profiles	Religious values, mutual cooperation, and critical reasoning are included in learning activities	Religious, cooperative, and critical characters began to form
P5 Project	Anti-bullying, environmental, and local culture themes	Students show an attitude of caring, tolerance, and love for culture
Parental Participation	Support in school activities is still limited	The character of responsibility and discipline is not optimal

Moreover, the comprehensive analysis derived from the interviews conducted revealed that the majority of educators, including both teachers and principals, perceived the Independent Curriculum as being significantly more adaptable and conducive to diverse learning environments compared to the preceding curriculum framework; however, it is important to note that

various challenges still persist, particularly in relation to the accessibility of essential facilities, the preparedness and willingness of teachers to embrace this new approach, as well as the level of engagement and support from parents in the educational process. In order to provide a clearer understanding and visual representation of the findings from this research endeavor, the subsequent diagram illustrates the profound impact that the implementation of the Independent Curriculum has on the development and nurturing of character traits in students, specifically those enrolled in the fourth grade.

Diagram 1. The Impact of the Implementation of the Independent Curriculum on the Character of Students



Discussion

The findings derived from this comprehensive study elucidate that the execution and application of the Independent Curriculum can indeed yield a significantly favorable influence on the development and formation of students' character traits, highlighting the importance of educational frameworks in nurturing moral and ethical values. This assertion aligns harmoniously with the perspective presented by Mulyasa (2023), who articulates that the deployment of such a curriculum transcends the mere enhancement of students' academic knowledge, extending its impact to encompass the cultivation of positive attitudes and essential skills that are vital for their holistic development. The crucial integration of the Pancasila Student Profile into the educational process serves as a pivotal mechanism for the effective construction of character, ensuring that students not only acquire knowledge but also embody the values of religious devotion, communal cooperation, and individual independence that are essential in contemporary society. Empirical evidence suggests that the consistent incorporation of these values into daily classroom activities has demonstrably led to an increase in students' positive behavioral patterns, thereby fostering

an environment conducive to character growth. This observation is further corroborated by the research conducted by Rachmawati et al. (2022), which affirms that the principles underlying the Independent Curriculum are instrumental in nurturing qualities such as politeness, bravery, and self-reliance among students.

Moreover, the outcomes of this investigation resonate with the conclusions drawn by Yuliana Dwi Fatimah (2018), who posits that the effective integration of character education within elementary schools can be successfully achieved through a systematic approach that includes meticulous planning, diligent implementation, and thorough evaluation of educational practices. In a similar vein, at SD Negeri 1 Bakauheni, educators adeptly weave character values into every phase of the learning experience, thereby habituating students to exhibit behaviors that align with societal expectations and norms. Additionally, the current research fortifies the findings of Fauzi Latifah's (2018) study, which emphasizes that the regular practice of character-building activities, such as engaging in prayer, participating in collaborative group work, and maintaining discipline, constitutes a critical strategy for embedding moral values within students. The application of the Independent Curriculum at SD Negeri 1 Bakauheni underscores these foundational habits, which are consistently reinforced through the P5 framework, promoting an environment rich in character development. Furthermore, the insights gleaned from this study are in accordance with Saifudin's (2023) assertions, which highlight that the Independent Curriculum empowers educators with the autonomy to tailor their instructional strategies in alignment with the unique needs and individual characteristics of their students. This pedagogical freedom exercised by teachers at SD Negeri 1 Bakauheni, in selecting appropriate teaching tools and methods, consequently enhances the flexibility of the learning process, rendering it more student-centered and thereby contributing positively to the reinforcement of character values among learners.

The P5 initiative stands out as an exceptionally effective platform designed to cultivate essential character values in a manner that is both engaging and practical for students. Through a diverse array of activities that encompass vital themes such as anti-bullying initiatives and environmental conservation projects, this program actively stimulates students to engage meaningfully with their surroundings and develop a genuine sense of responsibility towards their environment. Nevertheless, the project faces significant challenges that hinder its full potential, including inadequate facilities, insufficient preparedness among educators, and a noticeable lack of support from parents, all of which represent critical obstacles that must be addressed in order to enhance the program's effectiveness. Consequently, this research substantiates the assertion that the implementation of the Independent Curriculum serves as a highly effective strategy for molding the character of students, particularly through a project-based learning methodology and the consistent integration of the values encapsulated in the Pancasila Student Profile. However, the results of the study also underscore the presence of considerable issues, including the constraints posed by limited infrastructure, the readiness of teachers to adapt to new

methodologies, and the suboptimal level of parental involvement, all of which impede progress. These challenges resonate with the observations made by Javanisia et al., who highlight the critical importance of time management, the enhancement of teachers' competencies, and the necessity for robust school support, all of which are essential to ensure that the implementation of the Independent Curriculum can proceed in a manner that is both effective and sustainable.

In a broader context, the implications of these findings serve to reinforce the validity of Howard Gardner's theory of Multiple Intelligences, which posits that education must be structured in such a way that it nurtures the potential of children in a holistic manner, addressing not only their academic capabilities but also their character development. The practical application of the Independent Curriculum at SD Negeri 1 Bakauheni stands as a compelling demonstration of the fact that character education can indeed be harmoniously integrated with cognitive learning processes, despite the ongoing need for collaborative support from various stakeholders to optimize its implementation and impact. The multifaceted approach taken by the P5 project not only enriches the educational experience but also lays the groundwork for a more compassionate and conscientious generation of students who are equipped to face the complexities of the modern world.

D. CONCLUSION

The execution of the Independent Curriculum at SD Negeri 1 Bakauheni has been observed to yield a significantly positive effect on the development of character traits among the fourth-grade students, fostering essential qualities that are crucial for their overall growth. Through the innovative approach of project-based learning combined with the thoughtful integration of the values inherent in the Pancasila Student Profile, students are able to cultivate attributes such as religious devotion, discipline, a strong sense of responsibility, collaborative spirit, and independence. Nevertheless, it is imperative to address various challenges that hinder the full potential of this curriculum, including the limitations posed by inadequate facilities, the preparedness and willingness of teachers to adapt, and the level of involvement from parents, all of which must be actively resolved with the backing of supportive school policies and continuous professional development for educators. In summary, the Independent Curriculum represents a vital cornerstone that can contribute significantly to the establishment of an engaging, comprehensive, and enriching learning environment for young learners in elementary education. The successful implementation of this curriculum necessitates a concerted effort from all stakeholders involved to ensure that the educational experience is not only effective but also resonates deeply with the students, making it both enjoyable and relevant to their lives. Ultimately, fostering such a holistic educational ecosystem will pave the way for students to thrive academically and personally, equipping them with the necessary skills and values to navigate their future endeavors.

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