

Independent Curriculum Management in High Schools Implementing the Force 2 Driving School Program

Fitri Yanti¹, Heri Supriyana²

^{1,2} Universitas Negeri Yogyakarta, Indonesia

Corresponding author, email: fitriyanti.2023@student.uny.ac.id

Article info:

Submitted: October 30, 2025. Revised: March 16, 2026. Accepted: March 26, 2026

Abstract

Background - The implementation of the Independent Curriculum in Indonesia represents a strategic reform aimed at improving the quality of education through flexible and student-centered learning approaches. One of the key programs supporting this reform is the Driving School Program, which emphasizes the transformation of curriculum management in schools.

Purpose - This study aims to analyse the management of the Independent Curriculum in a senior high school implementing the Batch 2 Driving School Program in Indragiri Hilir Regency.

Method/Approach - This research employed a qualitative method with a case study approach. Data were collected through interviews, observations, and document analysis involving the principal, vice principal for curriculum, vice principal for student affairs, learning committee members, and subject teachers. Data analysis was conducted through stages of data collection, data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing.

Findings - The results indicate that curriculum management was implemented through systematic and structured stages, including planning, organization, implementation, and evaluation. The planning stage was carried out through teacher training and In-House Training (IHT) to strengthen teachers' understanding of the Independent Curriculum. The organization stage involved the development of curriculum structures, the distribution of roles, and coordination among school stakeholders. The implementation stage included differentiated learning, Pancasila Student Profile strengthening projects, and the integration of technology in learning activities. Meanwhile, evaluation was conducted through regular meetings, classroom observations, and facilitator mentoring to monitor progress and identify areas for improvement.

Conclusions - Effective curriculum management plays a crucial role in supporting the successful implementation of the Independent Curriculum within the Driving School Program. The findings show that systematic planning, clear organization, consistent implementation, and continuous evaluation help schools manage curriculum change more effectively. Therefore, strong curriculum management can support teachers, improve learning practices, and strengthen the quality of educational reform at the school level.

Novelty/Originality/Value - This study provides comprehensive insights into curriculum management practices in the context of the Driving School Program. Its originality lies in highlighting how structured management stages contribute to the successful implementation of the Independent Curriculum in high schools. The study also emphasizes the importance of collaboration, teacher capacity building, differentiated learning, technology integration, and continuous evaluation as key factors in ensuring the sustainability of educational reform.

Keywords: Management, Independent Curriculum, and Driving School Programs.

Recommended citation:

Yanti, F., & Supriyana, H. (2026). Independent Curriculum Management in High Schools Implementing the Force 2 Driving School Program. *lembaran ilmu kependidikan*, 55(1), 74-83. <https://doi.org/10.15294/lik.v55i1.21407>

INTRODUCTION

Law Number 20 of 2003 concerning the National Education System Article 1 point 19 states that the curriculum is a set of plans and arrangements regarding objectives, content and learning materials as well as the methods used as guidelines for implementing learning activities to achieve certain educational goals. Another opinion expresses the meaning of curriculum, namely every opportunity to gain experience that is determined in the strategy, arrangement of material, as well as the variety of delivery in its function as a guideline in compiling learning programs at institutions to achieve certain goals (Wardan & Rahayu, 2021). From the definition above, the important role of the curriculum in smoothing the learning process and improving teaching standards in the classroom is illustrated. If there is no curriculum, the school will lose direction and find it difficult to achieve its goals.

As time goes by, technological developments are becoming more and more advanced, which of course has various good and bad effects on various aspects of life, as well as in the world of education. Of course, with this situation, various actions to compensate for these changes need to be taken so that education is also dynamic and develops according to students' current learning needs. It cannot be denied that this condition also brings various challenges so that there is a need for curriculum renewal and adjustments to face these changes. This is in line with the expression of Kurniasih (2023) who stated that the curriculum is always developed in an easy to understand, systematic and comprehensive manner to serve as a guide for learning activities that are adapted to current circumstances and conditions.

The independent curriculum is designed as a curriculum scheme that is easily adaptable by emphasizing core material and providing more space for the development of character and abilities for students. This curriculum is also an effort to support learning recovery. The characteristics or characteristics of the independent curriculum are character development in accordance with the Pancasila student profile and soft skills through project-based learning, teachers are flexible in carrying out differentiated learning according to students' abilities while still adapting to local context and content, and focus on essential material to be given sufficient allocation for in-depth learning related to literacy and numeracy. (Ministry of Education and Culture, 2023).

The Ministry of Education and Culture launched the Merdeka Curriculum on February 11, 2022, together with the Merdeka Teaching Platform. However, before it was widely launched, the Merdeka Curriculum has been implemented since the 2021/2022 school year by implementing the Driving School Program (PSP) in 2,500 schools. Schools are given the opportunity to implement this curriculum in the 2022/2023 academic year according to school needs and readiness. (Zainuri, 2023). So, at the beginning of its implementation, schools did not implement this curriculum simultaneously but adapted it to their capabilities and conditions. The independent curriculum has been in effect nationally since the publication of Minister of Education and Culture Regulation Number 12 of 2024 concerning the curriculum for early childhood education, basic education levels and secondary education levels.

Schools implementing the Driving School Program (PSP) are the targets for implementing the first independent curriculum which is based on the idea that improving the quality of human resources is the first stage towards the transformation of educational units. Therefore, this program concentrates on improving the leadership quality of school principals, teacher abilities and the capacity of school supervisors in improving the quality of teaching (Fahmi, 2023). Therefore, at the start of implementation, school principals, teachers and school supervisors (learning committee) were facilitated to strengthen the implementation of the independent curriculum, develop teacher competency through in-house training, independent training on the independent teaching platform, and implement learning communities in schools. Apart from that, other assistance is carried out periodically, such as school level PMO (Project Management Office), workshops, reflection

workshops, field visits, and stakeholder forums facilitated by driving school facilitators.

Based on the results of initial observations conducted by researchers by giving open questionnaires to teachers at PSP Implementing Schools Batch 2 in Indragiri Hilir Regency, there are still obstacles faced in implementing the independent curriculum, namely teachers still have difficulty understanding the independent curriculum as a whole, lack of skills in using IT, difficult internet networks in schools, unstable electricity access, teachers feel quite a lot of administrative burden, still find difficulties in designing modules and assessment rubrics, use of PMM is still limited, apart from that, there are also teachers who find it difficult to change their mindset in implementing this curriculum. These various challenges are also in line with the opinion of Zainuri (2023), that various shortcomings of course still color the implementation of the independent curriculum, for example in planning the implementation of this curriculum it is considered not perfect. This is reflected in the quality of human resources which is still minimal.

The Independent Curriculum is a curriculum currently being developed and implemented in several schools in Indonesia, particularly those participating in the Driving School Program. This program is designed to accelerate educational transformation by improving school management, strengthening learning quality, and enhancing students' competencies through more flexible and student-centered learning approaches.

SMAN Bina Bakti Sapat and SMAN IT Syech Walid Thaib Shaleh Indragiri are among the schools that successfully passed the selection process to participate in the Batch 2 Driving School Program among senior high schools in Indragiri Hilir Regency (BGP Riau Data, 2024). Despite facing certain challenges, such as limited internet connectivity that potentially affects the implementation of digital-based learning and the use of educational platforms, both schools have consistently implemented the Independent Curriculum since the 2022/2023 academic year. This condition makes these schools interesting contexts for examining how curriculum management is carried out in schools with limited infrastructure while still participating in national education reform programs.

Based on this background, it is important to conduct research entitled "Management of the Independent Curriculum in High Schools Implementing the Batch 2 Driving School Program in Indragiri Hilir Regency." This research contributes to the field of educational management by providing empirical insights into how schools manage the planning, organization, implementation, and evaluation of the Independent Curriculum within the context of the Driving School Program, particularly in schools located in regions with limited technological infrastructure. The findings are expected to enrich the literature on curriculum management and provide practical references for schools and policymakers in improving the implementation of the Independent Curriculum.

METHODS

This type of research is qualitative research conducted through a case study approach. Danuri & Maisarah (2019) define qualitative research as a type of research whose results are not obtained using statistical stages or other types of calculations. This form of research can adapt to situations in the field and is open to various conditions and changes. Sugiyono (2021), defines qualitative research methods as methods used to investigate natural objects, and researchers as the main tool. Triangulation (a combination of observation, interviews, documentation) is used in collecting and analyzing inductive data with research results including phenomenon construction, understanding meaning, understanding uniqueness, and hypothesis discovery

According to Rukminingsih, Adnan & Latief (2020) in case study design, research is carried out to gain a comprehensive understanding of the circumstances and meaning of the topic being studied. The advantage is that researchers are able to study the topic in great detail using case studies. The limitation is that based on the nature of the case study, the data obtained is subjective in nature and only applies to the individual concerned and may not apply to other people in the same situation. In

this research, independent curriculum management is described or described starting from planning, organizing, implementation and evaluation at the High School Implementing the Batch 2 Driving School Program in Indragiri Hilir Regency, Riau Province using a case study approach.

This research was conducted at the second generation of Driving School Program Implementing High Schools (PSP) in Indragiri Hilir Regency, namely SMAN IT Syech Walid Thaib Shaleh Indragiri and SMAN Bina Bakti Sapat. This research was carried out from September 2024 to January 2025. The data sources in this research use primary and secondary data sources. Primary data and secondary data are the data sources used in this research. According to Widodo (2021), data collection carried out directly by researchers or the first data source such as questionnaires or interviews is primary data, while data obtained from second sources or other people is called secondary data. The principal, deputy principal for curriculum, deputy principal for student affairs, learning committee board, and teachers are the primary data sources in this research, while the secondary data used consists of books, journals, and other sources that are appropriate to the research conducted.

Danuri & Maisarah (2019) stated that data collection is the most urgent process stage in research, because obtaining data is the main purpose of research. The researcher must understand the data collection method because this will make it easier to obtain data that meets the criteria. This research involves interviews, observations, and document studies. One of the characteristics of case studies for qualitative data according to Rukminingsih, Adnan & Latief (2020) is using various methods or alternatives to collect data or information such as interviews, open questionnaires, documents, observations and artifacts.

In this research, one of the data validities checking techniques used is the triangulation technique. According to Danuri & Maisarah (2019), triangulation in qualitative research is defined as testing the validity of data obtained from various sources, methods and times. In line with Sugiono (2021) who defines triangulation as a data collection method that integrates several data sources and various data collection techniques. To verify the correctness of the data that has been collected from several sources, the validity of the data is tested using source triangulation. Technical triangulation was then carried out to test the credibility of the data by using several approaches on the same data. In addition, if the resulting data is different, data testing is needed to ensure that the data collection is certain. Furthermore, Danuri & Maisarah (2019) revealed that data analysis in qualitative research is carried out before, during and after the researcher goes into the field. This is followed by triangulation, which involves collecting data while testing the credibility of the data with various sources and data collection techniques. Qualitative findings or data are considered valid if there is a match between the researcher's report and what actually happened to the object under study.

Data analysis in the research on independent curriculum management at the 2nd Generation Driving School Program High School in Indragiri Hilir Regency was carried out by managing all the data obtained from interviews, observations and studying documents that had been collected. To perform data analysis, researchers collect more information, look for connections, compare, and draw conclusions from actual data. According to Mulyatingsing (2021), from the time the researcher took the data until the research data was completed, data analysis activities had begun. The following are the data collection stages that the researcher carried out:

The data analysis process in this study was conducted through several stages. First, data collection was carried out using various supporting media such as cameras to document photos, audio recordings of interviews, and written documents in the form of field notes. After the data had been collected and recorded in detail, the researcher proceeded to the next stage, namely data reduction. Data reduction was conducted by grouping the collected data based on the research questions. The researcher then reread and examined the data to determine its relevance to the research theme. Data that were not relevant or considered less important were reduced or discarded, while important data, even if slightly outside the main research theme, were retained to enrich the discussion. The next

stage was data presentation, where the facts or findings obtained from the field were presented in the form of descriptive narrative text supported by relevant tables or figures to provide a clearer explanation. Finally, the researcher conducted drawing conclusions and data verification, which involved interpreting the findings and confirming the consistency of the data in order to produce valid and reliable research conclusions. Drawing conclusions in qualitative research is the final stage in analyzing this data. Its function is to obtain answers to the problem formulation and an overview of the achievement of the research objectives, namely, to determine the planning, organization and implementation of the independent curriculum at high schools implementing the 2nd generation driving school program in Indragiri Hilir Regency.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Independent Curriculum Planning

The selection of SMAN IT Syech Walid Thaib Shaleh Indragiri and SMAN Bina Bhakti Sapat in the Batch 2 Mobilization School Program (PSP) selection in Indragiri Hilir Regency was the first step for this school to implement an independent curriculum in all aspects of learning. The Ministry of Education and Culture's main objective in selecting this driving school is to provide assistance in order to improve numeracy literacy skills and the character profile of Pancasila students (Fahmi, 2023). The initial assistance provided by the Ministry of Education and Culture through the driving school facilitators was learning committee training for teachers and school principals related to new paradigm learning materials (independent curriculum), introduction of independent teaching platforms, preparation of educational unit operational curricula, learning outcomes, learning design and projects to strengthen Pancasila student profiles, as well as data-based planning. This training is provided as a provision for initial understanding in implementing the independent curriculum, as in the academic text of the driving school program (2020), it is stated that the driving school program is implemented by improving the abilities of teachers and school principals, which is important in the reform and reconstruction of Indonesian education.

The curriculum plays an important role in schools, therefore planning in its implementation is very necessary. This plan will later be outlined in the Education Unit Curriculum (KSP) as a guide in implementing the learning process. In preparing this KSP, it is necessary to develop a vision, mission and goals that are guided by the Pancasila Student Profile, namely lifelong students who are competent, have character and behave according to Pancasila values (Kemendikbudristek, 2021). Apart from that, KSP must also contain school characteristics that describe the specificity/uniqueness of the region, be it the environment or local socio-culture. From the results of research at the High School Implementing the Batch 2 Driving School Program in Indragiri Hilir Regency, planning was carried out before implementing the independent curriculum. begin to analyze the characteristics of the Education unit, as well as formulate the vision, mission and goals of the school which have been outlined in the Education unit curriculum document. In BSKAP (2023) it is explained that to get a complete picture of the conditions and needs of the school community, it is important to analyze the characteristics of the education unit, the results of this characteristic analysis become the basis for formulating the school's vision, mission and goals.

Other preparations made in implementing the independent curriculum through the driving school program are that the school principal and teachers on the learning committee board will impart the results of the training that has been obtained through facilitators to teachers and education staff at schools through In House Training (IHT). Apart from that, independent learning is also carried out through independent training on the independent teaching platform (PMM) related to the independent curriculum. Therefore, school principals need to encourage teachers to utilize PMM as an effort to accelerate the digitalization of schools (Fahmi, 2023). Apart from that, there are many interesting and useful features that can be used in studying the independent curriculum.

Organizing the Independent Curriculum

When organizing an independent curriculum, it is important to prepare the curriculum structure. Learning in this curriculum consists of intra-curricular, co-curricular learning in the form of the Pancasila Student Profile Strengthening Project, as well as extra-curricular. From the document study conducted by researchers, the organization at SMAN IT Syech Walid Thaib Shaleh Indragiri and SMAN Bina Bhakti Sapat refers to the Decree of the Minister of Education, Culture, Research and Technology of the Republic of Indonesia Number 262/M/2022 in attachment 1, it is stated that the structure of the high school curriculum consists of two phases, namely Phase E for class X; and (b) Phase F for class XI and class XII. In the 2024/2025 academic year, these two schools have implemented the Driving School Program in the third year, thus the implementation of the independent curriculum is comprehensive in classes X, XI and XII.

Based on the research document study, it is clear that the curriculum structure has been prepared based on the latest regulations, namely Permendikbudristek RI number 12 of 2024. The approach used in organizing learning content is carried out through a subject approach, although freedom is given to choose other approaches such as thematic, integrated or block system approaches. In this subject approach, one subject is taught separately, face-to-face meetings are held every week, and the number of hours follows the government's minimum requirements. (Hadiansah, 2022).

Decree of the Minister of Education, Culture, Research and Technology of the Republic of Indonesia Number 262/M/2022 is a reference for organizing the independent curriculum, especially in the curriculum structure. However, after the publication of Regulation of the Minister of Education and Culture, Research and Technology of the Republic of Indonesia number 12 of 2024 concerning the curriculum for early childhood education, basic education levels and secondary education levels, this Minister of Education and Culture Regulation has automatically become the main guide in implementing the independent curriculum in schools.

At the high school implementing the Batch 2 driving school program, the choice of subjects in class In the independent curriculum, there are no majors like in the 2006 curriculum, or specializations like in the 2013 curriculum, but in this independent curriculum, there is only a choice of subjects in class XI. In selecting these subjects, students are given the freedom to choose any subject in the science, social studies, or language group with a total of 4-5 subjects and schools are required to provide a minimum of 7 subjects that students can choose. Students are given the freedom to choose subjects according to their interests, talents and needs for their future careers (Aryanto, et al., 2022).

From reviewing documents, researchers found that local content was developed independently as a subject. The local content studied at these two schools is Riau Malay culture, with a time allocation of 2 hours of lessons per week. Apart from being developed as a separate subject, in Hadiansah (2022), local content can also be integrated into other subjects or integrated into the project theme of strengthening the profile of Pancasila students implemented in schools in accordance with local culture.

Implementation of the Independent Curriculum

In the first year it will be implemented in the 2022/2023 academic year in phase E (class X). In extracurriculars, the application of learning methods is increasingly diverse, and teachers are free to design their own, as well as the increasing use of technology in learning. In this independent curriculum, Learning Outcomes are the guidelines that will be achieved in each subject, their implementation in the learning process is more flexible so that teachers will have more freedom to design their learning, the material that will be delivered is also more in-depth and not as dense as in the previous curriculum, there is strengthening of character and competence through P5 which has its own time allocation. This is similar to Minister of Education and Culture Regulation Number 22 of 2020 which states that the curriculum of the independent learning policy has flexible characteristics,

focuses on achieving competency, character development and soft skills.

One of the other assistance efforts undertaken to strengthen the implementation of the independent curriculum in schools is through learning communities. At this high school a learning community has been formed and is held by meetings twice a month. Activities carried out include joint learning related to the implementation of learning in the independent curriculum, sharing good practices. From the results of interviews and document studies on the second-generation driving school program, this learning community helps in increasing understanding regarding the independent curriculum. This group has been carried out regularly, although it is not yet optimal, with activities carried out in the form of sharing good practices, finding solutions to learning problems together, and increasing personal competence. The importance of this community is in line with Fahmi (2023) who stated that learning communities are a learning forum for school members to share good practices and improve their quality in learning in the independent curriculum.

In implementing this independent curriculum, there is some assistance provided by the Operational Management Working Group (PMO), workshops, reflection workshops, field visits, and stakeholder forums. Some of the assistance carried out at SMAN IT Syech Walid Thaib Shaleh Indragiri and SMAN Bina Bhakti Sapat, namely the Operational Management Working Group (PMO), is that PMO activities involve discussions about school targets, achievements and obstacles when implementing the independent curriculum among school principals, teachers and school supervisors. The discussion in this activity refers to the points listed in the PMO reporting instrument in SIMPKB. (Fahmi, 2023). In the first year of participating in the driving school program in Batch 2, the responsibility and reporting for the implementation of the PMO was carried out by the facilitator, however in the second year the PMO experienced a transition in responsibility to the school principal. This activity is in the context of reflecting on the progress of the driving school's progress.

The workshop is a meeting between the facilitator and the school community to discuss the independent curriculum as well as increasing competency. Meanwhile, workshop reflection is reflection after carrying out workshop activities in order to follow up on the real actions planned in the workshop activities. (Fahmi, 2023). The themes of the workshops that took place were related to material on strengthening the independent curriculum such as Curriculum 1, Curriculum 2 workshops, tolerance workshops, Assessment, P5, positive discipline Workshop Reflection, Data Based Planning, Positive Discipline Workshops, Learning Communities, School Leadership, and School Leadership Workshop 2.

Evaluation and Reflection on the Independent Curriculum

Along the way, the school community has carried out a series of reflections regarding the implementation of the independent curriculum while undergoing the driving school program. Evaluation and reflection activities on the independent curriculum are carried out both in learning and curriculum evaluation. Reflection can be done in learning communities, regular monthly meetings, or at the end of the semester. Education unit curriculum evaluation is carried out to measure the success of teachers and school principals in implementing the activity programs that have been prepared. In the Ministry of Education and Culture's BSKAP (2024), it is stated that evaluation of the independent curriculum can be carried out at any time according to need, either per day which can be done in the learning process, per learning unit, namely in reviewing the achievement of learning objectives, per semester in evaluating learning achievements, or can be done annually, namely evaluation of the learning process and achievements which play a role in achieving the school's goals, mission and vision.

From the results of the interview, after the school has carried out the reflection and evaluation process, follow-up actions will be carried out to improve teacher competency, such as conducting training or the principal will provide feedback to the teacher. As stated by Hadiansah (2022), in the follow-up evaluation of the results of the reflection, the principal should provide mentoring and

professional development to teachers by involving supervisors. This assistance can be done at school through training activities by bringing in both external and internal resource people, or it can be done through mentoring and coaching.

CONCLUSION

The conclusions of this research are, 1) Independent curriculum planning is carried out starting from training the learning committee for school principals and teachers by the Ministry of Education and Culture, holding in-house training in schools for teachers, especially those in charge of phase E, analyzing the characteristics of education units and preparing the school's vision and mission involving various parties, both from the school community and stakeholders. 2) Organizing the independent curriculum is carried out by compiling the curriculum structure and learning programs in extra-curricular areas, the Pancasila Student Profile Strengthening Project, as well as extra-curricular activities which have been stated in the Education Unit Curriculum (KSP) document. 3) The implementation of the independent curriculum has gone well, but there are still challenges that must be faced, both from the readiness of existing human resources and the limited facilities to support the implementation of this independent curriculum. 4) Evaluation of the independent curriculum is carried out in learning community meetings, performance observations, regular monthly meetings, end-of-semester and end-of-year meetings. Apart from that, the reflection process is also carried out with assistance of the mobilizing school facilitator.

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