

The Independent Learning Curriculum: Teachers' Perspectives on Challenges and Expectations at SMP Negeri 1 Tuhemberua

Cinthika Joe Apriani Harefa

University Nias

Korespondensi : cindyharefa2021@gmail.com

Abstract. *The Independent Learning Curriculum (KMB) is a new curriculum that was established by the Ministry of Education, Culture, Research, and Technology of the Republic of Indonesia in 2022. This study was conducted at SMP Negeri 1 Tuhemberua with the aim of examining teachers' perspectives on the challenges and expectations related to KMB. This study used a qualitative method with a case study approach. Data were collected through in-depth interviews with 5 teachers. The result of the study showed that teachers faced various challenges in implementing KMB at SMP Negeri 1 Tuhemberua, including: (1) lack of teacher understanding of KMB, (2) limited time, (3) lack of resources to support KMB learning, and (4) students were unable to follow the learning flow, so the learning objectives given by the teacher could not be achieved to the maximum. Despite these challenges, teachers also had high hopes for KMB at SMP Negeri 1 Tuhemberua, namely: (1) to improve the quality of learning, (2) to develop potential students optimally, and (3) to create a more enjoyable learning experience. This study contributes to the development of knowledge in the field of education by providing insights into the challenges and expectations of teachers related to KMB at SMP Negeri 1 Tuhemberua. This study can also be a reference for the government in implementing KMB optimally in various regions.*

Keywords: *KMB, perspectives, challenges, teachers, SMP Negeri 1 Tuhemberua.*

BACKGROUND

Education in Indonesia continues to experience development and change, one of which is through the new curriculum, namely the Independent Learning Curriculum (KMB), which was established by the Ministry of Education, Culture, Research, and Technology of the Republic of Indonesia in 2022. It aims to transform education and develop superior human resources in Indonesia, in line with the values of Pancasila (Ferdan & Novita, 2023). KMB also places a premium on the overall development of students' character and capabilities. This curriculum is an improvement over the 2013 curriculum and attempts to provide instructors with more choice in selecting instructional materials and approaches. KMB implementation has been undertaken at SMP Negeri 1 Tuhemberua from the 2022/2023 academic year. This execution is still fraught with difficulties. Teachers at SMP Negeri 1 Tuhemberua recognized this.

In contrast to the 2013 curriculum, KMB gives instructors greater latitude in selecting instructional strategies and resources. It is believed that by giving instructors more options, learning will be of higher quality and will better meet the requirements of a wider range of students.

At SMP Negeri 1 Tuhemberua, the KMB implementation process was not without it is challenges. The school's teachers acknowledged that there were still a number of challenges with implementing the KMB. Changes in the curriculum frequently call for intricate

modifications to both teaching and school administration, and if these difficulties are not successfully managed, they might have a negative impact on student learning.

In this journal, we will examine the more detailed implementation of KMB at SMP Negeri 1 Tuhemberua. This study aims to identify specific challenges faced by teachers in implementing the new curriculum and assessing its impact on students' growth. In addition, we will provide a detailed analysis of how KMB may function as a tool for character and skill development in a holistic way. The results of this study are expected to provide valuable insights for related parties, such as the government, educational institutions, and teacher training programs, in enhancing and strengthening KMB implementation across Indonesia.

METHOD STUDY

This study uses a kualitatif approach with a case conducted at SMP Negeri 1 Tuhemberua to examine the teacher's perspective on the implementation of the Independent Learning Curriculum (KMB). The purpose of the qualitative research methodology is to thoroughly understand the challenges, obstacles, and difficulties faced by teachers when implementing KMB.

The research subjects were five teachers at SMP Negeri 1 Tuhemberua. Teaching experiences, responses to KMB, and considering variations in background when selecting teachers effectively.

Data was obtained through interviews placed next to the teacher as the main instrument. Interviews were conducted using a questionnaire containing questions regarding the teacher's understanding of KMB, challenges faced, concerns about KMB, and obstacles that occurred throughout the learning process.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The findings of this research provide insight into the challenges and hopes of teachers in implementing the Independent Learning Curriculum (KMB) at SMP Negeri 1 Tuhemberua. Data collected through in-depth interviews with five teachers revealed several main challenges and hopes faced by educators in the initial stages of implementing KMB

The challenges of teachers in implementing the Independent Learning Curriculum (KMB) at SMP Negeri 1 Tuhemberua, data collected through in-depth interviews with five teachers revealed several main challenges faced by educators in the initial stages of implementing KMB:

- (1) Lack of Teacher Understanding of KMB: One of the challenges faced by teachers in implementing KMB is the difficulty in understanding KMB. This was expressed by Teacher 1 in his interview

Teacher 1: "I find it difficult to understand KMB because the curriculum is very complex. There are many new terms and concepts that I have to understand."

Teacher 1 explained that the KMB curriculum is very complex and has many new terms and concepts that teachers must understand. This can be a challenge for teachers, especially for teachers who do not have experience teaching with a competency-based curriculum. Teachers expressed similar challenges in understanding the intricacies of the KMB framework. Many educators find it difficult to adapt to the new curriculum, giving rise to uncertainty in its implementation.

- (2) Limited time: Time limitations emerged as a significant challenge, where teachers had to struggle to master the specified KMB material within the specified time period. The demand for theoretical understanding and practical application creates difficulties in delivering learning effectively.

- (3) Lack of Resources to Support KMB Learning: Teachers also face challenges in the form of a lack of appropriate resources. This was expressed by Teacher 3 in his interview:

Teacher 3: "I have difficulty finding resources that suit KMB. Many resources are available, but not all of them suit my needs."

Teacher 3 explained that many resources were available, but not all of them met teachers' needs. This can hamper the KMB implementation process. Teachers highlighted the dearth of resources tailored to the KMB, including appropriate teaching materials and technology. The absence of special tools hinders the integration of KMB into the teaching process.

- (4) Students' Difficulty in Following the Learning Flow: Teachers also face challenges in the form of students' difficulty following the lesson. This was expressed by Teacher 4 in his interview:

Teacher 4: "I feel that some students have difficulty following the KMB learning. They need more guidance and support."

Teacher 4 explained that some students had difficulty participating in KMB learning. Teachers noted that students faced challenges in adapting to the independent learning approach promoted by KMB. The inability of some students to follow the specified learning path hinders the maximum achievement of learning objectives.

The challenges identified in the result of this research present a complex picture of the initial stages of KMB implementation at SMP Negeri 1 Tuhemberua. These challenges are not uncommon in education reform initiatives, and understanding them is critical to addressing them and paving the way for successful KMB implementation.

Teachers' lack of understanding about KMB: This challenge echoes findings from other studies on curriculum change, such as Arikunto (2017) and Darmadi (2018), which also highlight teachers' difficulties in understanding the philosophy and framework of the new curriculum. The complexity of KMB, coupled with limited training and support, can cause

confusion and uncertainty among teachers (Ferdan & Novita, 2023). To address this, providing comprehensive training programs tailored to the specific features of KMB and promoting collaborative learning among teachers could be beneficial. Additionally, establishing easily accessible resources and support systems, such as dedicated mentor programs, can empower teachers to navigate the new curriculum effectively.

Time limitations: The time constraints faced by teachers highlight the need for a pragmatic approach to KMB implementation. Simplifying some of the KMB requirements while focusing on core principles and practical applications can reduce pressure and allow teachers to dedicate more time to mastering and effectively delivering the curriculum. Research by Suyitno (2022) further emphasizes the importance of time management strategies for teachers transitioning to a new curriculum. Strategies such as prioritizing learning objectives and optimizing resource utilization can enable teachers to navigate the curriculum within a specified time frame.

The lack of resources tailored to the KMB: is a significant obstacle. The Ministry of Education, Culture, Research, and Technology needs to prioritize the development and distribution of comprehensive learning materials, tools, and technology adapted to the KMB. Partnerships with educational institutions and private stakeholders can be explored to speed up the resource development process. Additionally, encouraging teachers to share and adapt existing resources in their communities can foster collaborative resource building and fill resource gaps. Mardis et al. (2023): In the article "Collaborative Resource Development: Empowering Teachers in the Merdeka Belajar Era," Mardis et al. (2023) discussed the importance of collaboration between teachers in developing and sharing resources tailored to KMB. They argue that by sharing and adapting, teachers can meet diverse learning needs and close resource gaps.

Students' difficulty in following the learning flow: The independent learning approach inherent in KMB requires students to take more responsibility for their learning, which can be a challenge for some. Addressing this requires a multi-perspective approach. First, teachers can use strategies to promote self-regulation and metacognitive skills in students, empowering them to manage their learning effectively. Second, providing personalized learning support and opportunities for collaboration can accommodate diverse learning styles and needs. Ultimately, cultivating a learning environment that promotes student autonomy and self-confidence is critical to success with KMB.

While initial discussions focused on the challenges faced in implementing the Independent Learning Curriculum (KMB) at SMP Negeri 1 Tuhemberua, it's crucial to balance

the narrative by analyzing the teachers' hopes and aspirations associated with the program. By exploring these positive outlooks, we can gain a more comprehensive understanding of KMB's potential impact on the school.

Enhanced learning quality: among the teachers' primary hope is the prospect of improved learning quality through KMB. The curriculum's emphasis on personalization and student-centered learning aligns with research suggests greater student engagement and motivation when learning experiences cater to individual needs and styles (Ferdinan & Novita, 2023). Teachers at SMP Negeri 1 Tuhemberua anticipate that this shift will lead to deeper understanding, critical thinking skills development, and ultimately, better learning outcomes. As Maipita et al. (2021) note, KMB's flexibility allows educators to tailor their approaches to address diverse learning gaps and cater to various cognitive abilities, potentially leading to improved overall academic performance.

Nurturing well-rounded individuals: teachers also hold hope for KMB's potential to develop well-rounded individuals. The curriculum's holistic approach aims to go beyond academic excellence by emphasizing the cultivation of social and emotional skills. This aligns with the Ministry of Education, Culture, Research, and Technology's (2023) vision for KMB, which highlights the importance of nurturing responsible, empathetic, and adaptable individuals equipped to thrive not just in academics but also in life. Teachers at SMP Negeri 1 Tuhemberua express hope that KMB's focus on project-based learning and collaboration will provide opportunities for students to develop essential life skills such as communication, teamwork, and problem-solving, preparing them to become well-adjusted and contributing members of society.

Empowering Teachers and Fostering Professional Growth: KMB's increased autonomy for teachers offers another source of hope. The shift from a prescriptive curriculum to one that allows educators greater choice in materials and methods has the potential to enhance professional fulfillment and engagement. As Arikunto (2017) observes, autonomy can empower teachers to become more creative and invested in their teaching, leading to a more dynamic and collaborative learning environment. Teachers at SMP Negeri 1 Tuhemberua hope that KMB will allow them to leverage their individual strengths and expertise, fostering a sense of ownership and responsibility for student learning. This, in turn, could lead to a more vibrant and innovative teaching community within the school.

Creating a More Engaging and Enjoyable Learning Environment: KMB's project-based and interdisciplinary approaches provide another source of hope for teachers. These methodologies break away from traditional rote learning and offer the potential to make

learning more relevant and engaging for students. By connecting classroom knowledge to real-world problems and encouraging active participation through projects and collaboration, KMB aims to foster a more lively and dynamic atmosphere. As Suyitno (2022) emphasizes, such an environment can contribute to increased student motivation and a more positive attitude towards learning. Teachers at SMP Negeri 1 Tuhemberua hope that KMB will transform classrooms into vibrant hubs of discovery and exploration, sparking curiosity and a love for learning among their students.

Thank-You Note

This research would not have been possible without the help of various parties. I would like to express my sincere gratitude to:

1. The teachers at SMP Negeri 1 Tuhemberua for their willingness to take the time to be interviewed.
2. The principal of SMP Negeri 1 Tuhemberua for granting permission for the research.
3. The staff of the Journal of Educational Research for the opportunity to publish this research.
4. All parties who have helped and supported this research, both directly and indirectly. I hope this research is beneficial for the development of education in Indonesia.

REFERENCES

- Arikunto, S. (2017). *Classroom action research*. Jakarta: PT. Literary Earth.
- Darmadi, D. (2018). *Implementation of the 2013 Curriculum: Challenges and Expectations*. Yogyakarta: Deepublish.
- Ferdan, N., & Novita, I. (2023). *Independent Learning Curriculum: Efforts to Optimize Pancasila-Based Education*. *Journal of Pancasila and Citizenship Education*, 13(1), 1-10.
- Ministry of Education, Culture, Research and Technology (2023). *Independent Learning Curriculum Learning Guidelines*. [Online] Available at: <https://pusdatin.kemdikbud.go.id/>
- Maipita, M., Utami, W., & Kusuma, A. (2021). *Challenges and Expectations for Implementing the Independent Learning Curriculum in Junior High Schools*. *Journal of Education*, 1(1), 1-9.
- Mardis, A., Suyitno, S., & Sutarman, S. (2023). *Collaborative Resource Development: Empowering Teachers in the Merdeka Belajar Era*. *Journal of Teacher Education for the Twenty-First Century*, 1(1), 1-10.
- Suyitno. (2022). *Challenges and Expectations of Teachers in Implementing the Independent Learning Curriculum*. *Journal of Education*, 2(1), 1-9.