

ANALYSIS OF THE DIFFICULTIES OF ELEMENTARY SCHOOL TEACHERS IN DEVELOPING INTEGRATED THEMATIC LEARNING IN THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE INDEPENDENT CURRICULUM

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Abstract

The implementation of the Independent Curriculum requires elementary school teachers to have the ability to design learning that is flexible, contextual, and oriented to the needs of students. In practice, the learning planning development process still faces various obstacles, especially in integrating learning objectives, materials, learning activities, assessments, and the use of learning media. This study aims to analyze various difficulties of elementary school teachers in developing learning planning in the implementation of the Independent Curriculum, especially in the context of integrated thematic learning. The research uses a qualitative approach with a literature study method. Data were obtained from various scientific articles, policy documents, and academic sources relevant to the learning planning and implementation of the Independent Curriculum, then analyzed descriptively through the process of identification, categorization, interpretation, and synthesis of findings. The results of the study show that teachers' difficulties are mainly related to understanding changes in the learning planning paradigm, aligning learning objectives with activities and assessments, organizing integrated learning, utilizing media and learning resources, and adjusting planning to the characteristics and needs of students. This complexity is strengthened by the limitations of pedagogical competence, learning resources, mentoring, and understanding of curriculum policies. Therefore, strengthening teacher competencies through continuous training, implementation assistance, collaboration between teachers, and the provision of relevant learning resources is needed to improve the quality of learning planning in the Independent Curriculum.

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A. INTRODUCTION

Education is one of the strategic instruments for developing human resources and achieving national educational goals. In Indonesia, education is directed toward developing students' potential, competencies, character, and capacity to contribute to society. The development and implementation of the curriculum constitute an important component of this process because the curriculum provides a framework for determining educational objectives, learning content, learning processes, and assessment. Indonesian educational policy has continuously undergone curriculum adjustments in response to changes in students' needs, developments in science and technology, and broader social and global demands. The development from the Competency-Based Curriculum and the School-Based Curriculum (KTSP) to the 2013 Curriculum and subsequently the Merdeka Curriculum reflects an ongoing effort to adapt educational practices to changing educational contexts and student needs (Government of the Republic of Indonesia, 2003).

The implementation of the Merdeka Curriculum introduces a shift in the learning paradigm by providing greater flexibility for educational units and teachers to design learning according to students' characteristics, the context of educational institutions,

and the learning environment. The curriculum emphasizes students as the main focus of learning and assessment, while learning is expected to support the development of competencies and character in an integrated manner (Ministry of Education, Culture, Research, and Technology, 2024). This paradigm shift consequently changes the role of teachers, particularly in designing and organizing learning. Teachers are not only expected to master subject matter but also to translate learning outcomes into meaningful learning objectives, learning activities, assessment processes, and the selection of appropriate learning resources and media. The greater flexibility provided by the Merdeka Curriculum therefore requires teachers to possess adequate pedagogical and professional competencies to make curriculum decisions that are responsive to students' needs and local learning contexts (Sutinah et al., 2024).

Learning planning is an essential component of the learning process because it provides a systematic basis for organizing learning objectives, learning experiences, instructional strategies, learning resources, and assessment. Within the framework of the Merdeka Curriculum, planning is expected to be flexible, contextual, and oriented toward students' learning needs rather than merely fulfilling administrative requirements. Learning and assessment should also be understood as an integrated cycle in which assessment information is used to design learning and subsequently to identify the extent to which learning objectives have been achieved (Ministry of Education, Culture, Research, and Technology, 2024). Consequently, effective learning planning requires consistency among learning outcomes, learning objectives, learning activities, assessment strategies, and students' characteristics. Teachers therefore need sufficient understanding of curriculum principles and the ability to translate curriculum policies into practical learning plans.

At the elementary school level, the need for appropriate and integrated learning planning is particularly important because students are still developing cognitively, socially, emotionally, and physically and therefore require learning experiences that are concrete, contextual, meaningful, and relevant to their everyday lives. Before the implementation of the Merdeka Curriculum, integrated thematic learning was widely used in elementary schools as an approach for connecting different learning contents through meaningful themes and students' experiences. This approach enabled students to understand relationships among concepts and learning contents rather than studying knowledge in isolation. However, the transition toward the Merdeka Curriculum has introduced changes in the organization of learning, including the formulation of learning outcomes, learning objectives, instructional activities, and assessment. Consequently, teachers who previously worked within an integrated thematic learning framework need to adapt their planning practices to the structure and principles of the current curriculum.

The transition to the Merdeka Curriculum may create various difficulties for teachers in developing learning plans. These difficulties may involve understanding new curriculum concepts and terminology, analyzing students' characteristics and learning needs, interpreting learning outcomes, formulating learning objectives, determining learning activities and time allocation, selecting appropriate instructional models and methods, developing learning assessments, and selecting learning resources and media. Research conducted by Asmahasanah et al. (2023), for example, identified difficulties among elementary school teachers in adapting to new concepts and terminology associated with learning outcomes, learning objectives, lesson plans, teaching modules, and the Pancasila Student Profile Strengthening Project. Similarly, Yulaehah and Utami (2024) found that elementary school teachers experienced difficulties in analyzing students' needs, analyzing learning objective pathways,

determining time allocation, selecting learning models and methods, formulating learning objectives, determining meaningful understanding, and developing assessments. These findings indicate that curriculum change requires not only policy dissemination but also substantial teacher capacity to translate curriculum principles into appropriate learning plans.

Previous research has also demonstrated that the implementation of the Merdeka Curriculum at the elementary school level continues to encounter challenges related to teacher understanding, preparedness, learning implementation, and curriculum adaptation. A review of previous studies by Yunitasari et al. (2023) identified teacher understanding and preparedness as among the important challenges in implementing the Merdeka Curriculum in primary schools. Sutinah et al. (2024) similarly reported that although the Merdeka Curriculum provides greater flexibility for teachers, this flexibility requires adequate competence in designing learning and assessment according to students' characteristics and local contexts. These findings suggest that curriculum flexibility does not automatically eliminate teachers' difficulties; instead, it may create new professional demands because teachers are required to make more contextual and pedagogically informed decisions in planning learning.

More specifically, research on learning-plan development has identified concrete problems experienced by teachers when adapting to the Merdeka Curriculum. Tanio et al. (2024) found that teachers encountered difficulties in developing lesson plans, particularly in relation to understanding the principles of planning, identifying initial competencies, integrating the Pancasila Student Profile, interpreting learning outcomes and learning objectives, formulating stimulating questions, designing learning activities, and developing assessments. The study also indicated that teachers' difficulties were associated with differences between the new curriculum structure and previous curriculum practices, teachers' competencies, and technological mastery. Meanwhile, Yulaehah and Utami (2024) demonstrated that difficulties in preparing teaching modules involve several interconnected components of learning planning. These findings indicate that teachers' difficulties are not limited to the technical preparation of documents but are closely related to their ability to understand and operationalize the underlying curriculum paradigm.

Although previous studies have examined the challenges of implementing the Merdeka Curriculum, teacher readiness, and difficulties in preparing teaching modules or lesson plans, there remains a need for more focused investigation into the specific difficulties experienced by elementary school teachers in developing learning planning during the transition from previous integrated thematic learning practices to the planning demands of the Merdeka Curriculum. Existing studies tend to discuss curriculum implementation challenges broadly or focus on particular planning components, while the relationship between the changes in curriculum planning paradigms and teachers' experiences in organizing integrated learning at the elementary school level has received comparatively less attention. This issue is important because teachers' previous experiences with integrated thematic learning may influence how they understand and adapt to the structure, flexibility, and planning principles of the Merdeka Curriculum.

Based on these conditions, there is a need to systematically identify and analyze the forms of difficulties experienced by elementary school teachers in developing learning planning within the implementation of the Merdeka Curriculum. Such analysis is important not only for describing the types of difficulties encountered by teachers but also for understanding the factors underlying these difficulties and their implications for the quality of learning planning. Identifying these difficulties can provide empirical

evidence for developing more targeted teacher mentoring, professional development, curriculum assistance, and training programs. Such efforts are particularly important because successful curriculum implementation depends not only on the formulation of curriculum policies but also on teachers' capacity to interpret and implement those policies through meaningful learning practices.

Therefore, this study aims to analyze the difficulties experienced by elementary school teachers in developing learning planning within the implementation of the Merdeka Curriculum, with particular attention to the integrated thematic learning aspect. The study is expected to contribute to the development of curriculum and elementary education studies by providing a more specific understanding of the challenges teachers face when adapting their planning practices to curriculum changes. Practically, the findings are expected to provide useful information for teachers, schools, educational institutions, and policymakers in designing appropriate forms of professional development, mentoring, and support to strengthen teachers' competencies in developing effective, contextual, and student-oriented learning planning under the Merdeka Curriculum.

B. RESEARCH METHOD

This study employed a qualitative approach using a literature study method to identify, examine, compare, and synthesize previous research findings relevant to elementary school teachers' difficulties in developing learning planning within the implementation of the Merdeka Curriculum. A literature review can function as a research methodology for identifying, evaluating, synthesizing, and interpreting findings from previously published studies to develop a comprehensive understanding of a particular research topic (Snyder, 2019). This approach was selected because the study did not involve direct data collection from respondents; instead, research data were obtained from previously published scientific articles and relevant academic documents. Through this approach, the study sought to identify recurring patterns, similarities, differences, and research gaps concerning teachers' learning-planning practices in the context of the Merdeka Curriculum.

The sources of data consisted of scientific journal articles and relevant academic documents addressing the implementation of the Merdeka Curriculum, learning planning, integrated thematic learning, teacher competence, and teachers' obstacles or difficulties in developing learning tools at the elementary school level. The literature search was conducted through academic databases and search engines, particularly Google Scholar. The search process used combinations of relevant keywords, including "Merdeka Curriculum," "elementary school learning planning," "teacher difficulties," "integrated thematic learning," "learning planning," "teaching modules," and "learning tools." The search strategy was designed to identify publications that were directly relevant to the research focus and provided substantive evidence concerning curriculum implementation and teachers' learning-planning practices. The use of structured search strategies is important in literature-based research because it facilitates the identification of relevant studies and supports a more transparent synthesis of existing evidence (Snyder, 2019).

The selection of literature was conducted using predetermined inclusion and exclusion criteria. The inclusion criteria consisted of studies that: (1) discussed the implementation of the Merdeka Curriculum or learning planning at the elementary school level; (2) reported findings related to teacher difficulties, obstacles, readiness, competencies, or challenges in curriculum implementation and learning planning; (3)

were published in relevant scientific journals or credible academic sources; (4) were available in full text; and (5) contained findings that were sufficiently relevant to the research objectives. Meanwhile, sources were excluded if they were unrelated to elementary education or the Merdeka Curriculum, duplicated other retrieved publications, lacked sufficient methodological or substantive information, or did not provide findings relevant to teachers' learning-planning difficulties. The application of explicit inclusion and exclusion criteria is important to improve transparency and reduce subjectivity in the selection of literature (Snyder, 2019).

The analysis process was conducted through several sequential stages, namely literature identification, initial screening, eligibility assessment, data extraction, categorization of findings, interpretation, and synthesis. These stages reflect the general principles of transparent evidence identification and selection used in systematic literature research (Page et al., 2021). Although this study was designed as a qualitative literature study rather than a systematic review, principles of transparent identification and selection were adopted to strengthen the methodological rigor of the research. During the data-extraction stage, information was systematically recorded from each selected source, including the author's identity, publication year, research objectives, research context, participants or subjects, research design, focus of learning planning, forms of teacher difficulties, factors contributing to those difficulties, and recommendations proposed by previous researchers. The extracted information was subsequently organized into thematic categories to facilitate comparison across studies and to identify recurring patterns and differences in research findings.

The collected data were analyzed descriptively and interpretively by comparing findings from the selected literature. At the descriptive stage, the findings of each study were summarized according to predetermined analytical categories. At the interpretive stage, the findings were compared to identify relationships among teachers' understanding of the curriculum, teacher competence, learning-planning practices, and difficulties encountered during the implementation of the Merdeka Curriculum. Similar findings were grouped into broader themes, including difficulties in understanding curriculum concepts, formulating learning objectives, designing learning activities, determining instructional strategies, selecting learning resources and media, developing assessment instruments, and adapting learning to students' characteristics. The analysis also considered factors that may contribute to these difficulties, including teacher understanding, previous curriculum experience, professional competence, technological skills, and institutional support. Previous literature studies have similarly identified teacher competence, assessment, technology, infrastructure, and contextual factors as important challenges in the implementation of the Merdeka Curriculum at the elementary school level (Sucipto et al., 2024).

The final stage involved synthesizing the findings from the selected literature to develop a comprehensive interpretation of elementary school teachers' difficulties in developing learning planning under the Merdeka Curriculum. The synthesis did not merely summarize individual studies but examined relationships and patterns across different research contexts. Such synthesis enables researchers to integrate fragmented findings and identify broader patterns and research gaps that may not be apparent from individual studies (Snyder, 2019). Particular attention was given to the transition from integrated thematic learning practices toward the learning-planning principles of the Merdeka Curriculum. Through this process, the study sought to identify the forms of teachers' difficulties, the factors associated with those difficulties, and their implications for improving learning planning in elementary schools. The results of the synthesis are

expected to provide an evidence-based foundation for developing more targeted teacher training, mentoring, and professional development programs related to learning planning within the implementation of the Merdeka Curriculum.

C. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The following is a synthesis of a literature review on teachers' difficulties in the implementation of the independent curriculum:

No	Researcher & Year	Study Focus	Method	Key Findings	Relevance to Research
1	Ardianti & Amalia (2022)	The Meaning of the Independent Curriculum in Elementary School Learning Planning	Qualitative-phenomenological	Learning planning has changed in line with the paradigm of the Independent Curriculum; teachers need to understand the meaning of flexibility and student-centered learning. (Undiksha Journal)	It becomes the basis for analyzing changes in learning planning demands.
2	Al Husna & Rigianti (2023)	Teachers' difficulties during the transition from K13 to the Independent Curriculum	Literature review	The transition of the two curricula poses difficulties in adaptation for teachers in the learning process. (Jbasic)	Strengthening aspects of paradigm change and teacher adaptation.
3	Teacher readiness research (2023)	Teacher readiness in planning, implementation, and assessment	Qualitative	The planning aspect includes the formulation of TP, the preparation of ATP, and teaching modules; readiness is not always the same in every aspect of implementation. (Unimed Journal)	Showing that planning is an important component in implementation readiness.
4	Sucipto et al. (2024)	Challenges of implementing the Independent Curriculum in elementary schools	Literature review	Challenges include infrastructure, teacher technology competence, learning evaluation, student/parent/environmental conditions, and inequality of policy support. (Sebelas Maret University Journal)	Strengthening external factors and teacher competence as the cause of difficulties.
5	Stuart & Angelline (2024)	Challenges, teacher readiness,	Literature review	Obstacles were found in the form of understanding of curriculum	Supports the identification of difficulty

		and implementatio n strategies		structure/tools, human resources, facilities, evaluation, and project- based learning. Strategies include training, digital platforms, collaboration, and policy support. (Journals of Semarang State University)	factors and their resolution strategies.
6	Khoirunnis a et al. (2024)	Factors of difficulty for elementary school teachers in the implementatio n of the Independent Curriculum	Qualitative	Teachers' difficulties are assessed through observations, documents, and interviews; the research highlights implementation issues in the context of elementary schools. (Journal of Universitas PGRI Semarang)	Reinforcing empirical evidence that teacher difficulties occur at the primary school level.
7	Salsabilah et al. (2024)	K13 Transformatio n to an Independent Curriculum	Descriptive	Curriculum changes require teachers to adapt to new learning policies and practices. (STKIP Subang Journal)	It is relevant to explain the difficulties of the transition from the K13 pattern to the Independent Curriculum.
8	Putri & Muhtarom (2024)	Implications of the Independent Curriculum on Elementary School Learning Planning	Literature studies	A study of 55 articles shows the implications of the Independent Curriculum on the role of teachers, learning planning, learning models, and learning outcomes. (Jbasic)	It is very relevant as the main foundation of the relationship between the Independent Curriculum and learning planning.
9	Pratiwi et al. (2025)	Teachers' challenges in developing teaching modules	Literature studies	Difficulties include understanding the concepts of the Independent Curriculum, P5, differentiation, technology, time constraints, workload, and support/socialization. (E-	Expanding the difficulty indicator in the development of learning tools.

Journal of Palangka Raya University)					
10	Corin et al. (2025)	Teachers' difficulties in compiling teaching modules	Mixed-method	The main difficulties include understanding the philosophy of the Independent Curriculum and the CP-ATP relationship, the preparation of authentic assessments and differentiated learning, as well as the collaborative support of the KKG. (Unja Repository)	Provide empirical evidence regarding the technical aspects of lesson planning.
11	Zaki & Iqbal (2026)	Teachers' difficulties in implementing differentiated learning	Qualitative case studies	Teachers experience obstacles in implementing differentiated learning in the context of elementary schools. (Muara Edukasi)	Demonstrate that the needs and characteristic s of students are an important part of planning difficulties.
12	Safitri et al. (2026)	Problems of implementing the Independent Curriculum in elementary schools	Systematic literature review	The main problems include teacher readiness/understanding, learning tools, facilities and technology, and administrative burden. (Tambusai Education Journal)	Strengthen the synthesis of difficulty factors and the need for systemic support.

Synthesis of the table

From the study, teachers' difficulties can be synthesized into five main categories:

Categories	Form of Difficulty	Underlying Factors
Curriculum understanding	Understand the paradigm, structure, and principles of the Independent Curriculum	Changes from K13 and lack of mentoring
Learning planning	Compiling TP, ATP, teaching modules, activities, and learning integration	Pedagogical competence and teacher experience
Assessments	Designing assessments that suit the goals and characteristics of students	Understanding of diagnostic, formative, and summative assessments

Adaptive learning	Tailor learning to the needs and characteristics of students	Understanding differentiation and characteristics of learners
Resources & support	Media, technology, time, infrastructure, and collaboration	School infrastructure, workload, training, and support

Based on the results of synthesis of various previous studies, teachers' difficulties in the implementation of the Independent Curriculum can be understood as a multidimensional problem. Difficulties are not only related to the teacher's ability to understand curriculum policies, but also include the ability to translate curriculum principles into operational learning planning. A number of studies show that the change from the 2013 Curriculum to the Independent Curriculum requires teachers to adapt to the structure and tools of learning, including in the formulation of learning objectives, the preparation of learning objectives flow, the development of teaching modules, and the design of assessments.

Literature findings also show that learning planning difficulties are closely related to teachers' ability to adjust learning designs to students' characteristics. The concept of more flexible and student-centered learning requires teachers to consider the needs, abilities, and diversity of students in determining learning activities and assessments. These difficulties are even more complex when teachers have to implement differentiated learning and develop contextual learning tools.

In addition to teacher competency factors, structural aspects also affect the quality of implementation. Limited facilities, digital technology capabilities, time, learning resources, and professional support were found to be recurring factors in various studies. Thus, teachers' difficulties are not properly understood solely as individual weaknesses, but as the result of interactions between teachers' competencies and the environment supporting curriculum implementation.

The literature review also shows that there is a research space that can still be developed. Some of the research discusses the implementation of the Independent Curriculum in general, while other research focuses on teaching modules, differentiated learning, or teacher readiness. Therefore, this study focuses on the synthesis of teachers' difficulties in developing learning planning by considering the context of integrated thematic learning in elementary schools. This focus is important to see the relationship between curriculum paradigm changes, teachers' ability to develop planning, and the demands of learning integration at the elementary school level.

1. Forms of Teachers' Difficulties in Developing Learning Plans

The results of the literature review show that teachers' difficulties in developing learning planning are not only related to administrative aspects, but also to the ability to translate curriculum principles into learning designs that are in accordance with the characteristics of students. These difficulties include understanding changes in curriculum paradigms, formulation of learning objectives, selection of learning strategies, development of assessments, use of learning media, and adjustment of learning to the conditions of educational units.

One of the difficulties found is the teacher's ability to integrate various components of learning planning consistently. It is not enough to simply contain separate objectives, materials, activities, and assessments, but needs to show the relationship between these components. Teachers need to determine a learning experience that allows students to achieve learning goals through active, contextual, and developmental activities that are appropriate to their level of development. Thus, the quality of planning is not only determined by the completeness of the documents, but also by the suitability between the learning plan and the needs of students and the learning context.

Another difficulty is related to the selection of learning methods, media, and resources. Teachers are required to develop more adaptive learning and utilize various learning resources, including digital technology. However, limited technological competence, infrastructure, and learning resources can cause the use of learning media to be not optimal. This condition shows that changes in curriculum demands need to be followed by strengthening teacher capacity and supporting the school ecosystem.

In the context of integrated thematic learning, teachers also face challenges in connecting various learning contents in a meaningful way. Learning integration should not just place several materials in one theme, but build conceptual connections and a complete learning experience for students. Therefore, teachers' ability to map competencies, determine material linkages, design activities, and develop assessments is an important aspect in producing meaningful integrated learning.

2. Factors Causing Teachers' Difficulties

Based on the synthesis of various literature, teachers' difficulties can be grouped into several main factors, namely factors of curriculum understanding, pedagogical competence, availability of resources, school support, and the ability to utilize technology.

The first factor is the teacher's understanding of the change in the curriculum paradigm. The change from the 2013 Curriculum to the Independent Curriculum has brought a change in the way teachers understand learning planning and implementation. Teachers who were previously accustomed to using the structure and format of learning tools in the previous curriculum need an adaptation process in order to be able to understand the concepts and characteristics of learning planning in the Independent Curriculum. These difficulties in adaptation can cause teachers to tend to maintain familiar planning patterns.

The second factor is related to the pedagogical competence of teachers. Learning planning requires the ability to identify student characteristics, formulate learning objectives, determine appropriate activities, choose learning strategies, and design assessments. If one of these abilities has not been developed optimally, the quality of learning planning can also be affected.

The third factor is limited resources. The availability of books, learning media, technological devices, internet access, and supporting facilities is an important part

of the implementation of adaptive learning. Limited facilities can reduce teachers' choices in developing varied and contextual learning activities.

The fourth factor is the limited mentoring and professional development. Curriculum changes require a continuous learning process. Training that is only oriented towards providing information about policies is not necessarily enough to help teachers face practical problems when designing and implementing learning. Teachers need mentoring that allows them to discuss learning designs, obtain feedback, reflect, and improve practices on an ongoing basis.

3. Implications of Teachers' Difficulties on the Implementation of the Independent Curriculum

Teachers' difficulties in developing learning planning have implications for the quality of curriculum implementation at the grade level. Planning that is not in accordance with the characteristics of students has the potential to result in learning activities that are less contextual and do not provide space for students to participate actively.

In addition, if teachers are still oriented towards administrative fulfillment, learning planning may lose its primary function as an instrument to direct the learning process. Planning should help teachers determine relevant learning experiences, monitor student development, and make learning adjustments based on needs found during the learning process.

The findings show that the success of the implementation of the Independent Curriculum is not enough to be measured by the school's ability to use certain planning documents or formats. A more important aspect is the ability of teachers to understand the principles of the curriculum and translate them into meaningful learning practices. Thus, strengthening the implementation of the curriculum needs to be directed at increasing the capacity of teachers, not solely on the fulfillment of administrative documents.

4. Strategies for Strengthening Teacher Competencies

Based on the difficulties factors found, strengthening teachers' competencies needs to be carried out in a sustainable and needs-based manner. Training can be directed to practical skills in preparing learning plans, starting from analyzing student characteristics, formulating learning objectives, developing activities, selecting learning media and resources, to preparing assessments.

Practice-based mentoring is also needed so that teachers not only understand concepts theoretically, but are able to apply them in real learning situations. Activities such as lesson studies, learning communities, teacher-to-teacher discussions, peer review of learning tools, and practical reflection can be alternative professional development that allows teachers to obtain feedback on an ongoing basis.

The use of technology also needs to be directed proportionately. Technology is not just an additional tool in learning, but can be used to help teachers develop learning resources, organize materials, conduct assessments, and document student

development. However, the use of technology still needs to consider the availability of infrastructure and the characteristics of the school environment.

Overall, the results of the study show that teachers' difficulties in developing learning planning in the implementation of the Independent Curriculum are multidimensional problems. Difficulties are not only caused by teachers' understanding of curriculum changes, but also related to pedagogical competence, the ability to design assessments, the availability of learning resources and technology, and the professional support received by teachers. Therefore, improving the quality of the implementation of the Independent Curriculum needs to be carried out through strategies that integrate strengthening teacher competence, continuous mentoring, professional collaboration, and support for learning facilities.

D. CONCLUSION

Based on the results of the literature review, it can be concluded that teachers' difficulties in developing learning plans in the implementation of the Independent Curriculum in elementary schools are multidimensional. These difficulties are not only related to the preparation of learning documents, but also to the ability of teachers to translate the principles of the Independent Curriculum into a learning design that suits the characteristics of students. The most common forms of difficulties found in the literature include understanding of curriculum paradigm changes, formulation of learning objectives, preparation of learning flows and tools, development of learning activities, preparation of assessments, implementation of learning that is responsive to the diversity of students, and the use of learning media and technology.

The factors that cause teachers' difficulties can be grouped into internal and external factors. Internal factors are mainly related to teachers' level of understanding of the Independent Curriculum, pedagogical competence, ability to develop learning tools, ability to conduct assessments, and mastery of technology. Meanwhile, external factors include limited facilities and infrastructure, learning resources, time, workload, mentoring, training, and school support. The findings show that difficulties in learning planning are not solely a matter of teachers' individual abilities, but are also influenced by the supporting environment for curriculum implementation.

The results of the synthesis also show that strengthening teachers' competencies needs to be carried out on an ongoing basis through needs-based training and real practices, assistance in developing learning tools, collaboration between teachers through learning communities or teacher working groups, and the provision of adequate learning resources and technological facilities. The strengthening needs to be directed not only at the ability to prepare planning documents, but also at the ability to design learning experiences that are meaningful, contextual, adaptive, and in accordance with the needs of students.

In the context of integrated thematic learning in elementary schools, teachers need to have the ability to meaningfully connect various learning contents without ignoring the goals and characteristics of each learning area. Therefore, the application of integrated learning principles in the context of the Independent Curriculum needs to be understood as a pedagogical process that is oriented towards the interconnectedness of students' learning experiences, not just combining materials or preparing documents administratively.

Further research is needed to strengthen the results of literature review through empirical research on various characteristics of elementary schools and regions in

Indonesia. Field research can be directed to identify more specifically the form of teacher difficulties, causative factors, professional development needs, and the effectiveness of the mentoring model in improving the ability of teachers to develop learning planning in the implementation of the Independent Curriculum.

E. REFERENCES

The bibliography is written at the end of the article in the same font type and size as the body of the article. The bibliography is arranged in alphabetical order. Everything referenced in the article must be included in the bibliography, and everything listed in the bibliography must be cited in the article by indicating what is referenced within the article. This reference uses the American Psychological Association 7th edition citation style. All references must adhere to writing ethics, especially regarding the writing of direct or indirect quotes. This section provides examples of citation writing. Everything in this list can be traced within the body of this article template to study the proper way of writing citations in the text. To make it easier to write references, use software like Mendeley.

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