Implementing Independent Learning Curricula: A Case Study from MAN 2 Kediri, Indonesia

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ABSTRACT*:*
This research examines four aspects of the independent learning curriculum at MAN 2 Kediri City, namely objectives, materials, methods and evaluation. The main focus is to examine the impact on the development of students' independence and their readiness to face future challenges. This qualitative case study involves field observations, interviews with educational figures, and document analysis within an ethnographic framework. The research results show that the curriculum is designed to shape student character according to the national education profile, with broad and inclusive content. This approach focuses on developing critical thinking and problem solving abilities through a variety of teaching methods. The evaluation uses a multilevel assessment strategy to ensure the effectiveness of the curriculum. The implementation was successful, marked by student academic achievement. However, there are limitations to this research, namely the absence of visual data analysis. For this reason, further studies are needed. These findings contribute to curriculum theory, by proposing a framework that prepares students with essential skills and attitudes for the 21st century.

ABSTRAK*:*
Penelitian ini menelaah empat aspek kurikulum pembelajaran mandiri di MAN 2 Kota Kediri, yakni tujuan, materi, metode, dan evaluasi. Fokus utamanya adalah mengkaji dampaknya terhadap pengembangan kemandirian siswa dan kesiapan mereka menghadapi tantangan di masa depan. Studi kasus kualitatif ini melibatkan observasi lapangan, wawancara dengan tokoh pendidikan, dan analisis dokumen dalam kerangka etnografi. hasil penelitian menunjukkan Kurikulum dirancang untuk membentuk karakter siswa sesuai profil pendidikan nasional, dengan konten yang luas dan inklusif. Pendekatan ini menitikberatkan pada pengembangan pemikiran kritis dan kemampuan pemecahan masalah melalui variasi metode pengajaran. Evaluasinya menggunakan strategi penilaian bertingkat untuk menjamin keefektifan kurikulum. implementasi yang dilakukan berhasil, ditandai dengan prestasi akademis siswa. Namun, terdapat keterbatasan dalam penelitian ini yaitu ketiadaan analisis data visual. utuk itu diperlukan studi lanjutan. Temuan ini memberikan kontribusi pada teori kurikulum, dengan mengusulkan kerangka kerja yang mempersiapkan peserta didik dengan keterampilan dan sikap esensial untuk abad ke-21.

Kata kunci: Inovasi pendidikan, evaluasi kurikulum, kurikulum belajar mandiri otonomi siswa

INTRODUCTION

Curriculum planning is a critical determinant of educational quality, impacting societal progress, individual development, and the global workforce. It bridges the gap between the objectives of education and the dynamic requirements of modern society, necessitating continuous adaptation and reevaluation. This study explores independent learning-based curriculum planning at MAN 2 Kediri City, an approach that seeks to align educational practices with the evolving needs of students in a rapidly changing technological and social landscape. The urgency for such curriculum reform is underscored by the need to foster autonomous learners capable of critical thinking, innovation, and adaptation to unforeseen challenges.

The literature reveals a rich tapestry of curriculum development approaches. UbD (Understanding by Design) emphasizes alignment of outcomes and competency-based education (Newell et al., 2023), while the needs of prelicensure nursing students call for curricula responsive to societal and emotional intelligence (Koren et al., 2008). Historical and philosophical underpinnings are deemed essential for a well-rounded social work education (Desai, 2000), and the challenge of concept learning suggests a departure from rote learning towards engaging, problem-solving curricula (Toepfer, 1971). This

corpus of work establishes the multifaceted nature of curriculum planning and the diverse needs it must fulfill.

Curriculum development for special populations, such as children with learning difficulties (Carpenter, 1987), or methodologies like authentic assessment through poster presentations (Wallace et al., 2016), broaden the scope of considerations in curriculum planning. The emergence of remote learning, necessitated by the COVID-19 pandemic, further demonstrates the need for flexible and adaptive curriculum frameworks (Tsuda et al., 2021). These studies, along with the concept of Curriculum Navigator (Al-Eraky, 2012) and the shift from product to process approaches (Goddard, 1995), highlight the dynamic evolution of curriculum planning.

Despite these advancements, gaps persist. The literature points to the need for curricula that are not only cognitively rigorous but also cater to the character development of students (Abdelmalak, 2015; Chavasse, 1988) Issues such as gender equity in curriculum content (Smith et al., 2023), the integration of play in early childhood education (Pollitt et al., 2020), and the preparation of students for an aging population (Monk, 1978) remain inadequately addressed. Furthermore, the influence of continuous quality improvement activities on curriculum effectiveness (Harper & Lattuca, 2010)and the incorporation of self-determination theory in AI education (Chiu & Chai, 2020) suggest a need for research into strategic curriculum design and evaluation.

This study, therefore, seeks to bridge these gaps by examining the planning components of the independent learning-based curriculum at MAN 2 Kediri City, including its objectives, content, methodology, and evaluation. It aims to contribute to the field by offering insights into how curricula can be developed to enhance student independence, adaptability, and preparedness for future challenges, informed by previous studies (Bullock, 1988; Kähkönen & Höltta-Otto, 2022; Kelly et al., 2019; Lazar et al., 1972; McGill, 2012; Pomphrey, 2004; Rahayu et al., 2019; Ritonga et al., 2021). The anticipated contribution of this research is a curriculum model that not only meets academic and professional objectives but also instills life skills and positive attitudes necessary for 21st-century learners.

METHODS

The study utilized a qualitative case study approach, appropriate for in-depth exploration of complex educational phenomena within their real-life context (John W. Creswell, 2014; Lexy J. Moleong, 2018). Conducted at the A-accredited MAN 2 Kediri City, a madrasah recognized for its academic and non-academic excellence, this research aimed to elucidate the mechanisms underpinning its successful curriculum planning, which has consistently yielded university-ready graduates.

Data were collected using a triangulation method involving observations, in-depth interviews, and document analysis to enhance the credibility of the finding (Sugiyono, 2008). Observations were conducted on-site to understand the educational milieu and curriculum enactment. In-depth interviews were carried out with the Deputy Head of Curriculum, selected as a key informant due to their extensive insight into the curriculum planning process, and with educators from Class X, who have practical experience implementing the curriculum. Documentation included teaching modules, student learning outcomes reports, and photographs of madrasah activities aligned with the independent curriculum concept.

The Spradley model guided the data analysis, employing an ethnographic approach to systematically deconstruct and interpret the data (Sugiyono, 2008). This model provided a structured method for examining the data, beginning with a broad scope and progressively narrowing to focus on particular domains, taxonomies, componential analyses, and cultural themes. Recorded interviews and collected documents were meticulously analyzed to ensure a comprehensive understanding of the curriculum planning process.

To ensure reliability and validity, this study employed methodological triangulation, allowing for cross-verification from multiple data sources. The key informant's authoritative perspective was instrumental in corroborating findings from other interviews and documents, providing a multifaceted view of the curriculum planning process. This approach ensured that the study's findings were well-founded and reflective of the curriculum's practical application within MAN 2 Kediri City.

FINDINGS

Based on the results of direct observations, in-depth interviews and researcher documentation, research results were found regarding the planning of the independent learning curriculum at MAN 2 Kediri City with reference to the curriculum planning components above. The independent-learning curriculum planning component contains curriculum objectives, content or material to be delivered, learning methods to be carried out, and curriculum evaluation. Each of them will be explained below.

First, curriculum objectives are hopes and ideals that will be implemented in the student's learning process. The curriculum objectives themselves were initially developed from a global aspect, namely national educational objectives, then madrasa objectives, and then learning objectives for students. The learning objectives at MAN 2 Kediri City itself contain two things that are based on the independent learning curriculum, namely: forming the character of students in accordance with the Pancasila student profile and the *Rahmatan Lil Alamin* student profile, as well as advancing students' cognition to better understand the benefits and meaning of learning. This was stated by the Head of Curriculum MAN 2 Kediri City in an interview who said that:

> "After the technical guidance and training events were carried out, there was a change in the curriculum from KBK to the independent curriculum, which actually answered the challenges of technological development. So, it is adapted to the conditions in which the current generation wants to participate. So, from there, it can be concluded that our learning is not able to give children character, and secondly, on the cognitive side, children only learn from something they have finished reading, but do not touch on the problems around them. So, the meaningfulness of learning cannot be felt by children."

The meaning of learning that is meant by this lack is the deepening of declining character and cognition in students. This is addressed by adding activities that can be directly felt by children in practice, such as instilling the value of children's religiosity through prayer together on Fridays, commemoration of teachers' day by students, theatricalization of the events of November 10 by extracurricular theater, and even congregational Istisqa' prayers. in the field. This is what the MAN 2 Kediri City documentation looks like on social media.

Figure 1. Theatrical Events of November 10th

Therefore, the learning objectives in planning the independent curriculum at MAN 2 Kediri City as a whole are aimed at students in accordance with technological developments in Indonesia. There is evidence that MAN 2 Kediri City students succeeded in winning 3rd place in the Robot Soccer Competition at Dian Nuswantoro University Semarang and 3rd place in the National Innovation Project (NIPRO) event by the Industrial Chemical Engineering Department at ITS.

Second, the content in curriculum planning includes materials or lessons and programs that apply in madrasas. The independent curriculum, which is a new curriculum, was determined by the government starting in the initial phase at each madrasa level. The independent curriculum at MAN 2 Kediri City will only be implemented in Phase E or class X of the 2022–2023 academic year and will continue to be implemented for class. Teaching modules are developed by each teacher in accordance with the learning outcomes set in the independent curriculum. The material taught in class X MAN 2 Kediri City is comprehensive but not specific. This is stated in the following table of results of observations, interviews and documentation.

Table 1. Class X Material (Phase E)

No	Mata Pelajaran	SKS
1	Al Quran dan Hadits 1	2
2	Aqidah Akhlak 1	2
3	Fiqih 1	2
4	Sejarah Kebudayaan Islam 1	2
5	PPKn 1	2
6	Bhs. Indonesia 1	3
7	Bhs. Arab 1	4
8	Matematika 1	3
9	Sejarah 1	2
10	Bhs. Inggris 1	2
11	Seni Budaya 1	2
12	Penjasorkes 1	2
13	Biologi 1	2
14	Fisika 1	2
15	Kimia 1	2
16	Geografi 1	2
17	Sosiologi 1	2
18	Ekonomi 1	2
19	Informatika 1	2
20	Bhs. Inggris (Mulok) 1	2

The material taught in class X is according to the table above, shows that in phase E in the independent curriculum there are no majors according to students' interests. This was explained by one of the class X educators in an interview, that these students study material both natural sciences, social sciences, religion and languages that have not been specifically designated. The following is proven by the following mid-semester class X learning results report.

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Figure 2. Class X Mid-Semester Learning Results Report

Third, the method in curriculum planning itself is a set of ways or strategies for delivering learning material. According to the results of observations, the methods used in learning at MAN 2 Kediri City vary between each educator. The direction of the madrasah's own learning methods is directed at further fostering students' critical thinking through problem-based learning. The results of the interview with the Head of Curriculum showed that, at the previous meeting, the teacher gave reading assignments and summarized the material that would be discussed at the next meeting, after which students were given examples of problems appropriate to the surrounding environment. This is also what MAN 2 Kediri City has been doing for a long time so that in the end it became the pioneer of Research Madrasas at the national level. As a result, it also became the destination for a comparative study from MAN 1 Pasuruan in the realm of "Research Madrasah".

Likewise, it was confirmed by one of the class X educators that the method used in learning also adopted the inquiry method (problem solving) in

collaboration with small group discussions and asking questions. Apart from that, there are also those who apply the learning by doing pattern by directly observing and practicing outside the classroom. Such as Expo activities Holding Project Work on Strengthening the Pancasila Student Profile, *Rahmatan Lilalamin* Student Profile (P5PPRA), and English Day activities in the central courtyard of the madrasah. The following is the documentation of the Work Degree activities at MAN 2 Kediri City.

Figure 3. P5PPRA Work Title

Learning by bringing in practitioners directly is also often carried out by MAN 2 Kediri City for its students. Such as bringing in the Kediri City Health Service directly to provide education about stunting and dengue fever, Customs Goes to School activities by the Kediri Customs Office and Joint Training Activities by the School Security Patrol which was also attended by School Security Patrol MAN 1 Kota Kediri, MAN 1 Kediri and SMKN 1 Plosoklaten.

Fourth, evaluation in curriculum planning contains three things in the form of assessments with one diagnostic assessment (evaluation of learning implementation) and two assessments of student learning (formative and summative). Based on the results of observations and interviews with the Deputy Head of Curriculum, the diagnostic assessment is carried out once a year two weeks before the madrasah entry schedule. Evaluation of learning implementation itself focuses on curriculum components and aspects ranging from objectives, content, to methods and strategies. The implementation evaluation itself discusses starting from the previous learning process to the

learning process that is more appropriate to be used as a subsequent goal according to the needs of students.

Furthermore, the evaluation of learning outcomes at MAN 2 Kediri City includes formative assessments and summative assessments. Formative assessment is intended to assess students in the short term, namely every time a teaching module is completed (half semester). Meanwhile, the summative assessment is aimed at assessing whether students have mastered the learning objectives in the longer term, namely at the end of the semester. The results of both assessments will be conveyed to the students' parents to find out about their children's learning process. This is reinforced by the results of documentation regarding friendship and the delivery of quarterly educational information to parents of class X students.

Figure 4. Submission of Class X Quarterly Educational Information

DISCUSSION

The pursuit of developing an independent learning-based curriculum at MAN 2 Kediri City resonates with the global shift in educational paradigms that emphasize learner autonomy and critical thinking. This study's interrogation into the curriculum's objectives, content, methods, and evaluation provides insight into how educational institutions can align with national educational

objectives while addressing specific learning goals (Abdelmalak, 2015; Chavasse, 1988; Newell et al., 2023).

The curriculum's design to shape students' character and cognitive abilities is consistent with modern pedagogical objectives. It seeks to instill values aligned with the Pancasila student profile and the Rahmatan Lil Alamin student profile, which are emblematic of the Indonesian educational ethos. These findings mirror the holistic approach observed in curriculum planning across different educational contexts, where character development and cognitive progression are interwoven (Desai, 2000; Kelly et al., 2019).

Comparative analysis reveals that the curriculum content at MAN 2 Kediri, encompassing a wide range of subjects without early specialization, supports the notion of a broad-based educational foundation as proposed in previous studies (McGill, 2012; Pomphrey, 2004). Moreover, the diverse teaching methods—ranging from problem-based learning to inquiry and hands-on activities—echo the pedagogical strategies recommended for fostering critical thinking and student engagement (Chiu & Chai, 2020; Harper & Lattuca, 2010; Tsuda et al., 2021).

The curriculum's evaluation framework, incorporating diagnostic, formative, and summative assessments, aligns with the continuous quality improvement processes found to influence student learning outcomes (Harper & Lattuca, 2010). This comprehensive approach to assessment ensures that the curriculum remains adaptive and responsive to both student needs and pedagogical efficacy. It also corresponds with the emphasis on assessment validity found in similar studies (Pollitt et al., 2020; Smith et al., 2023).

The significance of these findings is multifaceted. They validate the curriculum's alignment with contemporary educational theories that advocate for a balance between educational objectives and the demands of modern society (Bullock, 1988; Ritonga et al., 2021). The inclusion of activities that directly engage students, such as community prayers and theatrical events, addresses the growing concern over declining student character and cognition, offering a model that other institutions might emulate (Carpenter, 1987; Monk, 1978).

In conclusion, the study's implications underscore the viability of an independent learning-based curriculum in nurturing well-rounded individuals.

The curriculum at MAN 2 Kediri City is a testament to the possibility of harmonizing traditional educational values with the necessities imposed by a rapidly advancing technological society. It suggests a paradigm for other educational institutions seeking to cultivate a curriculum that is both reflective of national values and adaptable to global trends (Kähkönen & Hölttä-Otto, 2022; Lazar et al., 1972).

CONCLUSION

This investigation aimed to elucidate the components of independent learning-based curriculum planning at MAN 2 Kediri City, a pursuit that aligns with the pressing need for educational models that foster autonomy and readiness for future challenges. By examining the curriculum's objectives, content, methods, and evaluation processes, this study contributes a robust framework to the academic discourse on curriculum development.

The study's findings demonstrate a curriculum that aims to shape students' character and cognitive abilities in accordance with national educational profiles, embracing a wide spectrum of knowledge areas without confining students to specific majors. The deployment of varied pedagogical methods, including problem-based learning, inquiry, and active community engagement, aligns with a pedagogical shift towards teaching strategies that enhance critical thinking and real-world problem-solving. The curriculum's evaluation practices, comprising diagnostic, formative, and summative assessments, underscore a commitment to continuous educational refinement and accountability.

The implications of these findings extend to the broader field of curriculum development, suggesting that such a multifaceted and adaptable framework can enhance student independence and better prepare learners for the complexities of contemporary and future societal demands. The curriculum's success, as evidenced by students' achievements in competitive arenas, validates the potential of this approach to yield both academic and extracurricular excellence.

Acknowledging the limitations of this study, particularly the omission of visual data analysis and the need for longitudinal assessment to fully ascertain the curriculum's impact, the research underscores the necessity for further

inquiry. Future research should aim to explore the long-term outcomes of the curriculum's implementation and its adaptability to different educational contexts. By building on the foundation laid by this study, subsequent research can deepen our understanding of how independent learning-based curricula can effectively meet the evolving needs of learners in diverse educational settings.

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