

The Challenges Faced by EFL Teachers in Implementing Independent Curriculum

Mardhatillah^{1*}, Maghdahalena Tjalla², Arqam³, Zulfah Fakhruddin⁴, Ambo Dalle⁵

¹⁻⁵English Education, Post Graduate, Institut Agama Islam Negeri Parepare, Indonesia

Article Info

Article history:

Received 23 July, 2024

Revised 7 Sept, 2024

Accepted 18 Jan, 2025

Keywords:

Independent Curriculum;
EFL teachers;
Challenges

ABSTRACT

This study aims to identify the challenges faced by English teachers in implementing the independent curriculum at MAN 2 Parepare. Using a descriptive qualitative approach, data were collected through interviews, observations, and documentation from three teachers. Data analysis included collection, reduction, presentation, and conclusion drawing. The results show that the challenges faced include internal and external aspects. Internal challenges encompass classroom management, workload, motivation and job satisfaction, resources and support, as well as professional development. External challenges include educational policies, technology, students' social conditions, parental involvement, and the surrounding environment. Teachers face various obstacles such as the diversity of student characteristics, administrative demands, lack of technological support, and limited learning facilities.

Corresponding Author:

Mardhatillah

English Education, Post Graduate, Institut Agama Islam Negeri Parepare, Indonesia

mardhatillahukkas22@gmail.com

INTRODUCTION

A nation's greatness can be seen through its Human Resources, prompting continuous educational development and curriculum changes to enhance quality. In Indonesia, curriculum reforms, such as KBK, KTSP, and K13, reflect government efforts to improve education quality, as mandated by Law No. 20 of 2003 on the National Education System. This law underpins curriculum policies promoting independent, creative learning where students and teachers have freedom in the learning process. The Ministry of Education, Culture, Research, and Technology aims to prepare a future golden generation through quality education programs, including the independent learning program. The independent learning program, now implemented in Indonesia, seeks to create a joyful learning atmosphere for students and teachers. This program is part of the independent curriculum designed to encourage innovative and expressive thinking in schools. Assessments from institutions like PIRLS, TIMSS, and PISA reveal quality gaps in primary and secondary education due to limited access to quality teachers, resources, and technology for economically disadvantaged students.

Independent learning aims to bridge this gap through flexible curricula, school autonomy, and enhanced teacher capacity. The essence of independent learning is to unlock the potential of teachers and students, making equitable access to technology essential. The independent curriculum revitalizes the education system by focusing on key competencies, enjoyable learning activities, competency and values-based curriculum, and individual needs-based approaches.

The government grants schools the freedom to choose their curriculum, allowing educators to tailor

learning to students' needs. The Ministry of Education and Culture recommends phased implementation of the independent curriculum based on each school's conditions. Proper implementation requires adequate facilities and teacher preparedness. Challenges in implementing the independent curriculum include the transition from the 2013 curriculum, lack of knowledge about the new curriculum, and the need for teacher professionalism.

Teacher freedom in the learning process is crucial, yet challenges arise from both internal and external factors. This study will focus on internal challenges faced by English teachers in implementing the independent curriculum, with potential exploration of external factors if relevant.

This research, titled "The Challenges Faced by English Teachers in Implementing the Independent Curriculum," aims to thoroughly discuss these issues.

METHODOLOGY

This study was designed using a qualitative design because the focus of the research was to describe the challenges faced by English teachers in implementing independent curriculum. Creswell in 2012 states that mixed methods research is a research design with philosophical assumptions as well as an inquiry method. This method focuses on collecting, analyzing, and qualitative data in a single study or a series of studies. The main premise is that the use of qualitative approaches provides a better understanding of the research problem than either approach. Furthermore, In this study, data were collected through observation and interviews. In the data collection process, qualitative.

This research was conducted in three schools, the first school was at MAN 2 Parepare, located at Jl. Jenderal Sudirman, Cappa Galung, Kec. Bacukiki Barat., Kota Parepare, Prov. South Sulawesi. This research was chosen after making observations before conducting this research. The problems encountered are related to the concept of this research. The duration of the study is 30 days.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Based on the results of research conducted by the researcher regarding challenges faced by teachers in implementing the independent curriculum in EFL classes, the researcher found several opinions obtained from interviews with several teachers at MAN 2 Parepare.

At the interview stage, the author used 2 indicators of challenges, namely Internal Factors. In internal factors there were several questions asked regarding teacher challenges in terms of Classroom management, Workload, Motivation and job satisfaction, Resources and support, and Professional development in the independent curriculum implementation. The second was External factors, to finding out the challenges faced by teachers in terms of educational policy, technology, social and economic conditions, parental participation, and the environment.

The following is a table of these indicators created by the author regarding several questions submitted to English teachers.

Internal challenges

In the interviews conducted by researchers, to find out challenges faced by teachers in independent curriculum implementation, the researchers asked five questions namely the first, challenges faced by teacher related to classroom management in independent curriculum implementation; second, challenges faced by teacher related to workload in independent curriculum implementation ; third, challenges faced by teacher related to Motivation and job satisfaction in independent curriculum implementation; fourth, challenges faced by teacher related to Resources and support in independent curriculum implementation. The last, challenges faced by teacher related to Professional development in independent curriculum implementation.

Table 1. Internal Challenges

Questions	Teachers	Interview Data
1. challenges faced by teacher related to classroom management in independent curriculum implementation	T1	- Differences in student characters make it difficult to apply concepts that have been well designed
	T2	- Before teaching, teachers must carry out a diagnostic assessment to understand students' character, learning styles and prior knowledge. This process requires complicated preparation and is time consuming, especially with a large number of students
	T3	- Managing the diversity of student abilities, adapting learning methods, and

		ensuring student involvement in independent learning are additional challenges that must be faced
2. challenges faced by teacher related to workload in independent curriculum implementation	T1	- Teachers must be able to map and set a priority scale between important and unimportant tasks, which is often a challenge
	T2	- The many administrative demands that teachers have to carry out often make it difficult for them to focus, because on the one hand they have to teach and on the other hand they also have to complete various administrative tasks.
	T3	- Maintaining motivation and satisfaction in teaching, especially in certain subjects such as English, is also a challenge. - Teachers must be able to maintain student enthusiasm, adapt material to their needs, and find creative ways to keep learning interesting
3. challenges faced by teacher related to Motivation and job satisfaction in independent curriculum implementation	T1	- Teachers find it difficult to determine short-term and long-term goals, which are important to provide clear direction in the teaching process
	T2	- The large number of work demands often causes stress which has a negative impact on teaching activities, so that they cannot be carried out optimally
	T3	- Maintaining motivation and satisfaction in teaching, especially in a subject like English, becomes a challenge. - Teachers must be able to maintain students' enthusiasm, adapt material to their needs, and find creative ways to keep learning interesting
4. challenges faced by teacher related to Resources and support in independent curriculum implementation	T1	- teachers experience a lack of support from colleagues, especially due to age differences, so discussions regarding the Implementation of the Independent Curriculum (IKM) are still minimal
	T2	- There are problems with the availability of learning resources such as books based on the Independent Curriculum and technological facilities that are still inadequate to support technology-based learning. - support between fellow teachers is quite good
	T3	- Technological limitations and inadequate administrative support also become obstacles in implementing effective learning
5. challenges faced by teacher related to Professional development in independent curriculum implementation	T1	- Professional development is often hampered by unsupportive conditions and environments, which make the process of increasing competence difficult
	T2	- Even though they often participate in Merdeka Curriculum training, teachers find that what they learn

	in the training is difficult to apply in teaching practice, although there are also things that can be applied
T3	- challenges in gaining access to relevant training and professional development, resources for research and curriculum development, and support to meet new developments in learning, particularly in subjects such as English

Based on the table above it can be explained that:

Challenges faced by teacher related to classroom management in independent curriculum implementation

There are several categories regarding challenges faced by teacher related to classroom management in independent curriculum implementation. The first is that diverse student characteristics. Second, Diagnostic Assessment. Lastly, diversity of student abilities and time limitations.

Challenges faced by teacher related to workload in independent curriculum implementation;

There are several categories regarding Challenges faced by teacher related to workload in independent curriculum implementation. First challenge is division of tasks, Teacher must be able to map and set a priority scale between important and unimportant tasks. Second is many administrative demands. Last challenge is Maintaining motivation and satisfaction in teaching.

Challenges faced by teacher related to motivation and job satisfaction in independent curriculum implementation

There are several categories regarding Challenges faced by teacher related to motivation and job satisfaction in independent curriculum implementation. First is determining goals. Second is stress due to many demands. Last is maintaining motivation and creativity.

Challenges faced by teacher related to resources and support in independent curriculum implementation.

There are several categories regarding challenges faced by teacher related to resources and support in independent curriculum implementation. First is lack of support from coworkers. Second is learning resources and technology facilities. Last is technology limitations and administrative support.

Challenges faced by teacher related to professional development in independent curriculum implementation.

There are several categories regarding challenges faced by teacher related to professional development in independent curriculum implementation. First is unfavorable conditions and environment. Second, training is difficult to apply in teaching practice. Last is access and support for professional development.

External Challenges

In the interviews conducted by researchers, to find out challenges faced by teachers in independent curriculum implementation, the researchers asked five questions namely the first, challenges faced by teacher related to educational policy in independent curriculum implementation; second, challenges faced by teacher related to technology in independent curriculum implementation ; third, challenges faced by teacher related to social and economic conditions in independent curriculum implementation; fourth, challenges faced by teacher related to parental participation in independent curriculum implementation. The last, challenges faced by teacher related to environment in independent curriculum implementation.

Table 2. External Challenges

Questions	Teachers	Interview Data
1. challenges faced by teacher related to educational policy in independent curriculum implementation	T1	- Government policies regarding the Driving School Program add to the many programs that must be implemented outside of the main responsibility as an educator
	T2	- Current education policies require schools to follow a strict curriculum and carry out various mandatory activities and programs such as P5 activities.
	T3	- Challenges include understanding and implementing new

		curriculum changes, adapting learning methods to frequently changing policies, and navigating new and complex administrative requirements
2. challenges faced by teacher related to technology in independent curriculum implementation	T1	- do not have experience challenges in adapting technology
	T2	- Teachers who are no longer young face difficulties in learning technology, requiring repetition and longer time to understand
	T3	- Challenges faced include understanding and using digital learning tools effectively, overcoming limited access to technology in students' environments, and continuously updating technology skills to support innovative learning
3. challenges faced by teacher related to social and economic conditions in independent curriculum implementation	T1	- Differences in social and economic conditions both in the school environment and in students require special handling from educators so as not to disrupt learning
	T2	- Each student has a different socioeconomic background, which influences their ability to learn. The Teacher must pay extra attention, especially to students in harsh social conditions or low economic backgrounds, to ensure they can still learn well
	T3	- Challenges include economic disparities among students, social impacts affecting learning, varying family support, and ensuring all students feel supported and engaged in learning.
4. challenges faced by teacher related to parental participation in independent curriculum implementation	T1	- The main challenge is to provide understanding to parents of students regarding the Implementation of the Independent Curriculum (IKM), especially regarding new terms such as assessment, because many parents do not understand.
	T2	- There are no challenges faced because parents and the community can cooperate well and there are no problems in supporting learning and school activities
	T3	- The challenges are facing different expectations from parents regarding their children's education, building good cooperative relationships with parents, and overcoming societal influences that can influence the learning environment at school.
5. Challenges faced by teacher related to environment in independent curriculum implementation.	T1	- Teacher must be able to provide guidance regarding the culture surrounding the school environment to ensure good integration between the school environment and local culture
	T2	- Many learning facilities in

	schools still need to be equipped, especially learning resources and technology which must better support a technology-based curriculum
T3	- Challenges include inadequate physical facilities as well as noise or disturbances from the surrounding environment which can disrupt the learning process

Based on the table above it can be explained that:

Challenges faced by teacher related to educational policy in independent curriculum implementation. There are several categories regarding challenges faced by teacher related to educational policy in independent curriculum implementation. The first is that government policies regarding the driving school program add to the many programs that must be implemented outside of the main responsibility as an educator. Second, strict curriculum and mandatory programs. Last, challenges in policy understanding and implementation.

Challenges faced by teacher related to technology in independent curriculum implementation. There are several categories regarding Challenges faced by teacher related to technology in independent curriculum implementation. The first is Technology Learning Difficulties for Senior Teachers. Second, challenges of Understanding and Using Technology

Challenges faced by teacher related to social and economic conditions in independent curriculum Implementation. There is Challenges faced by teacher related to social and economic conditions in independent curriculum implementation. That is challenges of differences in social and economic conditions

Challenges faced by teacher related to parental participation in independent curriculum implementation. There are several categories regarding challenges faced by teacher related to resources and support in independent curriculum implementation. First is The main challenge is to provide understanding to students' parents regarding the Implementation of the Independent Curriculum (IKM), especially regarding new terms such as assessment, because many parents do not understand. Second is Other challenges include dealing with different expectations from parents regarding their children's education, building good collaborative relationships with parents, and overcoming societal influences that can affect the learning environment at school.

Challenges faced by teacher related to environment in independent curriculum implementation. There are several categories regarding challenges faced by teacher related to environment in independent curriculum implementation. First is Teachers have a challenge, namely that they must be able to provide guidance related to the culture around the school environment to ensure good integration between the school environment and local culture. Second is Limited Learning Facilities. Last is Disturbances from the surrounding environment that can interfere with the learning process.

CONCLUSION

The results show that the challenges faced include internal and external aspects. Internal challenges encompass classroom management, workload, motivation and job satisfaction, resources and support, as well as professional development. External challenges include educational policies, technology, students' social conditions, parental involvement, and the surrounding environment. Teachers face various obstacles such as the diversity of student characteristics, administrative demands, lack of technological support, and limited learning facilities.

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