THE ROLE OF SCHOOL PRINCIPAL IN OVERCOMING TEACHERS' OBSTACLES TO DEVELOP THE INDEPENDENT CURRICULUM IN AN ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

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ABSTRACT

Changes during the transition period from the 2013 curriculum to the independent curriculum have caused several obstacles for the school community, including the teachers who need to adjust their competencies to the latest curriculum. Therefore, the school principal plays a crucial role in overcoming these obstacles. The purpose of this study is to reveal the role of school principal in overcoming teachers' obstacles in developing the independent curriculum in elementary schools. This research used a case study method through a qualitative approach with Ngupasan State Elementary School as the location of the study. The subjects of this study were the principal, the teachers, and some students. The data collection techniques consisted of observation, interviews, and documentation. To obtain valid data, a data validity test was carried out through data triangulation by using the technical triangulation and source triangulation. The data analysis technique consisted of data reduction, presentation, and verification. The results of this study show that, to overcome teachers' obstacles in developing the independent curriculum in elementary schools, the principal acts as a decision maker, mentor, liaison, director, leader, and coordinator with such efforts as a) making bold and firm decisions or decisions by deliberation, b) accepting the opinions/input/suggestions from each teacher, c) providing guidance and direction for teachers who have difficulty in teaching, d) serving as a liaison with the school committee, e) giving solutions, motivation, and support for teacher performance, f) focusing on school programs that are derived from the school's vision and mission, g) helping teachers with independent training to learn the PMM application (Platform Merdeka Mengajar), h) carrying out evaluations once a quarter, and i) coordinating facilities, infrastructure, and the needs of teachers and students. Based on these findings, elementary schools that encounter obstacles in developing the independent curriculum, especially in the teacher aspect, should be able to make the abovementioned efforts to allow optimal implementation of the independent curriculum.

Keywords: elementary school; independent curriculum development; principal's role; teachers' obstacles

INTRODUCTION

In the last few decades, the focus on the world of education amidst curriculum reform has grown.[1] This attention is increasingly increasing with curriculum reform -

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[1] Hien Dinh and Annalisa Sannino, "Toward a Diagnostic Toolkit for Intervention in Teachers' Agency during Curriculum Reform: Groundwork for a Change Laboratory in Vietnam," *Teaching and Teacher Education* 140 (April 1, 2024): 104494, https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tate.2024.104494.

where teachers play an independent role in its success.[2,3] Development of the independent curriculum is a new matter in education in Indonesia. Such development is supposed to be one of the innovations in the education system in Indonesia which aims to provide flexibility and school autonomy in designing the school curriculum according to the needs of students.[4,5] However, in its implementation, the transition period from the 2013 curriculum to the independent curriculum has created new problems for the school community, including educators, students, curriculum development teams, principals, and other stakeholders.[6] One of the problems experienced by teachers in developing the independent curriculum is that teachers still have difficulty compiling the patterns of lesson planning in a new format, adjusting to new school programs, and establishing new administration.[7] Teachers as direct implementers of learning have a major role in implementing the independent curriculum in the classroom. However, teachers frequently face challenges in adapting and implementing the principles of independent curriculum in daily practice.[8] Teacher is the key to successful curriculum implementation, this is influenced by knowledge and teacher perceptions in playing the role of curriculum change.[9]

The education system has become more accountable for providing a positive and productive learning atmosphere in which both life skills and academic skills are taught

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[2] Mina Min, "School Culture, Self-Efficacy, Outcome Expectation, and Teacher Agency toward Reform with Curricular Autonomy in South Korea: A Social Cognitive Approach," *Asia Pacific Journal of Education* 43, no. 4 (October 2, 2023): 951–67, https://doi.org/10.1080/02188791.2019.1626218.

[3] Dylan Scanlon, Antonio Calderón, and Ann MacPhail, "Teacher Agency in Enacting Physical Education in a Period of Curriculum Change and Reform in Ireland," *The Curriculum Journal* 32, no. 1 (2021): 48–66, https://doi.org/10.1002/curj.80.

[4] Khoirurrijal et al., *Pengembangan Kurikulum Merdeka*, vol. 21, 2022.

[5] Rusi Rusmiati Aliyyah et al., "Perceptions of Elementary School Teachers towards the Implementation of the Independent Curriculum during the COVID-19 Pandemic," *Journal of Education and E-Learning Research* 10, no. 2 (February 22, 2023): 154–64, https://doi.org/10.20448/jeelr.v10i2.4490.

[6] Venera Vala Këndusi and Zamira Gashi Shatri, "The Role of the School Principal in Motivating Teachers for Professional Development: Case Study of the Municipality of Gjakova in Kosovo," *European Journal of Contemporary Education* 12, no. 3 (September 12, 2023), https://doi.org/10.13187/ejced.2023.3.885.

[7] Pelipus Wungo Kaka, "Integrasi Sikap Spiritual Dan Sikap Sosial Dalam Pembelajaran Bahasa Indonesia Berbasis Kurikulum Merdeka Belajar Pada Siswa …," *Stilistika: Jurnal Pendidikan Bahasa Dan Seni* 11, no. 1 (2022), https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.7416924.

[8] A. P. Nabila et al., "Perubahan Kurikulum Dan Implementasi Kurikulum Merdeka Di SDN 15 Pulai Anak Air Bukittinggi," *Benchmarking: Jurnal Manajemen Pendidikan Islam* 7, no. 1 (2023): 29–39.

[9] Novtryananda M.S Ghunu, "The Challenges of Remote Area Elementary Schools in Thematic Curriculum Implementation," *International Journal of Instruction* 15, no. 2 (April 1, 2022): 19–36, https://doi.org/10.29333/iji.2022.1522a.

and trained.[10] Schools play an important role in shaping the development and education of individuals. Before reaching such goal, the schools' key role involves imparting academic knowledge and skills to students. This includes organizing a curriculum that covers a wide range of subjects to provide a solid foundation of knowledge. In addition, schools also play a role in guiding students through evaluations and examinations to gauge their understanding of the learning materials.[11]

Ideally, schools are not only a place to transfer academic knowledge but also an institution that actively contributes to building students' character, social skills, and moral values. High-quality academic education should be accompanied by in-depth efforts in developing students' personalities and fostering values such as integrity, responsibility, and collaboration. The school environment should be a safe and supportive place where students not only learn but also receive emotional and psychological support. In addition, through extracurricular activities and self-development programs, ideal schools encourage students to develop life skills, leadership skills, and initiative. Active parental involvement, utilization of educational technology, and holistic evaluation involving all aspects of student development are the key elements of an ideal school.[12] Therefore, a school is not only a place to hone intellectual intelligence but also a place where students can grow and develop completely to become individuals who contribute positively to society.[13]

A principal is a school leader who has an onerous task to improve the school quality. A principal plays a crucial role in directing all school communities to achieve educational goals.[14] A principal is a manager as well as a supervisor or leader who

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[10] Zahra Bakhtiari Moghadam, Mehry Haddad Narafshan, and Massoud Tajadini, "The Effect of Implementing a Critical Thinking Intervention Program on English Language Learners' Critical Thinking, Reading Comprehension, and Classroom Climate," *Asian-Pacific Journal of Second and Foreign Language Education* 8, no. 1 (2023), https://doi.org/10.1186/s40862-023-00188-3.

[11] Helda Jolanda Anastasia Dewi, Muhammad Wahyudi, *Profesi Kependidikan Dan Keguruan*, 2020.

[12] Jelena Veletić, Heather E. Price, and Rolf Vegar Olsen, "Teachers' and Principals' Perceptions of School Climate: The Role of Principals' Leadership Style in Organizational Quality," *Educational Assessment, Evaluation and Accountability* 35, no. 4 (November 2023): 525–55, https://doi.org/10.1007/s11092-023-09413-6.

[13] Fredy Yunanto and Ria Kasanova, "Membangun Karakter Mahasiswa Indonesia Melalui Pendidikan Karakter," *Journal on Education* 5, no. 4 (2023): 12401–11, https://doi.org/10.31004/joe.v5i4.2223.

[14] Akhmad Arif Musadad et al., "Principal Transformational Leadership and Teacher Readiness to Teach: Mediating Role of Self-Efficacy," *International Journal of Evaluation and Research in Education (IJERE)* 11, no. 4 (December 1, 2022): 1798, https://doi.org/10.11591/ijere.v11i4.23259.

organizes, supervises, and gives instructions to all the subordinates, including teachers and employees, to solve various problems.[15,16] A principal creates a conducive school atmosphere, gives motivation, empowers teachers through collaboration, includes teachers in upgrading, involves teachers in decision-making, opens two-way communication, provides examples, develops innovative learning models, and organizes the physical environment and work atmosphere.[17] A principal as a leader of an educational institution must be responsible for all school activities. A principal has full authority and responsibility for organizing all educational activities within the school environment that he/she leads.[18]

Effective leadership behavior of a principal determines and influences teacher performance.[19,20] Teachers as one of the components in teaching and learning activities have a position that greatly determines the success of learning because the main function of a teacher is designing, managing, implementing, and evaluating learning.[21] Abdul Rohim stated that teachers play an important role in planning and implementing the curriculum. Because teachers are also at the forefront of curriculum development, they should always evaluate and improve the curriculum.[22] However, if teachers experience obstacles in the learning process, the curriculum development will also be affected. The implementation of a new curriculum, particularly the Independent Curriculum, does not rule out the possibility that teachers have difficulty adapting and adjusting the appropriate

[15] Ade Lisna and Erni Munastiwi, "Peran Kepala Sekolah Sebagai Supervisor Meningkatkan," *Jurnal Pelita PAUD* 5, no. 1 (2020): 7–13.

[16] Parvathy Naidoo, "Perceptions of Teachers and School Management Teams of the Leadership Roles of Public School Principals," *South African Journal of Education* 39, no. 2 (May 31, 2019): 1–14, https://doi.org/10.15700/saje.v39n2a1534.

[17] Asmui Asmui, Sudirman Sudirman, and Sridana Sridana, "Peran Kompetensi Manajerial Kepala Sekolah Dalam Peningkatan Profesionalisme Guru," *Jurnal Ilmiah Profesi Pendidikan* 4, no. 1 (2019): 61–66, https://doi.org/10.29303/jipp.v4i1.81.

[18] Astuti, "Peran Kepala Sekolah Sebagai Supervisor Dalam Meningkatkan Mutu Pendidikan," *Adaara: Jurnal Manajemen Pendidikan Islam* 5, no. 1 (2019): 435–49, https://doi.org/10.35673/ajmpi.v5i1.79.

[19] Abdul Mu'min, "Peranan Kepala Sekolah Dalam Meningkatkan Profesionalisme Guru Di Sdi Al-Ihsan Bambu Apus Pamulang" (UIN Syarif Hidayatullah, 2011).

[20] Vanitha Govindasamy and Raj Mestry, "The Principal's Role in Managing Curriculum Change: Implications for the Provision of Quality Education," *South African Journal of Education* 42, no. 4 (November 30, 2022): 1–10, https://doi.org/10.15700/saje.v42n4a2294.

[21] Këndusi and Shatri, "The Role of the School Principal in Motivating Teachers for Professional Development."

[22] Abdul Rohim, "Pembinaan Kompetensi Profesional Guru," *Jurnal Administrasi Pendidikan* 1, no. 1 (2012): 1–13.

approaches, methods, and strategies for students. [23] When teachers apply their competencies, they face many challenges and obstacles in the field, both internally and externally. Therefore, teachers need help and guidance from their supervisor to provide solutions.[24]

This is also shown in some relevant studies, such as research by Evy Ramadina which revealed that the role of a principal in developing the independent curriculum includes playing a role as a supervisor as well as a leader of change in his/her educational institution since schools have a strategic role in the curriculum development process.[25] Likewise, a study by Zulaiha, Meldina, and Meisin showed that teachers' problems in implementing the Independent Curriculum particularly in planning, implementing, and assessing learning include difficulties in analyzing the learning outcomes (LO), formulating the learning objectives, designing the semester learning plan and teaching modules, and determining the learning methods and strategies as well as the lack of ability to use technology, limited student books, lack of ability to use learning methods and media, extensive teaching materials, determination of grade I and IV projects, lack of time allocation for project-based learning, determination of assessment format, and assessment format for project-based learning.[26]

Other research by Chalarampous Constantia et al. discovered that the challenges faced by school principals and teachers are primarily associated with alienation, marginalization, time management, bureaucracy improvement, problems with technical equipment, and distance learning programs. Some possible solutions to these problems are empathy, teamwork, and decentralization of the educational system, which are all promoted by the principal who occasionally has additional authority.[27] A study by Elina Fonsen found that pedagogical leadership emerges from teachers. Pedagogical leadership

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[23] Framz Hardiansyah and Zainuddin Zainuddin, "The Influence of Principal's Motivation, Communication, and Parental Participation on Elementary School Teachers' Performance," *Al Ibtida: Jurnal Pendidikan Guru MI* 9, no. 2 (2022): 319, https://doi.org/10.24235/al.ibtida.snj.v9i2.9936.

[24] Ahmad Ma'ruf Muzahidin Arrosit, "Supervisi Akademik Kepala Sekolah Dalam Meningkatkan Kinerja Guru (Studi Kasus Di Ma Maarif Al-Falah Ngrayun Ponorogo)," *Tesis Institut Agama Islam Negeri Ponorogo* (2021).

[25] Evy Ramadina, "Peran Kepala Sekolah Dalam Pengembangan Kurikulum Merdeka Belajar," *Mozaic Islam Nusantara* 7, no. 2 (2021): 131–142, https://doi.org/10.47776/mozaic.v7i2.252.

[26] Siti Zulaiha, Tika Meldina, and Meisin, "Problematika Guru Dalam Menerapkan Kurikulum Merdeka Belajar," *Jurnal Pendidikan Dan Pembelajaran Dasar* 9, no. 2 (2022): 163–77.

[27] Charalampous Constantia et al., "The Impact of COVID-19 on the Educational Process: The Role of the School Principal," *Journal of Education* 203, no. 3 (2023): 566–73, https://doi.org/10.1177/00220574211032588.

is recognized as an indicator of high-quality pedagogy in early childhood education, and this finding highlights the need to continuously support and strengthen teachers' pedagogical leadership.[28] The difference between the aforementioned research and this research is that this research focuses more on combining some previous studies into a problem faced by teachers and providing solutions based on the role of a principal. In addition, this research also focuses on the development of the independent curriculum at the elementary school level.

The obstacles faced by the teachers of Ngupasan Elementary School include the lack of competencies in adapting the material, abilities, skills, and characters of students who are taught incompletely using the previous curriculum but are asked to use the new curriculum. In addition, with the diverse human resource potential among teachers, all teachers are required to implement the principles of independent curriculum without prior training from the office of education or the ministry, and there are problems associated with the demands of curriculum administration, school facilities and infrastructure, and limited education funds. Consequently, the role of school principal is needed to overcome the obstacles faced by teachers and to appropriately develop the implementation of independent curriculum.

In this context, the role of school principal as a leader in an educational institution is crucial.[29] Principals have deep strategy and profound role to overcome the obstacles faced by teachers in developing the independent curriculum in elementary schools. Principals have the authority and responsibility to provide support, guidance, and convenience for teachers in facing challenges and implementing the principles of independent curriculum.[30]

The role of principals as a leader reflects their responsibility to mobilize all resources in the school to create a high work ethic and productivity to achieve the

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[28] Elina Fonsén et al., "Teachers' Pedagogical Leadership in Early Childhood Education," *Educational Research* 65, no. 1 (2023): 1–23, https://doi.org/10.1080/00131881.2022.2147855.

[29] Philip Saagyum Dare and Atif Saleem, "Principal Leadership Role in Response to the Pandemic Impact on School Process," *Frontiers in Psychology* 13 (July 11, 2022): 943442, https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2022.943442.

[30] Dkk angga, cucu suryana, ima nurwahidah, "Kepemimpinan Kepala Sekolah Dalam Mewujudkan Merdeka Belajar Di Sekolah Dasar," *Jurnal Basicedu* 6, no. 4 (2022): 5877–89.

goals.[31,32] According to Saiful Bahri, academic supervision is an effort to help teachers develop their ability to achieve learning goals.[33] Arrosit emphasized that educational supervision activities coordinate, stimulate, and direct teacher development.[34] Therefore, the principal as a supervisor conducts academic supervision for teachers' teaching activities in the classroom, provides guidance, makes corrections, and seek initiatives for the course of all educational activities carried out in the school environment.[35]

Mantja suggested that, to foster teacher professionalism that makes them easy to mobilize in carrying out their duties, the principal should foster harmonious collaboration with the staff, help teachers to understand the applicable curriculum and describe it in more detail, foster good school - community relations, and organize education and guide the staff.[36] The leadership role of school principal, as described by Lipoto in Alimuddin, is as a figure, leader, liaison, monitor, disseminator, spokesman, entrepreneur, disturbance handler, resource allocator, and negotiator.[37,38]

The abovementioned studies are deemed relevant to this research as they can provide information and overview regarding the research to be carried out and support the research process. With a focus on the development of the independent curriculum, this research can produce an effective model of school principal management in supporting and facilitating teachers' efforts to develop the independent curriculum. This model can include strategies, involvement, and communication of the principal that motivate and encourage teachers. Based on the description above, the researchers are interested in conducting an in-depth examination of the role of school principal in

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[31] Mu'min, "Peranan Kepala Sekolah Dalam Meningkatkan Profesionalisme Guru Di Sdi Al-Ihsan Bambu Apus Pamulang."

[32] Feifei Li et al., "Principals' Transformational Leadership and Kindergarten Teachers' Career Calling: The Mediating Roles of Organizational Identification and Leader-Member Exchange," *SAGE Open* 13, no. 4 (October 2023): 21582440231218842, https://doi.org/10.1177/21582440231218842.

[33] Saiful Bahri, "Supervisi Akademik Dalam Peningkatan Profesionalisme Guru," *Visipena Journal* 5, no. 1 (2014): 100–112, https://doi.org/10.46244/visipena.v5i1.236.

[34] Arrosit, "Supervisi Akademik Kepala Sekolah Dalam Meningkatkan Kinerja Guru (Studi Kasus Di Ma Maarif Al-Falah Ngrayun Ponorogo)."

[35] Anissyahmai, Rohiat, and Osa Juarsa, "Supervisi Akademik Kepala Sekolah," *Manager Pendidikan* 11, no. 1 (2017).

[36] Zuchri Abdussamad, *Metode Penelitian Kualitatif*, vol. 21 (Makasar: CV Syakir Media Press, 2021).

[37] Alimuddin, "Pelaksanaan Kepemimpinan Kepala Madrasah Dalam Pengembangan Kurikulum Di Man Matangkuli Aceh Utara," *Al-Fatih: Jurnal Pendidikan Dan Keislaman* 3, no. 1 (2020): 14.

[38] Constantia et al., "The Impact of COVID-19 on the Educational Process: The Role of the School Principal."

overcoming teachers' obstacles in developing the independent curriculum in elementary schools.

RESEARCH METHODS

This research used a case study research method with a qualitative approach. Qualitative research is a research method that uses an interpretative approach to produce an in-depth understanding of social phenomena where the researchers interact directly with the participants, and the data collected is descriptive and in the form of words.[39] This method allows researchers to have in-depth understanding of the role of school principal in overcoming teachers' obstacles in developing the independent curriculum in elementary schools.

Qualitative research allows researchers to collect in-depth and detailed data about the obstacles experienced by teachers, the role of school principal, and the implementation of independent curriculum development in elementary schools.[40] This case study approach also allows researchers to observe and analyze situations in a specific environment.[41] The suitable data collection techniques used in this case study research method with a qualitative approach are in-depth interviews, observations in the school environment, and analysis of existing curriculum documents in elementary schools.[42] The interviews were conducted by asking for explanations directly from the research subjects (the principal, head of the curriculum development team, and teachers) by using a voice recorder application. The documentation was done by collecting data about the school's vision, mission, curriculum files, school programs, and school infrastructure. The observation was done directly by observing and recording the objects when the researcher and the principal were conducting the interview.

The validation process for each instrument, such as the interview guidelines, was done first by discussing with colleagues or other researchers, and then the findings were

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[39] Galang Surya Gumilang, "Metode Penelitian Kualitatif Dalam Bidang Bimbingan Dan Konseling," *Jurnal Fokus Konseling* 2, no. 2 (2016).

[40] Kurnia Cahya Ramadhan, "Pengembangan Kurikulum Dalam Meningkatkan Mutu Pendidikan Agama Islam Di SDIT Permata Bunda III Bandar Lampung" (universitas Islam Negeri Raden Intan Lampung, 2017).

[41] Yoki Yusanto, "Ragam Pendekatan Penelitian Kualitatif," *Journal of Scientific Communication (Jsc)* 1, no. 1 (2020): 1–13, https://doi.org/10.31506/jsc.v1i1.7764.

[42] Muhammad Rijal Fadli, "Memahami Desain Metode Penelitian Kualitatif," *Humanika* 21, no. 1 (2021): 33–54, https://doi.org/10.21831/hum.v21i1.38075.

validated by curriculum development experts to help obtain alternative perspectives and ensure appropriate interpretation. The observation instrument was validated by comparing the observational data with the data from the interviews and document analysis. Congruence among various data sources will strengthen the validity of the findings. The observation results were checked by an expert on curriculum development. The results of the document analysis were also validated by an expert curriculum developer, and the researchers requested external opinions from experts or colleagues to review the curriculum document analysis. External opinions can help identify biases or omissions and ensure that the documents are in line with the key stakeholders' perspectives.

The population in this study included the principal and all the teachers of Ngupasan Elementary School in Yogyakarta in the 2023/2024 academic year. The samples in this study were selected purposively. In this method, researchers select samples deliberately to include the subjects or case that are considered the most relevant or informative to the researchers.[43] The samples in the study were the principal and two teachers of different grades, namely AG as a fifth-grade teacher and AK as a third-grade teacher, who were also curriculum developer teachers at Ngupasan Elementary School Yogyakarta. The participants involved in this research and the instrument guide are shown in Table 1.

Table 1
Informant Data

Name of Participant	Status	School	Gender
AP	School Principal	Ngupasan Elementary School	M
AK	Head of Curriculum Developer	Ngupasan Elementary School	F
AG	Class Teacher	Ngupasan Elementary School	M

Source : Personal Documents
Note:
M: Male
F: Female

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[43] Nina Nurdiani, "Teknik Sampling Snowball Dalam Penelitian Lapangan," *ComTech: Computer, Mathematics and Engineering Applications* 5, no. 2 (2014): 1110, https://doi.org/10.21512/comtech.v5i2.2427.

Tabel 2
Interview Instrument

Interview Instrument	
Principal	1. What curriculum is implemented in this school?
	2. Does the school develop the curriculum every new academic year?
	3. Was the curriculum planned beforehand? How was the preparation done?
	4. How is the school curriculum developed?
	5. What is the planning involved in the development of the school curriculum?
	6. Are inputs (including feedback from society) from the past academic year taken into consideration when developing the curriculum?
	7. Is the curriculum tailored to the needs of the students? What are the examples?
	8. Is the curriculum development adjusted to the programs that will be implemented by the school?
	9. Is the curriculum planning done in collaboration with other parties? Who are they?
	10. In general, how does the school evaluate the implemented curriculum?
	11. Are there any obstacles experienced by the school from the implementation of independent curriculum? What is the solution?
Curriculum Teacher	1. What curriculum is implemented at this school?
	2. Does the school develop a curriculum every new academic year?
	3. How is curriculum planning done by the school?
	4. Are there any factors that influence the implementation of the curriculum in the school, both hindering factors and supporting factors? What is the solution?
	5. In the implementation of this curriculum, how is it implemented in the learning in the classroom? Is there a special guide from the school for the learning to achieve the learning objectives?
	6. How is the teachers' readiness to implement this curriculum? How are the syllabus and lesson plans prepared before the learning process?
	7. In your opinion, are the school programs able to improve the implementation of the teaching and learning activities? Why?
	8. Are there any obstacles that teachers experience in implementing this curriculum? How do they overcome these obstacles?
Class Teacher	1. Do you prepare annual, semester, weekly, and daily programs, remediation, and enrichment before teaching?
	2. When is the remediation and enrichment program conducted?
	3. Do you make your own syllabus or do you quote from the Ministry of National Education and then develop it according to the school conditions? Or is the syllabus discussed in MGMP then the school adjusts it to the condition of the students?
	4. How do you integrate the elements of this curriculum into your syllabus?

Interview Instrument
5. How do you integrate the elements of this curriculum into the lesson plans you make?
6. Are there any obstacles in making lesson plans? What is the solution?
7. What do you do at the beginning of the teaching activities?
8. What methods do you use in teaching?
9. What handbooks do you use?
10. What media do you use in the teaching activities?
11. What do you do at the end of the teaching activities?
12. What kind of assessment model do you use in teaching? Is it a class-based assessment model or a test model in the form of descriptions or multiple choice? During discussions, do you also observe and assess students' active participation? Do you give assignments, remediation, and enrichment?
13. Do you encounter any obstacles in assessments? What is the solution?

Source : Personal Documents

Tabel 3
Observation Sheet

Component	Aspects observed	Results
Infrastructure & facilities	1. Principal's room, teachers' room, classrooms 2. Library 3. Computer laboratory 4. Canteen 5. Toilet 6. School garden 7. Prayer room	
Lesson planning	1. Syllabus 2. Lesson plan 3. Annual program 4. Semester program 5. Assessment sheet 6. Academic calendar	
Implementation of the learning process	1. Opening 2. Interaction with students 3. Use of teaching methods 4. Use of media or teaching aids 5. Students' response and active participation 6. Use of time 7. Class control techniques 8. How to motivate students 9. Utilization of the surrounding environment 10. Closing	
Assessment	1. Assessment time 2. Assessment format and type 3. Assessment follow-up	

Source : Personal Documents

This research was conducted at Ngupasan State Elementary School in the city of Yogyakarta in the even semester of the 2022/2023 academic year. To test the validity of the data in this study, the source triangulation and technique triangulation were employed. Source triangulation is done by checking the data obtained from various sources. In this study, to test the credibility of the data on the role of the school principal in the curriculum development, the validity of the obtained data was tested by conducting interviews with the principal, teachers, and students. The data from the three sources were then described, categorized, and analyzed to draw the conclusion. A triangulation technique tests credibility by checking the same source using different techniques. In this study, the researchers held a discussion to ensure that the data collected was considered correct. The researchers had obtained the initial data through interviews, and then the data was crosschecked with the observation and documentation of the independent curriculum analysis to obtain the correct data.

The data analysis techniques referred to the opinion of Miles and Huberman that includes data reduction, data presentation, and conclusions.[44]
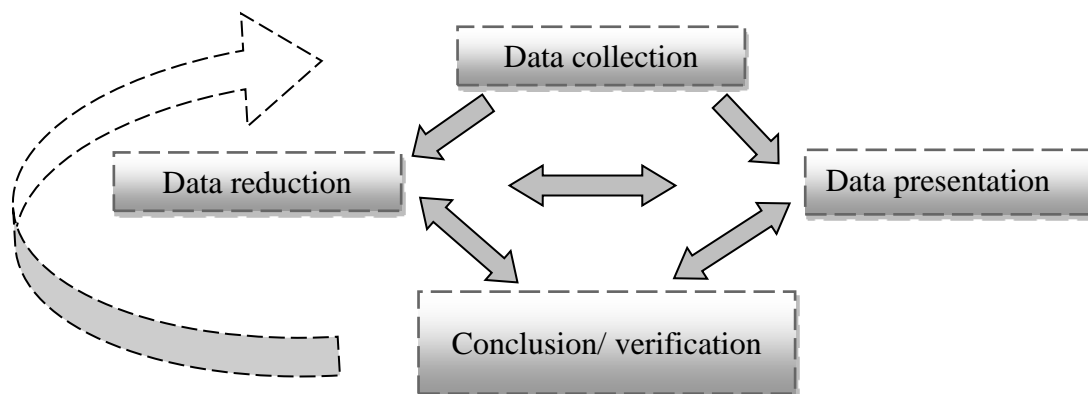

Figure 1
Data Analysis Technique
Source : [45]

The data analysis technique with coding can help promote holistic and in-depth understanding of the findings to provide a detailed and complex insight into the topic studied[46] as presented in Table 4.

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[44] Matthew B. Miles And A. Michael Huberman, *Analisis Data Kualitatif: Buku Sumber Tentang Metode Baru*, ed. rerj: Tjetjep Rohendi Rohidi (Jakarta: Universitas Indonesia Press, 1992).
[45] Matthew B. Miles And A. Michael Huberman, *Analisis Data Kualitatif: Buku Sumber Tentang Metode Baru*, ed. rerj: Tjetjep Rohendi Rohidi (Jakarta: Universitas Indonesia Press, 1992).
[46] Fadli, "Memahami Desain Metode Penelitian Kualitatif."

Table 4
Coding Data Analysis Technique

Data collection	Collecting data through interviews with the principal, head of curriculum development, and teachers, observations at school, and documentation related to the independent curriculum development
Data transcription	Transcribing interviews and converting verbal data into written data to facilitate analysis
Data categorization and coding	Identifying the categories relevant to the research and assigning a unique code to each category
Data organization	Organizing the coded data into an analysis table. Each column in the table represented a code, category, or data excerpt
Data analysis	Analyzing the collected data based on predetermined analysis categories. Looking for patterns, similarities, differences, and interesting findings in the data to identify the role of the principal
Interpretation and discussion	Interpreting the results of data analysis and structuring a discussion that described the teachers' obstacles, the principal's role in overcoming these obstacles, and the efforts to develop the independent curriculum

Source :[47]

By using this research method, researchers can organize and analyze data more systematically. A data analysis table helps in collecting, categorizing, and summarizing relevant excerpts in the research[48] to facilitate the discussion and interpretation of the research results.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The implementation of the independent curriculum has brought about significant changes, especially at the elementary school level. However, there are problems and obstacles experienced by the teachers, including:

As explained by the class teacher "*the independent curriculum has been implemented in grades I and IV while grades II, III, V, and VI implement the 2013 curriculum. However, the teachers and the school community must continue to introduce the independent curriculum in the school environment through habituation and incidental programs*".[49]

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[47] Fadli, "Memahami Desain Metode Penelitian Kualitatif."

[48] Sigit Hermawan and Amirullah, *Metode Penelitian Bisnis: Pendekatan Kuantitatif Kualitatif*, 2016.

[49] Mr. AG, Interview with classroom teacher at SDN Ngupasan, Yogyakarta, 8 Mei 2023.

In addition, teachers need to improve their competencies and ability to adapt to the independent curriculum because if they still have doubts and problems in teaching, the teaching and learning activities cannot run optimally. However, during the implementation, it is not easy for teachers to adapt quickly because they should adjust to student characteristics as explained by the head of the curriculum development team:

"*In the independent curriculum, there are 3 phases: the first phase for grades I and II, the second phase for grades III and IV, and the third phase for grades V and VI. In grade IV, the students immediately enter the end of the second phase, making the teachers, when reading the learning outcomes (LO), confused about which material is for grade III or IV while grade III is still using the 2013 curriculum. Because in the independent curriculum teachers are given freedom in teaching, we do not get assurance while, on the other hand, we must provide material to students coherently and systematically"*.[50]

The same matter was also expressed by the principal "*Each teacher has different perceptions in understanding the independent curriculum, such as in interpreting P5, some think that it should be done every week, whereas other teachers think it should be done in 5 meetings at the end of the semester*".[51]

Based on the above statement, these findings are in line with a study by Rusman which revealed that teachers are a very strategic factor in the development and implementation of curriculum in schools. The achievement of educational goals is more influenced by the ability of teachers, for example their professional competencies, work motivation, performance, dedication, confidence in their abilities, and experience such as academic qualifications, participation in professional training, and length of teaching.[52] [53] Although in the independent curriculum teachers are given freedom in teaching, they should not arbitrarily choose learning materials without considering the abilities, previously learned materials, and characteristics of students as exemplified by the class

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[50] Mrs. AK, Interview with head curriculum developer at SDN Ngupasan, Yogyakarta, 8 Mei 2023.

[51] Mr. AP, Interview with head of school at SDN Ngupasan, Yogyakarta, 10 Mei 2023.

[52] Rusman Rusman, "Implementasi Kurikulum 2013 Di Sekolah Dasar Studi Tentang Best Practice Yang Dilakukan Guru Sekolah Dasar Dalam Perencanaan, Pelaksanaan, Dan Penilaian Kurikulum 2013," *Al-Bidayah: Jurnal Pendidikan Dasar Islam* 10, no. 2 (2019): 135–50, https://doi.org/10.14421/al-bidayah.v10i2.166.

[53] Helda Kusuma Wardani et al., "Analysis of the Impact of the Merdeka Curriculum Policy on Stakeholders at Primary School," *Jurnal Ilmiah Peuradeun* 11, no. 2 (May 30, 2023): 513, https://doi.org/10.26811/peuradeun.v11i2.801.

teacher "*In the mathematics subject of grade IV about fractions, the students must have previously learned decimal fractions, prime numbers first*".[54] So the teacher must choose which material to learn in grade III and which one in grade IV in the independent curriculum, and which material the students have learned and which they have not.

In the implementation of independent curriculum, the teachers are still crawling in understanding and practicing the educational objectives according to the independent curriculum. This is because, when the independent curriculum started to be implemented, at that time the teachers also implemented it in the field without any guidance and training from the office of education, as described by the teacher "*the difficulty we experience in the independent curriculum is that we are required to learn independently in the PMM application without being given training or workshop like the 2013 curriculum, so we are confused about how to make teaching modules, how to break down the learning outcomes into objectives, and how to choose learning material*".[55] Consequently, this becomes one of the obstacles for teachers in teaching, especially if the teachers are still technologically challenged. The teaching of sciences in the 21st century must appropriately integrate digital competencies from both the subject didactics perspective and the subject content perspective.[56] On the other hand, if the teachers have been able to adapt to the independent curriculum, they can easily transform the 2013 curriculum into the independent curriculum because both still have similarities such as in the assessment on the report card, "*in the 2013 curriculum, although the learning is thematic, the grades on the report card are still per subject like those in the independent curriculum*".[57]

The same fact was also expressed by AP "*the teachers often complain every time they study the e-learning provided by the PMM application because they also have many other demands as teachers who multitask other school duties*".[58] These other duties are not only as a classroom teacher but also as a member of the curriculum development team as well as doing other works at home. Therefore, teachers find it difficult to understand

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[54] Mr. AG, Interview with classroom teacher at SDN Ngupasan, Yogyakarta, 8 Mei 2023.

[55] Mr. AG, Interview with classroom teacher at SDN Ngupasan, Yogyakarta, 8 Mei 2023.

[56] Daniel Braun and Johannes Huwer, "Computational Literacy as an Important Element of a Digitized Science Teacher Education—A Systematic Review of Curriculum Patterns in Physics Teacher Education Degrees in Germany," *Education Sciences* 13, no. 10 (2023), https://doi.org/10.3390/educsci13101063.

[57] Mrs. AK, Interview with head curriculum developer at SDN Ngupasan, Yogyakarta, 8 Mei 2023.

[58] Mr. AP, Interview with head of school at SDN Ngupasan, Yogyakarta, 10 Mei 2023.

the independent curriculum because not all teachers have managed to learn the new curriculum changes optimally through the PMM application, making it necessary to improve teachers' understanding of technology.

A study by Dian revealed that the rapid development of technology and information has a significant impact on the progress of education. This is a sign that there are opportunities for participation, adaptation, and direct improvement of quality, creative, and innovative human resources. As a benchmark for the progress of the nation, education seeks to optimize the existence of information and communication technology in every aspect of education.[59] In accordance with the function of curriculum revealed by Lailatu Rohmah, it becomes a guide or management tool that contains instructions on the types and sources of the individuals needed, learning media, necessary actions, sources of funding, personnel, and facilities needed, monitoring and evaluation systems, the role of elements and personnel to achieve educational management objectives to obtain optimal results.[60] Therefore, all parties in the institution must be able to support the process of achieving these goals to achieve the main objectives of education.

This was described by the head of the curriculum development team "*the development of the independent curriculum here is still in the crawling stage, starting from adjusting changes in the teachers' schedule to the subjects, creating or adjusting the previous programs to the Pancasila student profile program*".[61] In addition, other obstacles are described by the teacher:

"*The implementation of the P5 program is not simultaneous because grades II, III, V, and VI use the 2013 curriculum in their learning but in the school environment they have implemented P5, although they have not maximally learned it but we as the teachers have introduced and taught the independent curriculum".[62]*

The same opinion was also expressed by the principal:

"*The independent curriculum gives freedom to students to choose the extracurricular activities that they like, but due to the constraints of facilities and*

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[59] Dian Noviar, "Pengembangan Ensiklopedia IPA Terpadu Berbasis Scientific Approach Dan Indigenous Science Untuk Siswa Kelas VI SD/MI Dalam Rangka Implementasi Kurikulum 2013," *Jurnal Pendidikan Dasar Islam* 7, no. 2 (2013): 125–34.

[60] Lailatu Rohmah, "Implementasi Kurikulum Berbasis Education For Sustainable Development (ESD) Di Sdit Internasional Luqman Hakim Yogyakarta," *Al-Bidayah* 6, no. 2 (2014): 217–34.

[61] Mrs. AK, Interview with head curriculum developer at SDN Ngupasan, Yogyakarta, 8 Mei 2023.

[62] Mr. AG, Interview with classroom teacher at SDN Ngupasan, Yogyakarta, 8 Mei 2023.

infrastructure, the availability of educators, and the lack of funds to provide an honorarium for extra teachers, the school selects according to the availability and needs of students".[63]

Based on the description regarding teachers' obstacles in implementing the independent curriculum, the obstacles for teachers and school parties in developing the independent curriculum are adjustments in schedule changes, program creation, honorarium costs for extracurricular teachers and subject teachers, and the implementation of P5 program that is not simultaneous. The implementation of independent curriculum in elementary schools indirectly makes Indonesian education have increasingly qualified and professional human resources (HR) because the curriculum encourages the development of knowledge from stage to stage.

Angeliki and Alena Nardi revealed that, in the UK, the Initial Teacher Education (ITE) for inclusion includes a statement "trainee teachers must achieve professional standards before they can gain a status as qualified teachers." These standards ensure that teachers can help all students, including students with disabilities, to reach their full potential.[64] In the independent curriculum, there are three phases or levels of development consisting of phase A for grades I and II, phase B for grades III and IV, and phase C for grades V and VI, which indicate that the learning outcomes (LO) have been adapted to the characteristics, potential, and needs of students. [65] The independent curriculum is a curriculum that gives freedom to school members in determining appropriate and relevant learning according to the needs and environment of students and can be applied in everyday life.[66,67,68] However, in practice, the development of independent curriculum in primary schools often face obstacles, one of which comes from the teachers.

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[63] Mr. AP, Interview with head of school at SDN Ngupasan, Yogyakarta, 10 Mei 2023.

[64] Angeliki Stylianidou and Elena Nardi, "Overcoming Obstacles for the Inclusion of Visually Impaired Learners through Teacher–Researcher Collaborative Design and Implementation," *Education Sciences* 13, no. 10 (2023), https://doi.org/10.3390/educsci13100973.

[65] Zulaiha, Meldina, and Meisin, "Problematika Guru Dalam Menerapkan Kurikulum Merdeka Belajar."

[66] Addurorul Muntatsiroh and Suswati Hendriani, "Strategi Kepala Sekolah Dalam Memfasilitasi Implementasi Kurikulum Merdeka Di SMKN 3 Sijunjung," *Jurnal Kajian Ilmu Pendidikan* 3, no. 2 (2023): 100–106.

[67] Aris Rudi Purnomo et al., "Embedding Sustainable Development Goals to Support Curriculum Merdeka Using Projects in Biotechnology," *International Journal of Learning, Teaching and Educational Research* 22, no. 1 (January 30, 2022): 406–33, https://doi.org/10.26803/ijlter.22.1.23.

[68] Wasehudin Wasehudin et al., "Transforming Islamic Education through Merdeka Curriculum in Pesantren," *Jurnal Pendidikan Islam* 9, no. 2 (December 28, 2023): 255–66, https://doi.org/10.15575/jpi.v9i2.28918.

Table 5
Teachers' Obstacles in the Independent Curriculum

No.	Obstacles Experienced by Teachers in Developing the Independent Curriculum	Result
1	Adaptation	The need for adjustment to student characteristics
2	Training	No training on the Independent Curriculum
3	P5 Program	Teacher availability and lack of concurrent P5 Program

Source : Personal Documents

Based on the discussion of the research findings at Ngupasan Elementary School, the obstacles experienced by the teachers are the transition period from the 2013 curriculum to the independent curriculum, making it necessary for teachers to adapt between curriculum changes and the conditions of students, the confusion about understanding LO and preparing teaching modules, requirement to learn the PMM application independently without training or teaching workshop, differences in teacher perceptions, arrangements for changes in teaching schedules, non-simultaneous implementation of the P5 program, and the limited availability of teachers. These obstacles, in Susetyo's opinion, indicate that the design of the independent curriculum policy has differences in its implementation, causing such problems as human resource readiness, mindset, administrative system, funding, rights to learn, and curriculum design.[69] The same opinion is also described by Zulaiha, Meldina, and Meisin in that the problems of teachers in implementing the independent curriculum at ES 17 Rejang Lebong are in the planning implementation and learning assessment. The problems faced start from analyzing the Learning Outcomes to become Learning Objectives, following the Flow of Learning Objectives and turning objectives into Teaching Modules, difficulties in determining appropriate learning methods and strategies, and the lack of teacher ability to use technology.[70]

To overcome these obstacles, the role of the principal is crucial. The role of the principal of Ngupasan Elementary School in the curriculum development is as follows.

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[69] Khoirurrijal et al., *Pengembangan Kurikulum Merdeka*.
[70] Zulaiha, Meldina, and Meisin, "Problematika Guru Dalam Menerapkan Kurikulum Merdeka Belajar."

As explained by the head of curriculum development "*Of course, there is a very significant role of the principal in developing the curriculum, which is as a decision maker ...*".[71] In addition, it is reinforced by the opinion of the principal that the role of the principal of Ngupasan Elementary School is "*usually teachers report/complain to me regarding learning needs and then I make decisions and help meet the needs of teachers to teach then I move to coordinate with the finance department*".[72] The same statement was also explained by the teacher "*Usually we as teachers report if there are complaints or needs of learning, then the principal will make decisions and act directly to the finance department to discuss and fulfill the learning needs*".[73]

The principal of Ngupasan Elementary School also acts as a mentor who guides teachers and school community members to understand the independent curriculum well, as described by the teacher "*The principal always guides us in implementing the independent curriculum in the learning*".[74] Another matter was also revealed by the head of curriculum development "*the principal helps teachers with independent training to learn the PMM application*".[75] Therefore, the teachers will not experience problems in learning the PMM application and implementing the independent curriculum in the school environment.

As explained by the head of the curriculum development "*of course, there is a very significant role of the principal in developing the curriculum, as a decision maker and liaison from the school to the office of education*".[76] This requires cooperation and coordination with each other because various aspirations and proposals from teachers and school community cannot be addressed to the office of education except through the principal, and then the principal accommodates and conveys to the school committee, supervisor, and the office of education to improve the curriculum development.

The principal also constantly directs teachers in the form of motivation, advice, support, and orders as expressed by the head of curriculum development:

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[71] Mrs. AK, Interview with head curriculum developer at SDN Ngupasan, Yogyakarta, 8 Mei 2023.

[72] Mr. AP, Interview with head of school at SDN Ngupasan, Yogyakarta, 10 Mei 2023.

[73] Mr. AG, Interview with classroom teacher at SDN Ngupasan, Yogyakarta, 8 Mei 2023.

[74] Mr. AG, Interview with classroom teacher at SDN Ngupasan, Yogyakarta, 8 Mei 2023.

[75] Mrs. AK, Interview with head curriculum developer at SDN Ngupasan, Yogyakarta, 8 Mei 2023.

[76] Mr. AP, Interview with head of school at SDN Ngupasan, Yogyakarta, 10 Mei 2023.

"*When I report/give feedback related to curriculum development, the principal always accepts our input/aspirations/opinions and helps coordinate funding, such as the budget to meet the needs of teachers for teaching then he moves to coordinate with the finance department*".[77]

This is supported by the principal "*teachers often complain to me if they have difficulties in teaching or learning the PMM application, so I usually direct teachers to take action, support and motivate, and invite other teachers to understand the independent curriculum policy in the PMM application*".[78] As expressed by the teachers, the principal always listens to the aspirations and complaints of the teachers and provides solutions:

"*We are confused about selecting the learning outcomes for grade IV which is in phase B of the independent curriculum, while phase B is for grades III and IV but grade III is still using the 2013 curriculum. So, the principal suggested that the teachers of parallel class IV A and B always have discussions or sharing sessions regarding which material to teach so that students get the same material simultaneously*".[79]

The principal of Ngupasan Elementary School tries to focus on planning and evaluating the school programs that are derived from the school's vision and mission, curriculum development, and learning. This was explained by the principal "*In the development of this independent curriculum, we focus on the school programs that are derived from the vision and mission of the school, which may change the vision or goals a little so that the program can be adjusted to the latest curriculum*".[80] The same matter was revealed by the head of curriculum development "*the principal does act decisively regarding the curriculum programs such as the plans for extracurricular evaluations*".[81]

As described by the principal of Ngupasan Elementary School, "*Usually teachers report/complain to me regarding the learning needs and then I make decisions and help fulfill the needs of teachers for teaching then I move to coordinate with the finance department*".[82] The same matter was also expressed by the teacher "*he is a liaison with*

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[77] Mrs. AK, Interview with head curriculum developer at SDN Ngupasan, Yogyakarta, 8 Mei 2023.

[78] Mr. AP, Interview with head of school at SDN Ngupasan, Yogyakarta, 10 Mei 2023.

[79] Mr. AG, Interview with classroom teacher at SDN Ngupasan, Yogyakarta, 8 Mei 2023.

[80] Mr. AP, Interview with head of school at SDN Ngupasan, Yogyakarta, 10 Mei 2023.

[81] Mrs. AK, Interview with head curriculum developer at SDN Ngupasan, Yogyakarta, 8 Mei 2023.

[82] Mr. AP, Interview with head of school at SDN Ngupasan, Yogyakarta, 10 Mei 2023.

the committee and if there are things conveyed from the office of education, the principal coordinates and gives orders to us".[83]

Based on the findings, the principal's role in overcoming teachers' obstacles in developing the independent curriculum is as a decision maker, mentor, liaison, director, leader, and coordinator, as described in Figure 2.
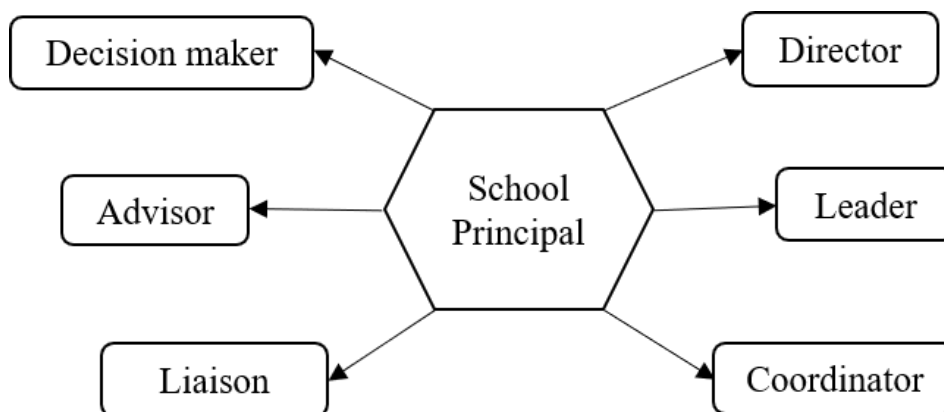

Figure 2
Diagram of the Principal's Role
Source : Personal Documents

The principal as an advisor or mentor is a form of efforts to improve the performance of education personnel by guiding the implementation of the independent curriculum in teaching and helping teachers with independent training in learning the PMM application. Dina, et al. stated that the principal has a duty to guide teachers, education personnel, and students, to follow the development of science and technology, and to become a good role model.[84] In addition, creating a conducive school climate requires cooperation or harmonious relationships among all school members, and this is not only the responsibility of the principal alone.[85] Therefore, teachers' obstacles can be minimized as best as possible.

The principal as a decision maker makes bold and firm decisions and helps to resolve obstacles faced by teachers in developing the independent curriculum. As stated

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[83] Mr. AG, Interview with classroom teacher at SDN Ngupasan, Yogyakarta, 8 Mei 2023.

[84] Nurul Zahriani JF, Neny Sri Wahyuni, Dina Khairunnisya siregar, Ade Irma Suryani Pane, "Upaya Kepala Sekolah Dalam Peningkatkan Kinerja Guru Dan Partisipasi Orangtua Terhadap Pelaksanaan Aktivitas Pembelajaran Anak Pada Masa Pandemi Covid-19 Di Tk Swasta Tunas Bangsa Medan Timur," *PENDALAS: Jurnal Penelitian Tindakan Kelas Dan Pengabdian Masyarakat* 1, no. 1 (2021): 92–109, https://doi.org/10.47006/pendalas.v1i1.65.

[85] Muh. Fitrah, "Peran Kepala Sekolah Dalam Meningkatkan Mutu Pendidikan," *EDUCATOR : Jurnal Inovasi Tenaga Pendidik Dan Kependidikan* 3, no. 1 (2017): 175–83, https://doi.org/10.51878/educator.v2i2.1307.

by Mulyasa, the role is related to decision-making, which includes the principal as an entrepreneur, disturbance handler, provider of all resources, and negotiator. [86] The principal as a liaison is a communication intermediary between the school and the school committee or office of education. Hence, the principal should be able to establish good relationships with various stakeholders inside and outside the school. Through transformative leadership, the principal can build a strong collaboration with parents, communities, government, and other educational institutions to improve the quality of education.[87]

The principal as a coordinator is responsible for coordinating the needs of teachers and students as well as activities related to curriculum development. The coordination activities of the principal of Ngupasan Elementary School include facilitating the needs of students and teachers in learning, organizing school facilities and infrastructure, coordinating with the finance department, and reporting to the district office to better develop the curriculum implemented. As a coordinator, the principal must have the ability to improve and develop all school facilities. Specifically, the principal is also required to manage the curriculum, administration of facilities and infrastructure, archival administration, and financial administration.[88]

The principal as a director has an activity of observing and identifying which is correct, which is less correct, and which is not correct, to be precise in providing guidance. [89] The principal of Ngupasan Elementary School acts as a supervisor by providing direction and support to teachers in developing the independent curriculum, listening to teachers' complaints about teaching, and providing solutions because supervision is carried out to shape and improve abilities in the teaching and learning process.[90] In addition, the importance of the principal's role as a supervisor is supported by Maulid's research which found that the implementation of principal supervision can

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[86] E Mulyasa, *Menjadi Kepala Sekolah Profesional; Dalam Konteks Menyukseskan MBS Dan KBK* (Bandung, Indonesia, 2005).

[87] T. J. Sergiovanni, *Strengthening the Heartbeat: Leading and Learning Together in Schools* (Jossey-Bass, 2005).

[88] Mulyasa, *Manajemen Dan Kepemimpinan Kepala Sekolah* (Jakarta: PT Bumi Aksara, 2011).

[89] Safrijal, "Hubungan Supervisi Akademik Denan Kinerja Guru," *Jurnal Inovasi Penelitian* 3, no. 2 (2022): 1–12.

[90] Akhmad Sirojuddin, Andika Apriliyanto, and Novela Elza Zahari, "Peran Kepala Sekolah Sebagai Supervisor Dalam Membina Profesionalisme Guru," *Chalim Journal of Teaching and Learning* 1, no. 2 (2021): 730–43, https://doi.org/10.35673/ajmpi.v8i1.415.

improve teacher performance.[91] The principal must also be able to provide motivation and clear direction to teachers in understanding and implementing the independent curriculum. The principal must have the appropriate strategy to motivate education personnel to carry out their various tasks and functions because the principal believes that the ability to build good motivation will establish and improve work effectiveness and efficiency (Sabirin, 2012). The ability of the principal of Ngupasan Elementary School to build teachers' work motivation is shown by encouraging teachers to learn the new curriculum policy through the PMM application, supporting and accepting teachers' aspirations/opinions in developing the independent curriculum, providing solutions, or acting directly when teachers experience difficulties in teaching. The results of research by Harmendi, Lian, and Wardarita concluded that principal leadership and work motivation simultaneously have a significant effect on teacher performance.[92]

The principal as a leader is one of the factors that can encourage the school to realize the vision, mission, goals, and objectives of the school through programs that are well planned and implemented gradually. For this purpose, the principal of Ngupasan Elementary School tries to focus on planning and evaluating the school programs that are derived from the school's vision and mission, curriculum development, and learning, and always holds meetings every 3 months as well as evaluates all the activities. Muflihah and Haqiqi suggested that a school principal must be able to influence and mobilize school resources about the planning and evaluation of school programs, curriculum development, learning, management of personnel, learning facilities and resources, finance, student services, school relations with the community, creation of school climate, and others.[93] A principal as a leader is required to have the readiness to manage the school, and such ability and willingness will emerge when a school leader can be open minded to absorb any sources that can encourage managerial changes.[94]

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[91] Ahmad Maulid, "Pengaruh Supervisi Kepala Sekolah Dan Pengembangan Tenaga Pendidik Terhadap Kinerja Guru Madrasah Aliyah Swasta Di Kabupaten Lima Puluh Kota," *JMKSP (Jurnal Manajemen, Kepemimpinan, Dan Supervisi Pendidikan)* 1, no. 2 (2017): 89–98, https://doi.org/10.31851/jmksp.v1i2.1010.

[92] Muhammad Harmendi, Bukman Lian, and Ratu Wardarita, "Pengaruh Gaya Kepemimpinan Kepala Sekolah Dan Motivasi Kerja Terhadap Kinerja Guru," *PRODU: Prokurasi Edukasi Jurnal Manajemen Pendidikan Islam* 2, no. 2 (2021): 46–57, https://doi.org/10.15548/p-prokurasi.v2i2.2589.

[93] Anik Muflihah and Arghob Khofya Haqiqi, "Peran Kepala Sekolah Dalam Meningkatkan Manajemen Mutu Pendidikan Di Madrasah Ibtidaiyah," *Quality* 7, no. 2 (2019): 48, https://doi.org/10.21043/quality.v7i2.6039.

[94] Moh Sholihuddin, "JurnalManajemen Pendidikan Dan Keislaman," *Jurnal Manajemen Pendidikan Dan Keislaman* 11, no. 1 (2022): 1–9.

In developing the independent curriculum, Ngupasan Elementary School completely involves several parties, as revealed by the head of curriculum development:

"*In developing the curriculum, first, we hold a meeting between the principal and education staff, we have a draft and then we submit it to the committee which includes student guardians, community leaders, and experts such as Muslim scholars or clerics who give suggestions, and then we submit it to the supervisor to provide results and report it to the office of education*". [95]

Furthermore, in evaluating the development of the independent curriculum, Ngupasan Elementary School focuses on the program because, in its implementation, the previous programs need to be adjusted to the principles of the independent curriculum, and students can practice them. As explained by the principal "*School programs still need evaluation in developing the independent curriculum. By deriving the vision, mission, and goals, then the program. Maybe there will be slight changes in the vision or goals so that the program can be adjusted to the latest curriculum*".[96] In addition, according to Mrs. AK, the implementation of the independent curriculum that needs to be evaluated is the extracurricular activities and teacher communication with students, as revealed in her statement that "*there needs to be an evaluation of the extracurricular activities, whether there is a need for extracurricular activities that do not aim at student achievement, and of the many extracurricular activities that exist, students' interest is decreasing over time*".[97] Then from the teachers' side, what needs to be considered is the time to conduct curriculum meetings because of the importance of careful planning to obtain maximum results. As stated by the teacher "*In my opinion, what needs to be evaluated is the time of the meetings because every quarter the principal has to present to the office of education so that we do not work overnight, we need structured preparation and planning*".[98]

Therefore, the findings above show that the development of the independent curriculum in elementary schools focuses on the principal's role in directing and facilitating such development. In accordance with previous research, Elina Fonsen stated that teachers' pedagogical leadership requires strong professionalism, teachers'

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[95] Mrs. AK, Interview with head curriculum developer at SDN Ngupasan, Yogyakarta, 8 Mei 2023.

[96] Mr. AP, Interview with head of school at SDN Ngupasan, Yogyakarta, 10 Mei 2023.

[97] Mrs. AK, Interview with head curriculum developer at Ngupasan Elementary School, Yogyakarta, 8 Mei 2023.

[98] Mr. AG, Interview with classroom teacher at SDN Ngupasan, Yogyakarta, 8 Mei 2023.

responsibility for pedagogical solutions in the classroom, and principal's responsibility for pedagogy at the central level.[99],[100] In this case, the principal leads the curriculum team, encourages collaboration between teachers, develops school program policies that support the independent curriculum, and ensures the use of appropriate resources for successful implementation.[101] The development of the independent curriculum should involve various parties to develop a draft curriculum that will be reported to the committee, and the draft will be implemented and evaluated. As explained by Marzano, the steps of developing a curriculum start from analyzing the needs and context of the school followed by formulating vision, mission, and educational goals, curriculum design, implementation, evaluation, and continuous development.[102]

CONCLUSION

Based on the results of the discussion above, it can be concluded that the obstacles experienced by teachers in developing the independent curriculum during the transition period from the 2013 curriculum to the independent curriculum have caused teachers to adjust between curriculum changes and the conditions of students. The teachers are still confused about understanding the learning outcomes and making teaching modules, while they are required to learn independently in the PMM application without training or teaching workshop. In addition, there are differences in teachers' perceptions, arrangements for changes in teaching schedules, non-simultaneous implementation of the P5 program, and the limited availability of teachers. Therefore, the role of the principal to overcome teachers' obstacles in developing the independent curriculum is as a decision maker, mentor, liaison, director, leader, and coordinator with some efforts to make bold and firm decisions and decisions by deliberation; accept the opinions/input/suggestions from each teacher; provide guidance and direction to teachers who have difficulty in teaching; become a liaison with the school committee; give solutions, motivation, and support for teacher performance; focus on school programs that are derived from the

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[99] Fonsén et al., "Teachers' Pedagogical Leadership in Early Childhood Education."

[100] Umar, Yofhandra Ockta, and Pringgo Mardesia, "A Correlational Study: Pedagogical and Professional Competence of Physical Education Teachers in Relation to the Implementation of the Merdeka Curriculum," *Journal of Physical Education and Sport* 23, no. 12 (2023): 3325.

[101] Evy Ramadina, "Peran Kepala Sekolah Dalam Pengembangan Kurikulum Merdeka Belajar."

[102] R. J. Marzano, *The Art and Science of Teaching: A Comprehensive Framework for Effective Instruction* (ASCD, 2017).

school's vision and mission; assist teachers with independent training in learning the PMM application; conduct evaluations every quarter or three months; and coordinate facilities and infrastructure as well as the needs of teachers and students.

The limitations of this study include the fact that it only describes the role of the principal in developing the independent curriculum, while in the procedure, there are other parties involved in curriculum development. Therefore, the researchers recommend that further research can examine more deeply the role of teachers in developing the independent curriculum. In addition, the development of leadership training programs is needed through the expansion of leadership training for school principals with a focus on innovative managerial and leadership skills. This program should be designed to improve their understanding of how to support teachers in developing the independent curriculum.

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