

Educator's Perspective on the Implementation of an Independent Curriculum in Arabic Learning at MTs Negeri Malinau, North Kalimantan

Perspektif Pendidik terhadap Implementasi Kurikulum Merdeka dalam Pembelajaran Bahasa Arab di MTs Negeri Malinau, Kalimantan Utara

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Abstract

Implementing the Merdeka Independent Curriculum has evoked diverse reactions, particularly among teachers, giving rise to issues such as a lack of training or orientation, hasty adjustments, and various controversies, particularly affecting schools far from the central government. Consequently, these challenges have resulted in schools needing help seamlessly implementing the Curriculum. The controversies have triggered varied perceptions concerning the Independent Curriculum's implementation. This research aims to examine the implementation of the Independent Curriculum and elucidate teachers' perspectives on the implementation of the Independent Curriculum in Arabic language learning at MTs Negeri Malinau. The researcher used a qualitative method based on the Miles and Huberman framework to collect data through observations and interviews at MTs Negeri Malinau. The researcher treated educators and the Independent Curriculum's implementation as subjects and objects. The results show that instructors, including the curriculum coordinator and school principal, have generally positive opinions about applying the Independent Curriculum to Arabic language instruction. They state that the Curriculum is considered adequate and fits the needs of the students. Still, problems remain, chiefly related to inadequate infrastructure. Notwithstanding these challenges, MTs Negeri Malinau uses a variety of tactics to carry out the Independent Curriculum and is optimistic about its successful implementation.

Keywords: Arabic Language, Independent Curriculum, Perception

Abstrak

Penerapan Kurikulum Merdeka menimbulkan beragam tanggapan, terutama dari kalangan guru. Timbulnya persoalan bermula dari kurangnya pelatihan atau sosialisasi, waktu perubahan yang terkesan tergesa-gesa dan munculnya berbagai polemik terutama bagi sekolah-sekolah yang jauh dari pemerintahan pusat sehingga membuat sekolah harus terbata-bata dalam menerapkan kurikulum ini. Banyaknya permasalahan yang muncul memicu beragam persepsi terkait penerapan kurikulum merdeka. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mendeskripsikan persepsi guru terhadap implementasi Kurikulum Merdeka dalam pembelajaran bahasa Arab di MTs Negeri Malinau serta mengetahui bentuk penerapannya. Penelitian ini menggunakan metode kualitatif menggunakan pendekatan Miles and

Huberman. Peneliti menggunakan observasi dan wawancara untuk mengumpulkan data yang bersumber dari guru-guru MTs Negeri Malinau dan penerapan kurikulum merdeka sebagai subjek dan objek penelitian. Hasil penelitian ini menunjukkan bahwa persepsi para guru, termasuk kepala sekolah dan waka kurikulum, terhadap penerapan Kurikulum Merdeka dalam pembelajaran bahasa Arab, adalah positif. Mereka menyatakan bahwa kurikulum ini dianggap sudah cukup baik dan relevan dengan kebutuhan peserta didik. Meskipun demikian, terdapat kendala dalam penerapannya, terutama terkait dengan fasilitas yang kurang mencukupi. Bentuk penerapan Kurikulum Merdeka di MTs Negeri Malinau sangat beragam. Meski terdapat hambatan fasilitas, sekolah tetap optimis dapat melaksanakan Kurikulum Merdeka dengan baik.

Kata Kunci: Bahasa Arab, Kurikulum Merdeka, Persepsi

Introduction

The Curriculum is the heart of any educational system. Nation & Macalister's curriculum is a set of guidelines designed for a learning program, consisting of principles, creating an environment, and addressing requirements that align with the learning program's objectives.¹ The Curriculum serves as an instrument for attaining educational objectives in Indonesia.² The Curriculum is learning that is planned in schools or other educational environments.³ As the initial foundation in education, the Curriculum must be prepared to meet the education objectives as well as possible. One of the fundamental principles of the Curriculum is to ensure relevance; in designing the Curriculum, it is necessary to consider the needs of the surrounding community and students to provide significant benefits for students facing competition in the world of work in the future.⁴ Thus, the Curriculum must continue to develop to be relevant to the times.

Curriculum design in this era must reflect the needs and demands of the changing times and shape students as individuals who are prepared to confront diverse facets of life, including the work realm.⁵ One of the main advantages of the Independent Curriculum is a

¹Dendi Wijaya Saputra and Muhamad Sofian Hadi, "Persepsi Guru Sekolah Dasar Jakarta Utara Dan Kepulauan Seribu Tentang Kurikulum Merdeka," *Jurnal Holistika* 6, no. 1 (2022): 28, <https://doi.org/10.24853/holistika.6.1.28-33>.

²Veronica Resty Panginan and Susianti, "Pengaruh Penerapan Kurikulum Merdeka Belajar Terhadap Hasil Belajar Matematika Ditinjau Dari Perbandingan Penerapan Kurikulum 2013," *Jurnal PGSD Universitas Lamappapoleonro* 1, no. 1 (2022): 9–16.

³Tony Dowden and Southern Queensland, "Chapter 3 : Understanding the Curriculum," 2004, 1–12.

⁴Arif Rahman Prasetyo and Tasman Hamami, "Prinsip-Prinsip Dalam Pengembangan Kurikulum," *Palapa* 8, no. 1 (2020): 42–55, <https://doi.org/10.36088/palapa.v8i1.692>.

⁵R Masykur, *Teori Dan Telaah Pengembangan Kurikulum Karya Masykur, Aura Publisher*, 2013, <Http://Repository.Radenintan.Ac.Id/14169/1/Uji%0aturnitin%0ateori%0adan%0atelaah%0apengembangan%0a%0akurikulum.Pdf>.

more straightforward and in-depth approach.⁶ The Curriculum emphasizes fundamental content and progressive development of learner competencies, fostering a more thorough, meaningful, leisurely, and enjoyable learning experience. Another advantage of using the Merdeka Curriculum is that it is more pertinent and engaging because learning through project activities will allow students to explore real issues like the environment and health actively. This will support the development of the character and competence of the Pancasila Student Profile.⁷ The birth of the Independent Curriculum can be seen as a step in transforming learning. Conceptually, the Independent Curriculum adopts a liberating educational philosophy by applying the TaRL (Teaching at the Right Level) approach and differentiated learning.

The Independent Curriculum allows teachers and students to engage in flexible and autonomous learning.⁸ The Minister of Education of Indonesia explained that the Independent Curriculum Focuses on depth rather than speed, so teachers don't have to rush to finish the material because of the amount of material that has to be covered and mastered.⁹ The Independent Curriculum focuses on independent learning and summative and formative assessments.¹⁰ The Independent Learning Curriculum not only gives students freedom in developing their potential but also gives education units the freedom to manage the Curriculum based on regional autonomy and gives teachers the freedom to design learning and lesson plans that have been complained about.¹¹

Approximately 70 percent of educational institutions across Indonesia have adopted the Independent Curriculum, utilizing programs such as the Mover School Program, SMK

⁶Ahmad Almarisi, "Kelebihan Dan Kekurangan Kurikulum Merdeka Pada Pembelajaran Sejarah Dalam Perspektif Historis," *MUKADIMAH: Jurnal Pendidikan, Sejarah, Dan Ilmu-Ilmu Sosial* 7, no. 1 (2023): 111–17, <https://doi.org/10.30743/mkd.v7i1.6291>.

⁷"Kurikulum Merdeka Jadi Jawaban Untuk Atasi Krisis Pembelajaran," Kementerian Pendidikan dan Kebudayaan, 2022, <https://www.kemdikbud.go.id/main/blog/2022/02/kurikulum-merdeka-jadi-jawaban-untuk-atasi-krisis-pembelajaran>.

⁸Direktorat, "Implementasi Kurikulum Merdeka Wujudkan Pembelajaran Menyenangkan Bagi Siswa Dan Guru," Direktorat Jendral Pendidikan Vokasi Kementerian Pendidikan, Kebudayaan, Riset dan Teknologi, 2023, <https://www.vokasi.kemdikbud.go.id/read/b/implementasi-kurikulum-merdeka-belajar-wujudkan-pembelajaran-menyenangkan-bagi-siswa-dan-guru>.

⁹Antara, "Nadiem: Kurikulum Merdeka Fokus Pendalaman Kompetensi Anak Didik," accessed May 7, 2023, <https://www.antaraneews.com/berita/3609054/nadiem-kurikulum-merdeka-fokus-pendalaman-kompetensi-anak-didik>.

¹⁰Restu Rahayu et al., "Implementasi Kurikulum Merdeka Belajar Di Sekolah Penggerak," *Jurnal Basicedu* 6, no. 4 (2022): 6313–19, <https://doi.org/10.31004/basicedu.v6i4.3237>.

¹¹Panginan and Susianti, "Pengaruh Penerapan Kurikulum Merdeka Belajar Terhadap Hasil Belajar Matematika Ditinjau Dari Perbandingan Penerapan Kurikulum 2013."

Center of Excellence, and Independent Pathway implementation.¹² During the early phases of implementation, schools had the option to use the Independent Curriculum; however, by 2024, it will become a mandatory nationwide curriculum.¹³ In the initial stages of the Independent Curriculum policy, diverse opinions emerged regarding its implementation.

Based on the results of preliminary research that has been carried out, researchers found that some teachers complain about the Independent Curriculum policy. This occurred due to insufficient socialization and training regarding the execution of the Independent Curriculum, leading to numerous teachers expressing dissatisfaction with their limited understanding of its implementation. In addition, one of the teachers stated that the facts in the field need more support from students and parents, especially in education. Parents still take education lightly; the embedded mindset is "the important thing is that children go to school," so a sense of caring about what is learned at school is still often ignored; this makes the school's steps to advance education according to the times following the Independent Curriculum have many obstacles ranging from students, teachers, and parents.¹⁴ Furthermore, confident educators question the rationale behind implementing the Independent Curriculum, especially when the outcomes of the previous Curriculum are perceived as yet to be evident. This is also reinforced by the madrasah's geographical location, which is in the Regency, so it is quite far from the central government. The Lack of training related to the Independent Curriculum means this madrasah still needs to catch up on implementing it. The many responses about the Independent Curriculum have led to various perceptions regarding its application in learning.

According to Dendi Wijaya's research, teachers' perceptions of the Curriculum's implementation significantly influence the teaching and learning processes they deliver.¹⁵ In line with this, research conducted by Fahri Septian concluded that Teacher Preparation in Learning Merdeka Belajar The Curriculum in State Junior High Schools in the Kuranji Sub-district, Padang City, is rated as "Good," with an average percentage of 87.67%. Implementing learning within the Merdeka Belajar Curriculum in State Junior High Schools

¹²Pengelola Kemendikbud web, "Hampir 70 Persen Satuan Pendidikan Sudah Menerapkan Kurikulum Merdeka," Kementerian Pendidikan dan Kebudayaan, 2023, <https://www.kemdikbud.go.id/main/blog/2023/08/hampir-70-persen-satuan-pendidikan-sudah-menerapkan-kurikulum-merdeka>.

¹³Dian Utoro Aji, "Kurikulum Merdeka Serentak 2024, Kemendikbud: Materinya Dikurangi," Detik Jateng, accessed May 7, 2024, <https://www.detik.com/jateng/berita/d-6848157/kurikulum-merdeka-serentak-2024-kemendikbud-materinya-dikurangi>.

¹⁴Wawancara dengan R (Guru MTs Negeri Malinau) pada 02 Juni 2023

¹⁵Saputra and Hadi, "Persepsi Guru Sekolah Dasar Jakarta Utara Dan Kepulauan Seribu Tentang Kurikulum Merdeka."

in the Kuranji District of Padang City is also classified as "Good," achieving an average score of 81.98%. Additionally, the Merdeka Belajar Curriculum assessment of State Junior High Schools in the Kuranji District of Padang City is evaluated as "Good," with an average score of 86.55%.¹⁶ Furthermore, findings from research conducted by Hardianto indicate that teachers' perceptions, as observed through adopting the Independent Curriculum at South Solok High School, are rated at 87%, signifying good qualifications. Similarly, teachers' perceptions of the Independent Curriculum at South Solok High School are rated 85% and classified as good. Additionally, teachers' perceptions related to the assessment or evaluation of the Independent Curriculum at South Solok High School are recorded at 83%, reflecting good qualifications.¹⁷

Sunarni and Hari Karyono conducted a study with the following findings: (1) Teachers express positive and appreciative perceptions of the Independent Curriculum implementation in elementary schools; (2) Teachers play a crucial role in the curriculum development and implementation process in elementary schools, and the success of implementation relies on the teachers' commitment in the classroom; (3) Teachers possess the capability to develop and implement the Curriculum, design classrooms, and contribute to enhancing the quality of teaching and learning processes; (4) The socialization and specific technical guidance training regarding the formation of the Pancasila learner profile have not been fully optimized; (5) Not all elementary school teachers have implemented the Independent Curriculum; (6) Some teachers lack proficiency in Information Technology (IT) skills; and (7) The main obstacle to Independent Curriculum implementation is the inadequate and unstable Internet connectivity is a significant problem, particularly for schools in rural locations where internet access is hard to come by.¹⁸

In contrast to the earlier investigation, the current study aims to concentrate on the perspectives of Arabic language subject teachers Concerning the implementation of the Independent Curriculum at MTs N Malinau.

The main goal of this research is to delineate how the Independent Curriculum is implemented at MTs Negeri Malinau and articulate teachers' opinions about its

¹⁶Fahri Septian, "Persepsi Guru Mata Pelajaran Terhadap Kurikulum Merdeka Belajar Di SMPN Sekecamatan Kuranji Kota Padang" 3 (2023): 4155–71.

¹⁷Romi Hardianto, Ade Irma Suryani, and Momon Dt Tanamir, "Persepsi Guru Geografi Terhadap Kurikulum Merdeka Di Sekolah Menengah Atas (SMA) Kabupaten Solok Selatan," *Horizon* 3, no. 2 (2023): 197–208, <https://doi.org/10.22202/horizon.v3i2.6717>.

¹⁸Sunarni, "Persepsi Guru Terhadap Implementasi Kurikulum Merd," *Journal on Education* 05, no. 02 (2023): 1613–20.

implementation into Arabic language learning. The researcher used a qualitative methodology; the study utilizes the method described by Miles and Huberman, which includes data presentation, data reduction, and conclusion drawing.¹⁹ Researchers used observation and interviews to collect data from MTs Negeri Malinau teachers on the implementation of the Independent Curriculum as both subject and object research.

Results and Discussion

1. Educators' Perspectives on The Execution of The Independent Curriculum in Arabic Education

According to “Kamus Besar Bahasa Indonesia (KBBI)”, perception is the immediate response (acceptance) to something and the process by which an individual acquires knowledge of various things through their five senses.²⁰ According to Slameto (2003: 102) in Sonia Anggiata (et al.), receiving messages or information in the brain is a mental process known as perception.²¹ Walgito revealed that several factors affect a person's perception: the individual's ability to absorb stimuli or objects from outside, the individual's ability to understand or understand something, and the ability to make an assessment or evaluation.²² Furthermore, Suryano categorizes the elements impacting an individual's perception into internal and external factors. Internally, these factors encompass one's emotions, attitudes, and personality, while externally, they involve family background, acquired information, and the knowledge possessed by the individual.²³

The results of this study indicate that teachers have a favorable evaluation of the execution of the Independent Curriculum in Arabic language education, as evidenced by the following aspects:

¹⁹Wahyu Mahaputra, Riyan Agus Prasetyo, and Rahadiyand Aditya, “Social Innovation in Sumbing’s Super-Man Program: Challenges, Opportunities, and Implementation,” *Indonesian Journal of Social Responsibility Review (IJSRR)* 1, no. 2 (2022): 121–35, <https://doi.org/10.55381/ijssr.v1i2.61>.

²⁰“KBBI,” n.d., <https://kbbi.kemdikbud.go.id/>.

²¹Sonia Anggianita, Yasnira Yasnira, and Muhammad Syahrul Rizal, “Persepsi Guru Terhadap Pembelajaran Daring Di Sekolah Dasar Negeri 013 Kumantan,” *Journal of Education Research* 1, no. 2 (2020): 177–82, <https://doi.org/10.37985/joe.v1i2.18>.

²²Rofiq Faudy Akbar, “Analisis Persepsi Pelajar Tingkat Menengah Pada Sekolah Tinggi Agama Islam Negeri Kudus,” *Edukasia: Jurnal Penelitian Pendidikan Islam* 10, no. 1 (2015): 189–210, <https://doi.org/10.21043/edukasia.v10i1.791>.

²³Ruina Nur Fitria et al., “Respon Mahasiswa Pendidikan Matematika Unipma Dalam Memecakan Masalah Geometri Ditinjau Dari Aspek Filsafat Ilmu Selama Perkuliahan Daring,” *Jurnal Review Pendidikan Dan Pengajaran* 4, no. 1 (2021): 76–84, <https://doi.org/10.31004/jrpp.v4i1.1750>.

a. Teachers' Views on Independent Curriculum

The principal, curriculum deputy head, and Arabic language teacher view the Independent Curriculum as flexible and directed. The Independent Curriculum aims to develop students' interests and talents and provide freedom for students to develop their potential according to their abilities and talents because, in general, learning in the Independent Curriculum focuses on student activeness or in other words, learning in this Curriculum is student-centered. In the Independent Curriculum, students are grouped according to their respective abilities; besides that, the P5 project, part of this Curriculum, is considered capable of developing students' thinking to be more active and critical.

Based on the above perceptions, it can be concluded that madrasah policymakers and Arabic language teachers at MTs Negeri Malinau view the Independent Curriculum as a flexible curriculum, focusing on developing students' interests and talents and liberating teachers in teaching. This perspective aligns with the fundamental principles of the Independent Curriculum. By these guidelines, the Independent Curriculum is designed to be straightforward and easily comprehensible and emphasizes all learners' competence and character development. It is characterized by flexibility, harmony, collaboration, and a keen focus on academic outcomes. As outlined in Prekemdikbud No. 22 of 2020, the Independent Curriculum is structured by independent learning policies, featuring flexibility, competency-based emphasis, and a focus on soft skill development and character development to meet the demands of the contemporary world.²⁴

b. Teachers' ability to understand the Independent Curriculum

Comprehension of the Independent Curriculum, whether by the school principal or the curriculum deputy head and Arabic language teacher, is understood as a curriculum that prioritizes students' interests and talents. Students are granted autonomy in their learning journey, and teachers also enjoy the freedom to select their preferred teaching styles and tools. This is one of the directions of change in the Independent Curriculum, namely, encouraging flexibility for educators to teach according to students' competence and encouraging educators to use more varied teaching tools.²⁵ Besides, the Independent

²⁴Nomor 22 Tahun 2020 Peraturan Menteri Pendidikan Dan Kebudayaan Republik Indonesia, "Nomor 22 Tahun 2020 Tentang Rencana Strategis Kementerian Pendidikan Dan Kebudayaan Tahun 2020-2024," *Kementerian Pendidikan Dan Kebudayaan*, 2020, 174.

²⁵Denis Hadiansah, *KURIKULUM MERDEKA DAN PARADIGMA PEMBELAJARAN BARU*, Ed. Veronika. Renika (Bandung, 2022).

Curriculum gives teachers the freedom to use various learning methods to meet students' needs and desires.²⁶

The Arabic teacher at this madrasah also discusses the independent learning policy; according to him, it allows Teachers and students to adapt the learning model to suit their needs and the conditions of the surrounding environment. Merdeka Belajar itself is not a new term. Independent learning is a philosophy formulated by the Father of Indonesian Education, Ki Hadjar Dewantara, long ago. Independent learning is a fun learning concept.²⁷

c. Teachers' ability to assess or evaluate the Independent Curriculum

In this instance, the school principal, curriculum deputy head, and Arabic teacher collectively appraise that the execution of the Independent Curriculum is commendable. However, there are assessments and evaluations regarding its implementation. Since the beginning of the implementation of the Independent Curriculum, there have been differences in the dissemination of information about this Curriculum from the previous Curriculum. This is because When the previous Curriculum was implemented, the government was quite intense in conducting teacher training. However, in this independent Curriculum, teachers must be more independent in their application, which makes this madrasah late in its implementation.

One of the characteristics of the Independent Curriculum is that it is based on competencies.²⁸The competency-based Curriculum emphasizes maximizing students' abilities and potential, building on what is learned, and striving for application in everyday life.²⁹ Students learn facts and develop skills such as critical thinking, communicating effectively, and working together. In learning, students are given a problem and asked to solve it; according to the Arabic teacher, this is very good because it will make students more critical in thinking and solving a problem. Teacher performance is also considered to have improved during the implementation of this Curriculum; the principle of differentiation carried out at MTs Negeri Malinau, which groups students according to their abilities, makes it easy for teachers to provide learning methods suitable for students' learning styles.

²⁶Kemendikbudristek, "Buku Saku: Tanya Jawab Kurikulum Merdeka," *Kementerian Pendidikan, Kebudayaan, Riset Dan Teknologi, Kementerian Pendidikan, Kebudayaan, Riset Dan Teknologi*, 2022, 9–46, <http://repositori.kemdikbud.go.id/id/eprint/25344>.

²⁷dkk 2018) richard oliver (dalam Zeithml., "Merdeka Belajar Landasan Teori," *Angewandte Chemie International Edition*, 6(11), 951–952., 2021, 2013–15.

²⁸Hadiansah, *Kurikulum Merdeka Dan Paradigma Pembelajaran Baru*.

²⁹Dwi Rahdiyanta, "Kurikulum Berbasis Kompetensi (KBK) (Pengertian Dan Konsep KBK)," n.d., 1–10.

Independent Curriculum is a project—or problem-based Curriculum that aims to provide a more contextualized learning experience related to real life. Through this approach, learners are expected to develop critical thinking, collaborative, and problem-solving skills. They are given the opportunity to face and solve problems relevant to their field of study or daily life.

d. The attitude of Arabic language teachers at MTs Negeri Malinau towards the Independent Curriculum's implementation.

Responding to the execution of the Independent Curriculum, the principal, vice principal for Curriculum, and Arabic language teacher stated that MTs Negeri Malinau continues to strive for the best in implementing this Independent Curriculum. Madrasahs show a high level of openness and receptiveness to the Independent Curriculum's implementation, and its progress thus far has been quite good. According to the Arabic teacher, the Independent Curriculum emphasizes differentiation in learning, requiring educators to tailor their teaching methods accordingly. Educators must understand their students' learning styles and choose appropriate instructional media.

Based on the interviews above, the principal, curriculum vice-principal, and Arabic language teachers at MTs Negeri Malinau have positively endorsed the implementation of the Independent Curriculum. They exhibit a readiness to persistently strive for excellence in executing the Curriculum. The overall assessment of the implementation of the Independent Curriculum at MTs Negeri Malinau is deemed satisfactory. This shows that the madrasah has accepted and managed the Curriculum effectively. MTs Negeri Malinau responds positively to the Independent Curriculum and actively tries to ensure its implementation based on the principles promoted by the Curriculum.

e. Conformity between the principles of curriculum development and the Independent Curriculum

The principal contends that the Independent Curriculum aligns closely with the principles of curriculum development, as it is flexible and follows the times. The head of the madrasah curriculum said that the Independent Curriculum needs to be appreciated because the center of learning activities focuses on students plus the P5 project, which emphasizes student activeness and creativity in completing projects.

Meanwhile, the Arabic teacher revealed that along with the times, students' mindsets will also change, and so will the Curriculum because it is dynamic and will change. In general, the Independent Curriculum aligns with the principles of curriculum development,

as stated by the curriculum head, who appreciates it because it focuses on developing students' interests and talents and is recognized as a dynamic system that can adapt to the times.

f. Guidelines for executing the Independent Curriculum.

The principal, curriculum vice principal, and Arabic language teacher of MTsN Malinau said in interviews that training about implementing the Independent Curriculum had already been carried out. This madrasah had held training and invited resource persons from the district so that, in principle, it was ready to implement the Independent Curriculum. Despite conducting training sessions, teachers must independently seek information about the procedures and attend relevant training programs to improve their understanding of how the Independent Curriculum is implemented.

g. Ease the Independent Curriculum implementation.

In implementing the Independent Curriculum, the madrasah principal stated that this Curriculum is simple, but the madrasah faces obstacles, primarily related to the Lack of adequate facilities. The head of Curriculum argues that implementation still requires adjustment because some senior teachers need time to adapt to curriculum changes. Arabic teachers also agree with this view, affirming that the Independent Curriculum can be accomplished easily if teachers understand and master the appropriate methods for delivering material and if there are facilities that back the teaching and learning process. The results of this study can be summarized into several main points:

- 1) Acceptance Positive towards the Independent Curriculum: MTs Negeri Malinau shows a very open attitude toward implementing the Independent Curriculum. This positive acceptance is reflected in the principal's view that this Curriculum has been quite good in its implementation.
- 2) Openness to Differences with Other Schools: The principal acknowledged that although MTs Negeri Malinau is still behind in implementing the Independent Curriculum compared to other schools, the school remains open to continuously improving and adjusting.
- 3) Good Implementation Although New: Although still in its early stages of implementation, MTs Negeri Malinau has implemented the Independent Curriculum well. This semester's implementation is recognized as a positive first step.
- 4) The principles of preparing the Independent Curriculum are considered appropriate and meet students' needs. However, Several challenges are encountered, particularly concerning schools' limited experience in carrying out the Curriculum.

MTs Negeri Malinau generally accepts the implementation of the Independent Curriculum positively, although there are still some differences with other schools and some

obstacles to its implementation. The school is receptive to making enhancements and modifications to enhance future curriculum implementation quality. The following is a tabular representation of teachers' views on the Independent Curriculum.

Table 1. Research Findings

No	Teacher Perception	Description				
		Very good	Good	Good enough	Not good	Very not good
1.	Teachers' Views on the Independent Curriculum	✓				
2.	Teachers' ability to understand the Independent Curriculum		✓			
3.	Teachers' ability to assess or evaluate the Independent Curriculum		✓			
4.	The attitude of Arabic language teachers at MTs Negeri Malinau towards The Independent Curriculum's implementation	✓				
5.	Conformity between the principles of curriculum development and the Independent Curriculum	✓				
6.	Guidelines for executing the Independent Curriculum.			✓		
7.	Ease the Independent Curriculum implementation.	✓				

2. Implementing the Independent Curriculum at MTs Negeri Malinau.

The Independent Curriculum is applied from early childhood education to high school levels, including Islamic boarding schools and madrasahs. This is stated in the KMA, and the Independent Curriculum Guidelines for Madrasahs aim to provide madrasahs with autonomy in overseeing education and learning, enhancing the quality and competitiveness

of madrasahs in accordance with the demands of 21st-century competencies.³⁰ The 2023/2024 academic year is the first year MTs Negeri Malinau has implemented the Independent Curriculum, which is currently exclusive to seventh-grade students. However, students in eighth and ninth grades continue to follow the 2013 curriculum. This decision was taken to test the effectiveness and response of implementing the Independent Curriculum before expanding to other grades. This implementation reflects the institution's commitment to keeping up with the latest developments in education and adapting to the dynamics of educational needs in the contemporary era.

In implementing the Independent Curriculum, MTs Negeri Malinau continues to do its best to ensure the execution of the Independent Curriculum runs well and adequately. The principal of MTs Negeri Malinau, revealed that there is no particular program for implementing the Independent Curriculum in madrasahs, but literacy activities, which are one part of the Independent Curriculum, are directed more towards reading the Qur'an which is carried out at the beginning of each lesson. This Qur'an reading activity is included in the local content called the *tahfidz* program, which is mandatory for seventh-grade students. At the same time, classes VIII and XI are local content in the form of ICT lessons. Another form of implementing the Independent Curriculum is self-made learning media; students also make several other works, which are the output of their subjects, such as planting kale vegetables, the output of science subjects. In addition, the madrasah allows students to develop their interests and talents by opening various extracurricular activities that suit their interests.

The curriculum framework for Elementary and Secondary Education consists of two primary components: the Pancasila Student Profile Strengthening Project and intracurricular learning. As per the Minister of Education and Culture Decision No. 262/M/2022 on Guidelines for Implementing the Curriculum within the context of learning recovery, the Pancasila Student Profile Strengthening Project is described as a project-oriented co-curricular activity designed to reinforce endeavors to attain competence and character aligned with the Pancasila student profile established on Graduate Competency Standards.³¹ Within the madrasah context, the P5 activity is called the Pancasila Student Profile and *Rahmatan Lil Alamin* Student Profile, abbreviated as P5PPRA. This denotes a student

³⁰Kementerian Agama Republik Indonesia, "Keputusan Menteri Agama Republik Indonesia No 347 Tahun 2022 Tentang Pedoman Implementasi Kurikulum Merdeka Pada Madrasah," *Jakarta*, no. Implementasi Kurikulum Merdeka (2022): 60.

³¹Menteri Pendidikan and D A N Teknologi, "Menteri Pendidikan, Kebudayaan, Riset, Dan Teknologi," 2022.

possessing a way of thinking, acting, and behaving that embodies the lofty ideals of Pancasila, highlighting universality and promoting tolerance to foster solidarity, national cohesion, and international peace.³²

Unlike P5, which encompasses six profiles of Pancasila students, which are as follows: 1). Firm belief, reverence for God Almighty, and possessing exceptional personality; 2). Embracing worldwide variety.; 3). Fostering cooperation; 4). Cultivating independence; 5). Nurturing critical reasoning; 6). Encouraging creativity³³In P5PPRA, religious moderation values were added, such as 1. Cultivated (*ta'addub*); 2). Exemplary (*qudwah*); 3). Commitment to citizenship and nationality (*muwatanah*); 4). Pursuing a moderate path (*tawassut*); 5). Balanced (*tawazun*); 6). Steadfast and resolute (*i'tidal*); 7). Advocating equality (*musawah*); 8). Embracing consultation (*shura*); 9). Upholding tolerance (*taswamuh*); 10). Dynamic and innovative (*tathawwur wa ibtikar*). Based on the development guidelines, this P5PPRA can be implemented according to the characteristics of each madrasah.³⁴

In MTs Negeri Malinau, starting in the 2023/2024 academic year, the P5PPRA program is implemented in blocks by determining a whole week every mid-semester as a special time allocation for project implementation. The following is the theme and time allocation for P5PPRA implementation that has been determined at the madrasah in the 2023/2024 academic year:

Tabel 2. P5PPRA Implementation Schedule

No	Theme	Time	Facilitator
1.	Sustainable Living	18-23 Sep 2023	Teacher Team
2.	Build the Body and Soul	20-25 Sep 2023	Teacher Team
3.	Entrepreneurship	4-8 Mar 2024	Teacher Team
4.	Local Wisdom	20-25 Mar 2024	Teacher Team

Usually, this P5PPRA activity is carried out after recess, and the madrasah allocates more than one hour to this P5PPRA program. This activity involves students and teachers in

³²Kementerian Agama Republik Indonesia, “Keputusan Menteri Agama Republik Indonesia No 347 Tahun 2022 Tentang Pedoman Implementasi Kurikulum Merdeka Pada Madrasah.”

³³Pusmendik, “Panduan Pengembangan Projek Penguatan Profil Pelajar Pancasila,” *Kementerian Pendidikan Dan Kebudayaan*, 2021, 1–108.

³⁴Fauziyah Yosi and Yosi Oktaviani, “Relevansi Empat Pilar Pendidikan Dengan Projek Penguatan Profil Pelajar Pancasila Dan Profil Pelajar Rahmatan Lil’ Alamin (P5PPRA),” *PenaEmas* 1, no. 2 (2023): 55–65, <https://jurnal.man1pasuruan.sch.id/index.php/PenaEmas/article/view/15>.

this program, and each teacher is given a schedule to fill this program. The following is documentation of some of the P5PPRA activities at MTs Negeri Malinau:



Picture 1. Implementation of the P5PPRA Program³⁵

Arabic teachers follow the differentiation principles stated in the Independent Curriculum as much as possible in the learning process. Differentiated learning is a teaching and learning process in which students can learn material according to their abilities, preferences, and needs.³⁶ The form of applying the principle of differentiation at MTs Negeri Malinau groups students according to each student's ability so that one class is filled with students with the same ability.

Although in one class filled with students with the same ability, in the learning process, Arabic teachers, as much as possible, adjust the teaching style to the abilities and interests of students, it still cannot be entirely done because some facilities at school are insufficient. In teaching and learning, subject teachers have used online teaching tools because the media covers almost all students' learning styles, ranging from audio-visual and visual to interactive, so it can implement differentiated learning. However, due to various obstacles, learning only uses one medium, so learning only partially meets students' learning needs. Another thing that hinders Arabic language learning is the need for more enthusiasm among students to study the Arabic language.

While executing the Independent Curriculum in Arabic language instruction, a visible change in student grades must still be visible. So, the Independent Curriculum in Arabic language learning still needs significant changes to achieve minimum competencies.

³⁵MTs Negeri Malinau, documentation, November 21, 2023

³⁶Heni Kristiani et al., *Model Pengembangan Pembelajaran Berdiferensiasi*, 2021.

Arabic teachers feel no difference from the previous Curriculum; student scores are still standard. The Independent Curriculum is also relevant to the needs of both students and teachers in learning Arabic. However, because the Independent Curriculum has many student projects, it is a challenge for schools because some facilities are less supportive. If the teacher wants to develop students' talents using large projects, it is still quite tricky, so for now, the projects developed at school are still simple.

Conclusion

From the discussion above, teachers generally hold a positive perception of implementing the Independent Curriculum in teaching the Arabic language. This can be seen from the understanding of teachers at MTs Negeri Malinau, who already understand the Independent Curriculum quite well; besides that, MTs Negeri Malinau's implementation is arguably perfect. This can be seen in several activities. Both the principal, vice principal of the Curriculum, and Arabic teachers at MTs Negeri Malinau consider the independent Curriculum quite excellent and relevant to the needs of students. However, its implementation still needs to be improved by more facilities. In its implementation, MTs Negeri Malinau is always optimistic that it can implement this Curriculum even though it is constrained by unqualified school facilities. However, in terms of assessment, there is still no visible difference in students when using the previous Curriculum with the Independent Curriculum; this is indicated by student scores that are still at the standard level. This research was conducted in the first stage of curriculum implementation at MTs Negeri Malinau, so the output of the Independent Curriculum still needs to be more visible. Besides that, researchers only focus on teacher perceptions. This makes the researcher feel the need to provide suggestions for further research to dig deeper into the output of the Independent Curriculum after its implementation has been long enough; besides that, students' views as the object of the Independent Curriculum are also needed about its implementation.

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