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**Implementation of International Curriculum Development in the
Independent Curriculum at Al-Muhafidzoh Blitar High School**

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ABSTRACT :

The Merdeka Curriculum has become the main focus of education reform in Indonesia, aiming to give schools freedom to design curricula according to local needs. However, in the context of globalization, implementing an international curriculum is also important to prepare students to face increasingly complex global challenges. This research uses qualitative methods which aim to investigate the implementation process of International Curriculum Development within the Independent Curriculum Framework at Al-Muhafidzoh Blitar High School, with a focus on implementation methods and approaches, challenges and obstacles faced, as well as the impacts and benefits resulting from the implementation. Research methods include participant observation, in-depth interviews with key stakeholders, and analysis of related documents to gain a comprehensive understanding. The research results show that a collaborative approach between schools, teachers and other stakeholders is an important basis in facilitating successful implementation. However, there are challenges such as a lack of understanding of international standards, limited resources, and curriculum adaptation which are obstacles that need to be overcome. Nonetheless, the positive impacts of the implementation, such as improved student academic achievement and better preparation to face global challenges, demonstrate the importance of the effort. Overall, this research provides an in-depth understanding of the implementation process of International Curriculum Development within the Independent Curriculum Framework at SMA Al-Muhafidzoh Blitar. By identifying effective methods, overcoming challenges, and exploiting the resulting benefits, this implementation has great potential to improve the quality of education and better prepare students to face an increasingly global future.

Keywords: *curriculum integration, development, Independent curriculum, international curriculum*

INTRODUCTION

The topic of the international curriculum is pertinent given the opportunities and challenges that educational institutions face in implementing global standards. The development of international curricula presents a number of challenges that need to be carefully considered. The disparity between the national and international curricula is a different issue that needs to be addressed. Global needs are not always fully reflected in local curricula, so graduates are not always prepared to handle challenges in the real world (Huda, 2017).

An international curriculum is a learning framework or structure that is designed to meet global standards and includes aspects such as curriculum, teaching methods, and assessments that are different from the national curriculum (R. Wulandari, Shohib, & Othman, 2024). The international curriculum is usually applied in international schools, which often have students from different countries with diverse cultural backgrounds.

International curricula often prioritize the development of broader skills such as critical thinking skills, creativity, communication skills, and proficiency in information technology (Yi-Chia, 2022). Some popular international curricula include the International Baccalaureate (IB),

Cambridge International Examinations (CIE), and the American Curriculum (e.g., Advanced Placement or AP). These curricula are often internationally recognized and can prepare students for college abroad or a career in a global environment.

The integration of the international curriculum into the Independent Curriculum for the Senior High School (SMA) level with a focus on Islamic aspects can be a sensitive and complex process. One of the issues that needs to be considered is the extent to which Islamic values can be aligned with the international standards carried out by international curricula such as the International Baccalaureate (IB) or Cambridge International Examinations (A Level)

At Al-Muhafidzoh Blitar High School Independent curriculum is still implemented only for grades 10 and 11. The Independent Curriculum, which is only implemented in grades 10 and 11, brings a number of important considerations in its implementation. First, this limited time frame demands that curriculum development be truly focused on the essential materials and skills that are most relevant to students. This requires careful and efficient curriculum development to ensure that students gain a deep understanding and skills that are appropriate for their future needs (Tiniyah, Fitri, & Aziz, 2023).

This is also an obstacle as well as a preparatory process in integrating the international curriculum into the Independent Curriculum. The readiness of educational infrastructure is the main obstacle, such as the availability of textbooks and supporting facilities in accordance with the international curriculum. On the other hand, the readiness of teachers in adopting learning and evaluation methods in accordance with international standards is also a significant inhibiting factor. Training and competency development for teachers is important to ensure successful implementation.

The availability of human, financial, and physical resources is also a challenge, especially in the procurement of textbooks, technological devices, and interactive learning facilities. Lack of awareness and understanding from various stakeholders such as parents, students, and the general public is also an inhibiting factor. Education to stakeholders regarding the benefits, goals, and strategies for the implementation of the international curriculum needs to be improved (Elfrida, Santosa, & Soefijanto, 2020).

However, in the process of integrating the international curriculum into the Independent Curriculum, it should be noted that the learning approach and the materials applied must still consider the local and religious context. Islamic values that are part of the identity of education in Indonesia must also be considered in every context of learning (Marvianasari, Fitri, & Aziz, 2024). This requires collaboration between related parties, both in terms of curriculum design, teacher training, and evaluation of its impact on students and the learning process as a whole.

According to the Theory Introduction to Innovation (Diffusion of Innovations Model) according to Rogers, This theory emphasizes that the adoption or introduction of an innovation in this case, the implementation of the international curriculum occurs through a process involving adopters (recipients of innovation) who go through certain stages such as knowledge, persuasion, decision, implementation, and confirmation (Sahin, 2006). These stages reflect the journey of stakeholders from the initial understanding of the international curriculum (knowledge), convincing themselves to implement it (persuasion), making a decision to adopt or implement it (decision), implementing the international curriculum in the Independent Curriculum (implementation), to confirming the success or benefits obtained from the implementation (confirmation).

The Independent Curriculum that prioritizes the development of global character can be enriched with values and character education embedded in the international curriculum (Pratama, 2019). This includes an awareness of diversity, tolerance, empathy, and social responsibility that are important values in an increasingly connected global environment. By integrating aspects of the international curriculum, the Independent Curriculum for high school can provide a more holistic, globally relevant learning experience, and prepare students to face challenges and opportunities in an increasingly internationally integrated world.

Methods

The method used in this study is a qualitative method involving interviews, observations, and document analysis. This research involves the use of qualitative methods by conducting observations, interviews, and document analysis to obtain data directly from the field. After the data is collected, the next step is to process the data in accordance with research ethical standards.

According to Sugiyono (2013) that this method as a new method is known as postpositivism because it is based on the philosophy of postpositivism. The qualitative approach is considered a new method because it emphasizes the deep understanding and complexity of phenomena, in contrast to the positivistic approach which emphasizes more on generalization and measurement. Therefore, the use of qualitative methods is considered relevant in the context of this research because it can provide a comprehensive and contextual picture of the phenomenon being studied.

The data processing process in qualitative research is very important to ensure the validity and reliability of the analysis results (Thalib, 2022). Through the editing process, researchers can review the collected data to ensure the accuracy and consistency of the information. As a result, the data can be arranged systematically and logically so that it can be interpreted clearly and easily understood by readers or parties interested in the results of the research. The editing process is carried out to review the recording or data record to ensure its quality before being prepared for the next stage. Furthermore, the data is arranged in an orderly, orderly, and logical manner so that it is easy for readers to understand and interpret.

Result And Discussion

Implementation Methods and Approaches

The integration between the Independent Curriculum and the international curriculum plays an important role in providing a comprehensive learning experience for students in today's global era (Adegbola, 2023). In this case, there are several aspects of the Merdeka curriculum that has been running at Al-Muhafizoh Blitar High School that can be developed and adjusted to the international curriculum. These aspects can be seen in table 1.

Table 1

| It | Aspects of the Independent Curriculum | Aspects of the International Curriculum |
|----|---------------------------------------|--|
| 1 | Competency-based curriculum | International Curriculum |
| 2 | Active learning | Active Learning Approach |
| 3 | Local content | Use of Local Materials in a Global Context |

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|---|-----------------------|---------------------------------|
| | | |
| 4 | Character development | Universal Character Development |

Table 1 illustrates how some important aspects of the Independent Curriculum can be integrated with the international curriculum. Standards against international curricula such as the International Baccalaureate (IB) or Cambridge have standards that go hand in hand with the development of these skills, helping students prepare to compete on the global stage (Aryati, 2023).

On the other hand, Al-Muhafidzoh High School Blitar has implemented an international curriculum in its learning approach. Active learning approaches and project-based learning are often considered in accordance with international standards because they emphasize the active involvement of students in the learning process. The use of learning approaches carried out by teachers at Al-Muhafidzoh Blitar High School allows students to develop a deeper and critical understanding of the subject matter. The active approach carried out at Al-Muhafidzoh Blitar High School includes methods such as cooperative learning, problem-based learning, inquiry-based learning, flipped classroom, and so on.

In table 1 point number three, the use of local materials in a global context at Al-Muhafidzoh Blitar High School has not entered the international realm in its material, even though the existence of local materials that contain international scale is an effective strategy in integrating aspects of the Independent Curriculum with the international curriculum. It refers to the use of content, materials, or case studies that are sourced from the local culture, history, or social context specific to a country or region, but presented in a globally relevant and understandable way (W. Wulandari, 2023).

One example of the application of the use of local materials in a global context is in the teaching of history or literature (Arifin, 2024). In the teaching of Indonesian history, local materials such as the struggle for independence or national historical figures can be integrated in international curricula such as IB History or Cambridge History. This local material is presented in a way that connects it to global events or their impact on an international scale, so that students can understand the contribution of local to global development (Shobri & Amaliyah, 2022).

In addition, in language or literature learning, the use of local literary works or oral traditions such as folklore or regional songs can be used as learning materials that describe the cultural richness of a country. This integration allows students to understand the values, norms, and uniqueness of local cultures, while also developing an understanding of cultural similarities and differences around the world.

Student character development is also an important focus in the development of the curriculum integration process (Qutni, 2021). The Independent Curriculum emphasizes values such as leadership, responsibility, and ethics, which are also values that are appreciated in the international curriculum. At Al-Muhafidzoh Blitar High School, the integration of character development is also followed by Islamic religious teachings so that students do not escape religious education so as to create a highly competitive and responsible Muslim generation.

Challenges and Obstacles in Implementation

The implementation of international curriculum development in the Independent Curriculum at Al-Muhafidzoh Blitar High School also faces a number of challenges and obstacles that need to be overcome to achieve optimal success. One of the main challenges is the readiness

of human resources, especially teachers and school staff, in adapting international curricula that may have different learning requirements and approaches from the local curriculum. Intensive training and development are needed so that teachers can understand international standards, appropriate learning methods, and appropriate evaluation strategies (Hanafiah & Hidayat, 2020).

The implementation of the development of the international curriculum in the Independent Curriculum at Al-Muhafidzoh Blitar High School requires the completion of a number of aspects that include teacher training and development, resource availability, policy support, and stakeholder awareness and understanding.

In terms of resource availability, Al-Muhafidzoh Blitar High School has strategically invested in educational infrastructure, such as information technology, libraries, laboratories, and other learning facilities that support the development of the international curriculum.

On the other hand, teacher training and development requires a comprehensive and continuous program to improve their understanding of international standards, effective learning methods, and appropriate assessment strategies. This training should also pay attention to how to integrate local and global aspects in the curriculum in a balanced manner (Yulianti, Anggraini, Nurfaizah, & Pandiangan, 2022). At Al-Muhafidzoh High School Blitar, there needs to be intensive training in achieving international curriculum quality standards. Policy support from the school and local government is very important. Policies that support innovation, flexibility in curriculum implementation, and financial support for teacher training and development programs can increase the success of curriculum development (Setiawati, 2022).

Additionally, it is important to increase awareness and understanding of stakeholders, including parents, students, and local communities, about the benefits and goals of international curriculum development. Open and transparent communication about curriculum changes, as well as their participation in the evaluation and improvement process, can strengthen stakeholder support and involvement in implementing this curriculum (Adilah, Galvez, Suliyanah, & Deta, 2023).

Impact and Benefits of Implementation

The implementation of international curriculum development in the Curriculum has a significant impact on improving student academic achievement. Development of critical and creative skills, better preparation for national exams or college selections, as well as long-term benefits in preparing students (Chotimah, 2019). The international curriculum allows for improved student academic achievement by providing higher standards in the curriculum and assessments. Students at Al-Muhafidzoh Blitar High School are encouraged to achieve higher abilities in certain fields, preparing them for academic challenges at the university level and the world of work.

The development of critical and creative skills is a key focus in the international curriculum. Students are not only taught to master the subject matter, but also trained to think critically, analyze information, and develop innovative solutions to complex problems (Christiana, Supriyanto, & Juharyanto, 2022). Al-Muhafidzoh Blitar High School often emphasizes the development of critical and creative skills, such as analytical thinking, problem-solving, and innovation. This is done through assignments that challenge students to think critically and seek unconventional solutions. This helps students prepare themselves and get used to thinking critically.

Better preparation for national exams or college selections is a real benefit of the implementation of the international curriculum (Irmita, Amanda, Syamsi, & Wardaya, 2022). Higher standards and comprehensive evaluation methods help students improve their readiness

to face important exams or selections in their academic journey. Students in grades 10 and 11 have been well prepared to continue their studies in higher education, both at home and abroad. They know with international standards and have become accustomed to higher academic demands. The implementation of the international curriculum has also helped improve students' language skills, especially in the English used in the curriculum. This provides a competitive advantage in the global era (Kamumu, 2020).

The long-term benefit of developing an international curriculum is that it prepares students to become skilled and highly competitive global citizens. They not only have knowledge and skills relevant to global standards, but also have a broad understanding of global issues, openness to different cultures and perspectives, and adaptability in a multicultural environment. Thus, the implementation of the development of the international curriculum in the Independent Curriculum at Al-Muhafidzoh Blitar High School has a positive impact and wide benefits for students in improving academic achievement, developing critical and creative skills, preparing themselves for exam challenges or university selection, and becoming skilled and highly competitive global citizens.

Conclusion

The implementation of the International Curriculum Development in the Independent Curriculum at Al-Muhafidzoh Blitar High School highlights the importance of teacher training, adequate educational infrastructure, strong policy support, and a deep understanding of all parties involved in achieving success in integrating the international curriculum. Despite being faced with various challenges such as resource availability and adaptation to international standards, the benefits resulting from such implementation are significant, including improved academic achievement, the development of critical and creative skills, and better preparation for students to compete in an increasingly complex global scenario.

In the context of methods and approaches, the study confirms that a collaborative approach between schools, teachers, and other stakeholders is the key to success in facilitating successful implementation. However, challenges such as a lack of understanding of international standards and a lack of prepared human resources require special attention in a mature implementation strategy. Nonetheless, the positive impact of the implementation of the international curriculum, such as improved student academic achievement and better preparation for global challenges, underscores the importance of the efforts undertaken.

The implementation of the development of the international curriculum in the Independent Curriculum at Al-Muhafidzoh Blitar High School requires a coordinated strategy, ongoing support, and a deep understanding of the long-term impact on education and student progress. By paying attention to the challenges faced and taking advantage of the benefits generated, this implementation has great potential to improve the quality of education and better prepare students to face an increasingly global future.

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