Curriculum Portrait Independent Learning At The Center Of Excellence School (Studi Kasus di SMK Ma'arif NU Tirto Pekalongan)

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Abstract: In education, the curriculum is the main aspect of the learning process. The independent learning curriculum is categorized as a Center of Excellence school for vocational schools and a Driving School for high schools. However, this research focuses on vocational schools categorized as Center of Excellence schools. This study uses a qualitative method approach with field study research at SMK Ma'arif NU Tirto Pekalongan. The purpose of the research is to find out how the learning system in the Center of Excellence schools implements the Independent Learning Curriculum. Vocational Secondary Schools implementing the Merdeka Learning curriculum include the term P5BK (Pancasila Student Profile Strengthening and Work Culture Project) in each subject. Therefore, school principals, teachers, and students must be ready to implement the Independent Learning curriculum. For PK vocational schools in Pekalongan, the level of readiness is mature and according to the criteria of the Ministry of Education. This can be seen from the supporting factors, which include synchronization between teachers and students regarding the concept of the Independent Learning Curriculum, teachers as facilitators of student learning, and the encouragement of counseling guidance teachers for students and many young teachers who can utilize technology. In addition, there are several inhibiting factors, namely the difficulty of teachers in understanding the diversity of students' characters, the inadequate facilities and infrastructure of the automotive department, and the absence of conducive classroom conditions. This makes it difficult for teachers to adjust learning to the diversity of students' characters. However, the existing obstacles do not last long because at SMK Ma'arif NU Tirto Pekalongan, there is a collaboration with industry partners and assistance funds to complete the school's needs.

Keywords: Independent Learning Curriculum, Learning, SMK Center of Excellence

INTRODUCTION

Education in the 21st century is an innovation in creating a superior generation. Indonesia needs a youth movement to build the nation's civilization through thought,
creativity, and life skills. This is education as a bridge of knowledge in developing the identity of the generation. The minister of education sees from PISA (Programme for International Student Assessment) data showing that 70% of education of the easy generation is left behind. Because the covid-19 pandemic factor makes students comfortable with the ease of technology. Moreover, the diversity of online games and social media applications triggers a low interest in literacy among the generations, especially the reading aspect which has an impact on laziness to study. Therefore, the role of education is very necessary and important in order to maintain a healthy and critical thinking pattern. At least during their education, the younger generation is able to produce works, have morals and ethics when behaving, and advance education in the future.

The importance of realizing a golden Indonesian generation in 2045 has begun to be carried out in various preparations. In the field of education, the curriculum is the main aspect of the learning process. In 2020, Nadiem Makarim inaugurated and carried out socialization about the Independent Learning curriculum. The transition of the curriculum on a macro scale will change the system of educational institutions, while on the micro-scale, it affects students' learning and thinking patterns. Broadly speaking, the curriculum is a learning guideline to achieve educational goals. As stated in the preamble to the 1945 Constitution of the 4th Alenia, one of the essences is to educate the life of the nation. Because the independent learning curriculum is a refinement of the previous curriculum. Of course, there are very fundamental differences, the independent learning curriculum prioritizes several indicators of educational goals, namely, learning based on the Pancasila student profile, there are graduate competency standards, curriculum structure, learning achievements and principles, and a form of assessment in the form of assessment. This is stated in the concept of the independent learning curriculum, which provides students with freedom in choosing scientific fields, there is no linear system in the learning process. Teachers are only facilitators who direct students in learning. The final result of this curriculum is that students are able to complete projects that have been designed at the beginning with their teachers.

Based on the description above, schools that have implemented the independent learning curriculum are schools that are categorized as Centers of Excellence schools for vocational schools and Driving schools for high schools. However, the focus of this research is on vocational schools with a category as a Center of Excellence school. The purpose of the Center of Excellence program is to make students competent according to
their field of expertise. In addition, it also builds MoUs and school cooperation with local industrial companies or outside the region. This is the government's effort to minimize the occurrence of unemployment in Indonesia. The SMK of the Center of Excellence school category is intended for schools that meet certain administrative standards according to the policy and certification of the principal. The government also supports all aspects of the learning process for the school.

The relevant research on schools of excellence in implementing the independent learning curriculum is still rare. However, this study seeks to connect several sources from the Ministry of Education and journal articles that have researched the independent learning curriculum in vocational schools. The research conducted by Dewi Ayu, et al., the discussion refers to the analysis of the independent learning curriculum to realize quality education. The results of the research showed that this curriculum is able to support education because there is platform Learning. From here, the learning system will be independent and fun by using technology development in the form of learning applications. Students are able to show creativity in the form of videos, and communication skills and facilitate the evaluation and assessment system by teachers(Priantini et al., 2022).

Next, research by Nurlaili Sunawardhani and Casmudi, examined SMK Negeri 3 Penajam Paser Utara as a Center of Excellence school. The center of excellence school program will be achieved if it is from physical facilities and infrastructure that support a total of 100%. The research focuses on SWOT analysis, namely Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats, which is at SMK Negeri 3 Penajam Paser Utara. From the results of the study, it was found that obstacles in running the Center of Excellence school program lie in external factors such as weather. This affects partners' suppliers, which are not on time, and there are also delays in the disbursement process and from the center. However, there are aspects of success that are able to improve the quality of education in school institutions. One of the most visible aspects of curriculum integration can involve teachers and students being productive, adaptive, and normative (Sunawardhani and Casmudi, 2022).

In line with the research conducted by Muharrom, it is more specific about the central school subjects of excellence in implementing the independent learning curriculum. To become professional educators in the Independent Learning Curriculum (KMB), teachers must take special training. This training is carried out so that teachers are able to compile and develop learning tools. Because to improve the learning model in accordance
with the characteristics of students. In addition, this curriculum is also a material for evaluating PAI learning, teachers develop formative and summative assessments. Broadly speaking, schools in the center of excellence category must synchronize the program with the new curriculum policy (Muharrom et al., 2023).

Based on the study of the journal articles above, differences with the research conducted can be formulated. This study seeks to review the concept of superior school programs within the scope of Islamic-based private schools. In addition, the object of this research is in the Pekalongan area which is known to have various industrial places. A qualitative approach was used in this study with the type of field study research at SMK Ma’arif NU Tirto Pekalongan. The purpose of the research is to find out how the readiness and learning system in the Center of Excellence schools in implementing the Independent Learning Curriculum.

**METHOD**

This research is qualitative descriptive research on the learning system and readiness factors of private schools of the Center of Excellence in implementing the Independent Learning Curriculum. This type of research is in the form of a field study at SMK Ma’arif Tirto Pekalongan. Therefore, from this study, data was obtained through interviews, observations, and documentation (Siahaan et al., 2022). In the data collection of interview techniques, the resource persons who the researcher succeeded in interviewing intensively were the principal and Deputy Principal of the Curriculum section. In addition, to strengthen the data findings, there are additional resource persons such as BK teachers, subject teachers and students. For observation data collection, the researcher made observations on learning in one of the classes and the condition of the school. Meanwhile, documentation comes from the school website to find information about the school and data on students and educators.

In this research method, data analysis is carried out using three important stages. After the data is obtained, data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing are carried out so that the results of the analysis will be more specific and arranged according to the problems formulated.

**RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

Independent Learning Curriculum at Center of Excellence Schools
From data from the Ministry of Education and Culture, it has been recorded that in the 2021/2022 school year, a total of 2,500 schools have begun to treat the independent learning curriculum. This curriculum focuses on knowledge and development of students' abilities according to their phases. In the Center of Excellence school, there are two phases, namely phase E for classes X and XI and phase F for class XII. Mukhadis stated that education for vocational school students better understand the economic and industrial movements that are happening today. If you look at the condition of the development of education in other countries, education is not only about deepening knowledge but also producing the output of the length of time the student deepens knowledge at school. The biggest hope is that the Center of Excellence School program for school institutions can easily gain access so that students learn in the field directly.

Aiman Faiz and Iman Kurniawati said that the concept of independent learning designed by the Indonesian Ministry of Education and Culture takes the idea developed by John Dewey based on changes and developments of the times. Therefore, education in the independent learning curriculum that is currently being implemented has also undergone changes and improvements to adapt to the changing conditions of the times. So, it is not surprising that the independent learning curriculum is a transformation or change in educational conditions as a form of effort so that the Indonesian state does not lag behind education in other countries (Syafifur et al., 2021).

The independent learning curriculum is a curriculum that provides flexibility, freedom and independence for educators and students to develop their potential. The independent learning curriculum is a curriculum about independence in thinking (Web Manager of the Directorate of Junior High School, 2022). The meaning of freedom of thinking is the ability of educators to adjust enthusiastic learning with students during the learning so that the expected learning nuances can be more comfortable for educators and students. By paying attention to the active, effective and conducive atmosphere, the independent learning curriculum can achieve the formation of student character.

The concept of the SMK Center of Excellence (SMK PK) program is the development of schools with certain skill competencies that are strengthened through corporate partnerships such as industry, business, and labor. The goal is that vocational schools can be used as a reference and have a function as a driving school and a center for the improvement and performance of other vocational schools. SMK PK is a continuation of the program from the Ministry of Education and Culture, namely the SMK Center of Excellence.
Excellence (CoE) program and SMK Revitalization. Currently, the minister of education is initiating a Center of Excellence school to have training for school principals, vocational teachers, a learning curriculum with a new paradigm, and school digitalization facilities (Kemendikbud, 2021) SMK PK's learning system is PJBL (Project-Based Learning), which explores the potential of soft skills.

Minister Nadiem Anwar Makarim conveyed that SMK PK is aimed at vocational school students so that learning is more in line with the needs of the world of work. Seeing the condition of many young people who graduated from vocational schools but became unemployed. In addition, it was also conveyed by the director general of education (Wikan Sakarinto) that SMK PK is an accelerator and a trainer vocational school for other vocational schools. The SMK PK program is prioritized for 895 vocational schools that have seven sectors of creative economy, machinery and construction, hospitality, care services, maritime, agriculture, and foreign cooperation. The Minister of Industry (Agus Gumiwang Kartasasmita) fully supports the SMK PK program, from the Minister of Industry will continue to facilitate the strengthening of links and matches in the education sector in order to improve the economy through industry. It is hoped that the next generation of the nation can be competitive in the global arena. Another support also comes from the Governor of Central Java (Ganjar Pranowo), through SMK PK is a bridge for human resources to excel, because there are targets that must be prepared towards a century of Indonesian Independence.

In essence, the launch of the SMK PK program received a positive response from various ministers and also several educational institutions. This program cannot run alone without the assistance of certain university students. The goal in question is so that synergy can be established between the levels taken at SMK PK. At least more than 100 universities will assist in the implementation of the program. So the SMK program is referred to as the improvement of the previous vocational education revitalization program. According to the medium-term work plan (RKJM), this program will last until 2024 (Masyarakat et al., 2021). So that the independent learning curriculum provides flexibility to SMK PK in developing and even creating productive students.

**SMK Ma'arif NU Tirto Pekalongan in Implementing the Independent Learning Curriculum**

Pekalongan is seen as a city of students, and almost most Islamic boarding schools are located in the corners of the region. The Islamic value of this city is a combination of
norms, ethics, and behavior with education. So it is not surprising that many schools are found to be private and integrated Islamic boarding schools or Islamic-based. One of the private schools in Pekalongan Regency whose education system has developed and advanced is SMK Ma'arif NU Tirto. SMK Ma'arif NU Tirto is located on Jalan Wonoprojo No. 19, Mijen, Pacar, Tirto District, Pekalongan Regency, Central Java. The mission of this school is to Realize SMK Ma'arif NU Tirto as a Creator of Skilled Human Resources, a Professional in working based on Faith and piety to God Almighty in the Expertise program he chose who is able to face the Globalization Era.

Prior to the Center of Excellence school program, this vocational school had received the CoE school category, namely the Center of Excellence from the Directorate General of Education. The Center of Excellence program, both the learning system and the assessment, are almost the same as the SMK CoE program, but there is vocational assistance from universities. The mentoring is carried out so that performance in the field produces collaboration as well as an internship activity for students to teach and practice science.

Ma'arif NU Tirto School is located close to the industrial center, and the surrounding environment has a direct influence on the learning system. According to Mohamad Surya (2014: 34), the environment is everything that stimulates individuals, so that individuals are involved and affect their development (Hidayat & Abdillah, 2019). Education, each individual development has different levels according to age factors and also cognition that must be developed. Students who are at a cognitive level and can hone their skills are educated at vocational schools. Vocational education institutions are regulated in Government Regulation of the Republic of Indonesia No. 29 of 1990 article 1 concerning secondary education. The article "Vocational secondary education is education at the secondary education level that prioritizes the development of students' ability to carry out certain types of work." Seeing the potential environmental impact, Mr. Munip, as the principal of the school, provides special facilities for teachers, namely IHT (In-House Training). Teachers are required to follow it so that in the future, there will be an alignment of the school with Dudi (the Business World and the World of Work Industry). Even though it is a private Islamic school, SMK Ma'arif received public appreciation for seeing the achievements of the students. The level of discipline, responsibility and democratic sense built is able to maintain the good name of the school.
SMK NU Ma'arif Tirto, the education and learning system of the independent learning curriculum as a whole follows instructions or directions from the center. This is from the interview data with the Deputy Curriculum Representative, who said that although the school is Islamic-based, it has not entirely changed according to the previous policy. However, the school will adjust the phases that apply to each class. This vocational school receives student assistance from the University of Pekalongan with a background of religious diversity. Therefore, the focus of learning as a Center of Excellence school is the implementation of P5BK (Project for Strengthening the Profile of Pancasila Students for Culture and Work). Compared to the previous curriculum, in the independent learning curriculum, P5BK material is included in all subjects taught by teachers. The form of development can be intra- or extra-school activities, according to the policy of the subject teacher. But the Ma'arif NU Tirto Pekalongan Vocational School exemplifies mutual cooperation activities, which these activities will give rise to a sense of democracy, tolerance, and help. Basically, this form of activity is carried out based on the syllabus which has now changed to ATP (Flow of Learning Objectives). ATP is also a consideration for withstanding evaluation and assessment both formatively and summatively.

To prepare for the performance of students who will intern at industrial companies, SMK Ma'arif NU Tirto Pekalongan provides various supporting facilities. As well as sewing machines, computer and language laboratories, school workshops, school cooperatives, places to make batik fabrics, and so on. The governance of the Center of Excellence starts with the aid funds the Center of Excellence received in 2020. The school also carries out partnerships and collaborations with industries, including PT. Daiwabo, Cabana, DMA Collection and PT Telkom. One of the efforts is to meet the requirements of the Center of Excellence school in connection with the implementation of the independent learning curriculum.

The enactment of the independent learning curriculum at SMK Ma'arif NU Tirto has resulted in various responses from students. Although not all students know the latest curriculum concepts, but enthusiasm for PJBL learning fosters a high curiosity. Discussions in the classroom attract students' attention to appear confident in expressing their opinions. Moreover, learning will be successful if teachers are able to develop learning media. Because the independent curriculum perfects the 2013 curriculum as students are active in learning, the method used by teachers is not like lectures from the beginning to the end of learning. as expressed by Dela Khoirul Ainia Ki Hadjar Dewantara
views education as a driver for student development, namely education that teaches to achieve change and benefit the surrounding environment. Thus, if examined more deeply, the Indonesian Ministry of Education and Culture is creating a new perspective for the Indonesian people about Education itself. If you look at its relevance, the Independent Learning Curriculum is a form of education to implements the values of the nation's character by improving the education system and learning methods that have previously been applied to the education system in Indonesia (Ainia, 2020)

**Supporting and inhibiting factors in the Pekalongan Center of Excellence (PK) school.**

There are supporting and inhibiting factors in implementing the Independent Learning Curriculum learning system.

1. **Synchronization between teachers and students regarding the concept of the Independent Learning Curriculum.** The dynamic curriculum requires the academic community to play an active role in running and developing the curriculum through the form of learning. There is synchronization between teachers and students regarding the concept of the Independent Learning Curriculum. Thus, teachers implement PjBL (*Projek Based Learning*) with the characteristics of innovating, creating, and improving students' soft skills. In accordance with the research theory conducted by Rahmansyah, the independent learning curriculum is a curriculum that has a fun character with the development of thinking, innovation, and creativity by teachers. Teachers, as educators, are given full opportunities to conceptualize learning according to the abilities of each student (Rahmansyah, 2021).

2. **Teachers as Learning Facilitators.** The Independent Learning Curriculum conceptualizes the development of character and competencies of the Pancasila Student Profile. In its actualization, this concept is contained in the term P5BK (Project for Strengthening the Pancasila Student Profile and Work Culture). Effective learning in the Independent Learning Curriculum can be seen from the high enthusiasm of students always to be active, ask questions, be disciplined, be democratic, and help each other. It is also related to the self-confidence theory from Jenny Fleming's research, which states that to increase self-confidence, the stage that must be done is to ask a number of fundamental problems. Then conduct a discussion and expand the analysis to make a decision (Fleming & McLaughlin, 2012).
3. Teacher Encouragement Counseling Guidance for Students. Although BK learning does not really master the scope of knowledge, this subject provides enthusiasm for students. The Independent Learning Curriculum is here to make students disciplined. Especially for vocational school students, discipline is the main key so that there are no mistakes in field performance. In addition, BK teachers voluntarily open consultations for students and teachers who experience difficulties and learning obstacles. Because the potential of human resources is influenced by encouragement from the outside so that they feel comfortable that the spirit of carrying out activities(Sari et al., 2021).

4. Teachers' Age Factors in the Use of Technology. Human resources as educators are able to carry out the professional competence of teachers. Teachers who have the potential and ability to operate technology can easily revive the learning atmosphere in the classroom. Students will be interested in new things, especially combining materials by utilizing technology. So, the age factor affects the use of technology for learning.

**Inhibiting Factors**

1. Teachers Struggle to Adjust Learning to Student Character Diversity. Besides teachers who are still relatively young are able to play an active role in operating technology, but on the other hand, it is still difficult to understand the different thinking patterns of students. A group learning system requires teachers to be able to divide group members fairly in order to maintain consistency and stability of learning. This is under the independent learning curriculum that is assessed to be in line with the concept of education in the opinion of Ki Hadjar Dewantara. As stated in the research theory from Dela Khoirul Ainia, Ki Hajar Dewantara views education as a driver for student development, namely education that teaches to achieve change and benefit the surrounding environment(Ainia, 2020).

2. Facilities and Infrastructure of the Automotive Department Are Inadequate. Although the government's policy provides assistance funds to schools in the Center of Excellence category every year, the school has difficulty fulfilling facilities and infrastructure. The cause is the characteristics of the physical buildings and PK school facilities that must be adjusted to government regulations. Bad conditions occur in the practicum of automotive subjects. Teachers cannot fully teach theory in practice due to constraints on media and limited infrastructure. These limitations are an obstacle to operating and dissecting equipment to practice independently. So it is contrary to the
opinion of Sri Yeyenri Putrianti Hau who stated that educational institutions that are able to implement good policies, infrastructure, and funding in the future can increase the readiness of human resources (Yeyenri Putrianti Hau et al., 2020). However, the school may complete the facilities that have not been met in the next academic year. In addition, almost all infrastructure facilities of all departments have begun to meet the needs evenly.

3. Unconducive Class Conditions. Not only data obtained from teachers related to inhibiting factors, but the researcher also conducted interviews with several students exclusively. There are several points of view of students of certain majors regarding the Independent Learning curriculum, such as group learning causing classroom conditions to be unconducive. Then I feel burdened by friends who don't think about the assignments given by the teacher. The inhibiting factors of students are in the form of complaints about the material and information provided by the teacher. Some students cannot master and understand foreign terms in the material in the book.

Thus, the supporting and inhibiting factors at SMK Ma'arif NU Tirto Pekalongan are a reference for improving the learning system in the future. This will ensure that obstacles can be overcome immediately and do not negatively impact schools and industrial cooperation.

CONCLUSION

The Independent Learning Curriculum is a curriculum in the student learning system to practice soft skills. The PjBL (Project Based Learning) learning model emerged in each student subject. For Vocational High School students in implementing the Merdeka Learning curriculum, the term P5BK (Project to Strengthen the Pancasila Student Profile and Work Culture) is included in each subject. Therefore, school principals, teachers, and students must be ready to implement the Independent Learning curriculum. For PK vocational schools in Pekalongan, the level of readiness is mature and according to the criteria of the Ministry of Education. This can be seen from the supporting factors, which include synchronization between teachers and students regarding the concept of the Independent Learning Curriculum, teachers as facilitators of student learning, there is the encouragement of counseling guidance teachers for students and many young teachers who are able to utilize technology. In addition, there are several inhibiting factors, namely the difficulty of teachers in understanding the diversity of students' characters, the inadequate facilities and infrastructure of the automotive department, and the absence of conducive
classroom conditions. This makes it difficult for teachers to adjust learning to the diversity of students' characters. However, the existing obstacles do not last long because at SMK Ma'arif NU Tirto Pekalongan, there is a collaboration with industry partners, and there are also assistance funds to complete the needs of the school.

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